CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CSEC® English

SYLLABUS
SPECIMEN PAPER
MARK SCHEME
SUBJECT REPORTS

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English

The CXC English syllabus is organised for examination as English A and English B. Syllabus objectives are organised under understanding and expression in order to guide both content development and the assessment scheme. Understanding indicates more than basic comprehension, and Expression is of more significance than the ability to employ structural and grammatical correctness. The syllabus seeks to express and invite the recognition of Reflection as being intrinsic to both. English A emphasises the development of oral and written language skills through a variety of strategies; English B provides opportunities for students to explore and respond critically to specific literary texts, to observe and appreciate the author's craft, and to make meaningful connections with human daily interactions.

The English Syllabus encourages receptive and expressive exploration of the three major literary genres - Drama, Poetry, and Prose – and the varieties related to those major divisions – in order to develop awareness of and familiarity with the many functions and purposes of language. It is recognised that a good language syllabus provides opportunity to discover and appreciate that the five facets of the language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing.

In addition, this syllabus strongly promotes reflection on the principle that reflection is the tool which helps individuals to clarify their own understanding, and enables them to provide themselves and others with satisfying responses. This recognition is seen as being fundamental if teachers are to help students to reach their full creative potential. The literature of the region is fore-grounded so as to foster the positive sense of selfhood and Caribbean-ness. The focus encourages recognising our region's talents, valuing regional varieties of language, and developing the skills of selecting form, tone and register appropriate to the transactional context. The syllabus also recognises that language is essential to basic, effective transactions – personal, social, scientific, technical and business. Literary texts are also chosen, therefore, to help in the development of appropriate responses to general human behaviours, to promote understanding of the human condition.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSEC®

ENGLISH
SYLLABUS

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English Syllabus

♦ RATIONALE

It is envisaged that persons certified by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) will demonstrate the ability to understand and appreciate what they listen to, read and view, and the ability to express themselves clearly in speech and in writing. The teaching and testing of English is founded on the premise that the abilities mentioned are fostered by the study of language and literature, separately and jointly, and that the abilities are vital factors in managing personal and social well-being. Indeed, in the current socio-political world climates, the study of language and literature underpins our understanding of human dynamics, and prepares us to respond critically to the wealth of material that bombards our lives through the media.

*The CSEC English syllabus is organised for examination as English A and English B. The s*yllabus objectives are organised under **understanding** and **expression** in order to guide both content development and the assessment scheme. **Understanding** indicates more than basic comprehension, and **Expression** is of more significance than the ability to employ structural and grammatical correctness. The syllabus seeks to express and invite the recognition of ***Reflection*** as being intrinsic to both. *English A emphasises the development of oral and written language skills through a variety of strategies. English B provides opportunities for students to explore and respond critically to specific literary texts, to observe and appreciate the author's craft, and to make meaningful connections with human daily interactions. The language and literature syllabus document recognises the separate value of these areas, but advocates an approach to teaching that creates a strong inter-relatedness of the two. The principle is that structured language learning situations which use literature, provide opportunity for guided reflection on, and understanding of, the human condition and life itself. It also promotes meaningful comprehension, acquisition of grammatical correctness and other communication skills.*

This integrated syllabus provides a map to help students to develop the ability to read and enjoy literary texts; to explore social and moral issues using the skills acquired while learning to 'read' texts; to evaluate the way their personal ownership of language promotes and optimises their own growth; and creates opportunity to practise using the acquired language to express themselves effectively. In short, the syllabus crafts an essential interweaving of literature and language study as the platform for raising UNESCO's "Pillars of Learning": to know, to do, to live together, to be, and to transform self and society. Inter-related study helps the instructor to shape the many-faceted image of the 'ideal' Caribbean person envisaged by the syllabus. That person is a social being who respects human life itself and values the fundamentals of that life - family, community, diversity, rights and freedoms which characterise our area. The ideal also understands and appreciates the meanings and nuances of environment, ethnicity, culture, imagination, entrepreneurship and accountability.

Further, the English Syllabus encourages receptive and expressive exploration of the three major literary genres - Drama, Poetry, and Prose – and the varieties related to those major divisions – in order to develop awareness of and familiarity with the many functions and purposes of language. It is recognised that a good language syllabus provides opportunity to discover and appreciate that the five facets of the language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. In addition, this syllabus

strongly promotes reflection on the principle that reflection is the tool which helps individuals to clarify their own understanding, and enables them to provide themselves and others with satisfying responses. This recognition is seen as being fundamental if teachers are to help students to reach their full creative potential. The literature of the region is fore-grounded so as to foster the positive sense of selfhood and Caribbean-ness. The focus encourages recognising our region's talents, valuing regional varieties of language, and developing the skills of selecting form, tone and register appropriate to the transactional context. The syllabus also recognises that language is essential to basic, effective transactions – personal, social, scientific, technical and business. Literary texts are also chosen, therefore, to help in the development of appropriate responses to general human behaviours, to promote understanding of the human condition.

♦ AIMS

The syllabus aims to:

1. *develop the ability to use the spoken language, Caribbean Standard English (CSE[1]);*

2. *develop the ability to understand and respond to spoken and written Caribbean Standard English;*

3. *develop the ability to use language effectively for communicating across cultures at different levels, that is, intra-personal, inter-personal and groups;*

4. *develop the ability to monitor personal thinking processes through the application of meta-cognitive strategies;*

5. *develop the ability to articulate personal experiences (real or imagined) in spoken and written language;*

6. *promote in students a willingness and ability to inform themselves about, and to contribute reasoned opinions on social issues;*

7. *promote an appreciation of the variety of purposes for which language is used;*

8. *promote an understanding and appreciation for the place and value of the varieties of English and of the dialects and creoles of the Caribbean and other regions in different social and cultural contexts;*

9. *develop a critical awareness of the use of language devices used for narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository writing;*

10. *develop the ability to respond to literature for pleasure and insight, to recognise and respond to the writer's craft, and to make sensitive appraisals of value judgements and other concepts expressed in Literature;*

11. *use knowledge of the various forms of information for the students' own enlightenment, while recognising the importance of acknowledging the contribution of such sources to their own*

[1] *CSE (Caribbean Standard English) is a standard of English. It differs from other Standard Englishes primarily on the phonological and lexical levels, with no appreciable difference in grammar, particularly in the formal written mode.*

ideas;

12. *develop the capacity to assess the reliability of sources of information including those available on the Internet.*

♦ SKILLS AND ABILITIES TO BE ASSESSED

The skills and abilities are categorised under the two broad headings: **Understanding,** the decoding and interpreting of messages through the analysis of the language structures and devices used in any given context, and **Expression**, the conveying of meaning through the selection of language structures and devices appropriate to each specific context. Performance will be reported under the profile dimensions **Understanding** and **Expression**.

1. Understanding

The ability to:

(a) understand meaning conveyed (both in listening and in reading) through word choice and grammar, and (in reading) through punctuation and paragraphing.

(b) obtain information accurately, as demonstrated in the ability to:

(i) recognise facts stated explicitly;

(ii) extract specific information from what is read or heard;

(iii) extract implied information;

(iv) identify stated or implied time sequence;

(v) draw valid conclusions and inferences from information presented;

(vi) recognise cause and effect relationships;

(vii) identify main and subordinate ideas and trace their development;

(viii) recognise the difference between denotative and connotative language;

(ix) treat with passages whose main purpose is informative (expository) *as opposed to* literary or argumentative;

(x) interpret and respond to tables and pictorial communication, such as diagrams, conventional signs and symbols.

(c) grasp insights from reading literature and demonstrating the ability to:

(i) deduce reasons and motives for particular spoken and written communication (other than those with an overt argumentative intent);

(ii) appreciate the appropriateness of different uses of tone, mood, register, code

and style in talks and speeches, in non-literary forms including scientific or technical writing, and in literary forms (prose, verse and drama), in relation to the author's intention;

(iii) detect connotations in the use of words and in the presentation of ideas and distinguish between connotative and denotative meaning;

(iv) detect and assess the apt use of devices such as pun, innuendo, exaggeration, irony and symbolism;

(v) recognise and respond to the appropriateness of the means, including form and structure, used by a speaker, director or author to achieve the intended effect of a talk or speech, letter, article or essay, poem, novel, story or play;

(vi) visualise the situation, attitudes, mood and setting of a play and appreciate how they influence the actions and interaction of actors in the performance of that play;

(vii) recognise implicit themes;

(viii) respond to West Indian and other literature in English (novels, short stories, poems and plays): recognise elements of the writer's craft; respond to writers' evocation of feelings, moods, atmosphere; making critical appraisal of values and concepts expressed in literature, and relate these to everyday living.

(d) recognise and evaluate opinion expressed in various forms *as* demonstrated in the ability to:

(i) distinguish factual statements from unsupported opinion statements;

(ii) *detect bias or particular perspective* in the use of words and *in* the presentation of ideas;

(iii) evaluate the effectiveness of language devices used to persuade;

(iv) recognise the range of techniques of persuasion employed in social intercourse and in the mass media, and assess their argumentative effects.

2. Expression

The ability to:

(a) use appropriate diction, grammatical forms (both in speaking and in writing) and suitable punctuation and paragraphing to convey meaning clearly and with facility;

(b) communicate factual information clearly, concisely *and* adequately in giving oral and written instructions, reports, summaries, and expositions;

(c) *acquire self-knowledge through self-expression and give aesthetic satisfaction to others in personal, creative and imaginative language by:*

(i) organising and sequencing ideas to communicate emotional and imaginative interpretations of experience;

(ii) using language (tone, mood, register, code and style) appropriate to particular situations and contexts.

(d) communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which persuades or dissuades effectively. This will involve the ability to:

(i) present reasoned evaluative comments on proposals and situations of various kinds in language that is clear and appropriate to the occasion;

(ii) demonstrate the ability to employ, wherever necessary, a range of argumentative techniques for emotional impact;

(iii) present a logical argument using justifiable techniques related to sound oral and written debate;

(iv) *research a topic or situation from different angles or perspectives in order to express an informed opinion.*

♦ SUGGESTED TIMETABLE ALLOCATION

It is recommended that in order to satisfy the requirements of the English A and English B examinations, a minimum of six sessions should be allocated to English A and four to English B per week. However, it is recognised that students and teachers operate in a wide variety of situations and under an equally wide variety of conditions. It is important that individual institutions develop an allocation of time, taking the following into consideration:

1. language competence levels of students at point of entry into the examination class;

2. availability of human and other resources;

3. learning styles of students;

4. school culture;

5. normal timetable concerns; and

6. balance among skills needed in English A and English B.

♦ *RECOMMENDED APPROACHES TO FACILITATE LANGUAGE LEARNING*

This syllabus is based on the philosophy that the acquisition and mastery of language is a progressive process. Teaching and learning methodologies should facilitate opportunities for students to gradually build on their experiences, knowledge and skills.

A number of language varieties, which differ significantly from the Caribbean Standard English (CSE), exist in the Caribbean region. A non-threatening setting is therefore critical to student experimentation with the language and the development of the required competencies. For this reason peer and small group activities are recommended so that students will feel confident enough to manipulate the language. Excessive correction of errors should be avoided, since this may contribute to low self-esteem and refusal to make attempts to develop CSE competencies. Teachers should also keep in mind that in teaching CSE grammar to speakers of creoles, it is important to raise students' consciousness or awareness of the similarities and differences between the forms.

Teachers will find it useful to employ the integrated approach in the teaching of this syllabus. The different modes of language- listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and the sixth element – reflection – are essentially linked and should be addressed through methodologies which reflect and promote their interconnectivity.

The exploration of literature is essential to the achievement of the aims of this syllabus. Literature should continue to serve the traditional roles of facilitating literary appreciation and promoting positive values and attitudes. However, literature should also serve as the general context through which meaningful language learning takes place. It should be used to model the apt use of a range of learning skills in the different genres. It should serve as the springboard for reflection and problem-solving. It is recommended that as far as possible elements of literature be fully and seamlessly integrated into the language learning process via various prompts, as well as through the treatment of specific elements. The promotion of the reading of good literature will also improve students' language skills.

Teachers should also promote the use of metacognitive strategies on the part of students. Thinking aloud as they work through a task or explaining the process involved in arriving at a plausible response should be modelled by the teacher and practised by the students. As students become more aware of the processes which undergird language learning, they will begin to display more confidence and competence in the use of the language.

Interpersonal development should be promoted at all levels of the language learning process. As students build their language competence through interaction with peers, they should also be encouraged to develop the attendant social skills.

The transactional functions of language form an important aspect of this syllabus. Students must therefore be made to recognise the utility of language in practical functions. Teachers should seek also to help their students develop a genuine love and appreciation for language as they use it to reflect and provide pleasure for themselves and others.

♦ *CLASSROOM RESOURCES*

The choice of material to be used in the classroom will be guided by both the language needs of daily living and the need of the students to develop the skills and insights necessary if they are to derive satisfaction from novels, stories, poems and plays. The approach in this syllabus calls for emphasis on the exposure of students to literature, not to the learning of facts about literary theory.

A reading list is included in the syllabus to offer help to schools in choosing class texts to develop the ability to enjoy literature. It is a list of ***suggested*** *reading, not prescribed reading. It offers a guide to the range of material that is suitable for particular groups of students. Schools are encouraged to create situations which lead to wide reading by students.*

There will, of course, be differences from territory to territory and even from school to school, so the recommendations must not be taken as binding in any way. It is hoped that students will be encouraged to read widely within the range of titles suggested both by the list and by the teacher's own additions to it, and that class sessions and written assignments will be geared to stimulate and reward this extra reading of, and interest in literature.

The reading list includes a number of reference texts on the teaching of drama. The approach to drama implicit in the syllabus places the emphasis on the use of activities such as miming, improvisations, the reading and acting of plays in the classroom that would help in the development of self-awareness and understanding of others. The texts included in the suggested reading list will provide guidance in implementing this aspect of the drama programme, particularly in the first three years of secondary schooling.

Refer to pages 65–88 for Suggested Reading List.

♦ ENGLISH A AND B: NOTES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES (FORMS 1 – 5)

Communicative competence is a critical issue in any classroom and is the focus of the aims outlined earlier in this syllabus. Students will be expected to demonstrate good control of the mechanisms of language, write good, clear prose, and to communicate easily, precisely and fluently. It is a sound instructional principle to practise the skills required to achieve these features within situations that simulate the social contexts as nearly as possible. *The importance of the oral aspects of* ***English*** *should* be emphasised.

Suggested teaching activities are intended to guide teachers for both English A and English B into a full understanding of the objectives of the syllabus, while offering ideas for both teaching and assessment activities. This list of activities is not prescribed, nor is it exhaustive.

NOTE*: It is recommended that teachers in all subjects ensure that the English Language competence of their students is satisfactory. With this in mind, it is suggested that teachers of English should provide guidance to teachers of other subjects with respect to the quality of English expected to be displayed, and that five per cent of the marks for any assignment should be allocated to the quality of the language used in presenting the assignment, oral or written.*

♦ ENGLISH A and B – NOTES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (a) – Grammar and Mechanics Students should be able to:			
1. **explain** meaning conveyed (both in listening and in reading) through word choice and grammar, and (in reading) through punctuation and paragraphing;	**Word choice**: formal, informal, standard, non-standard, Creole, literal, figurative use, fixed phrases, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms. *Striking word combinations, for example, alliterations, produce effective descriptions.*	*Appropriateness of word choice and brainstorming.* Wide reading (class library); shared newspaper, assessing alternative Internet sites, listening to effective speeches, oral skills; use of dictionary and thesaurus including e-dictionary and e-thesaurus; word puzzles, word-a-day, vocabulary notebooks, word-attack skills. *Use students' writing to analyse word choice*.	(a) Cloze tests. (b) Sentence completion. (c) Synonyms. (d) Antonyms. (e) Definitions. (f) *Word Matching.*
2. *identify effective use of adjectives, word combinations, unusual turn of a phrase.*	**Grammar**: (a) syntax – the ways in which words are ordered and connected to form phrases or sentences with particular meaning;	*Grammar and Spell check in word processing.(Stick consistently to CSE/ASE/BSE).* Explicit language comparison and substitution and restructuring drills (as in second-language teaching); critical listening and reading exercises; identifying sentence patterns, analysing fact, evaluating arguments and opinions.	Listening and reading comprehension exercises, with answers dependent on the understanding of particular forms, structures, patterns. Selecting appropriate words from a range of choices when describing. Combining words for effect, for example, adjectival phrases with double adjectives. Create alliterations.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (a) – Grammar and Mechanics (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
		Study and discussion of visual media extracts relating to standard English spoken: (i) by Caribbean persons; (ii) *by non-Caribbean persons or;* (iii) *by Caribbean persons with non-Caribbean influences.* *(Note word choice, check for agreement in grammar, common and different aspects of language use).* *Read poetry for how word choice conveys imagery, produces effective comparison and contrast.* *Discuss shades of meaning of synonyms.*	
	(b) morphology – the ways in which the form of words and fixed phrases, and the changes made to them affect meaning.	Exercises to differentiate marking of number, possession, verb tense, adjective degree, pronoun reference, and word-building. Use of word-processing tools for editing.	As overleaf.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (a) – Grammar and Mechanics (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
	Punctuation: recognition of punctuation marks and their effect on meaning – capital letter, question mark, exclamation mark, full stop, semi-colon, comma, colon, apostrophe, quotation marks, brackets, dash, hyphen, ellipsis.	Critical discussion and correction of punctuation used in selected and prepared material; dictation; reading aloud to identify contribution of punctuation to meaning. Unpunctuated passages used to focus on links between punctuation and interpretation.	**Dictation:** Reading aloud to show appreciation of punctuation; Explaining the effects of punctuation marks in context.
	Paragraphing: *recognition that material is ordered in paragraphs in order to assist understanding and create particular emphases and effects.*	Justifying choice of topic sentences in paragraphs read or heard; making an outline from a given (magazine) article; evaluating colleague's paragraphs, creation of dialogue and role play and other controlled oral activity, impromptu speech.	Using written material: (a) identifying topic sentences; (b) explaining the effect of paragraphing in passages with and without dialogue; (c) similar exercises to (a) and (b) using oral materials or visual media.
Expression (a) – Grammar and Mechanics			
Students should be able to:			
1. use appropriate diction and grammatical forms (both in speaking and in writing) and suitable punctuation and paragraphing to	**Diction:** (a) *careful selection characterises word choice and influences style;*		

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (a) – Grammar and Mechanics (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
convey meaning clearly and with facility.	(b) appropriate diction, matches word choice and style to the purpose, situation, audience and content of the written or spoken discourse; accurate use of words, fixed phrases, synonyms and antonyms are expected.	Use of dictionary and thesaurus including audio samples on e-dictionaries; creating word puzzles; scrabble; word-a-day; vocabulary notebooks; rewriting items for different purposes, situations and audiences; oral and written sentence completion and cloze exercises. Role play: (a) various professions; (b) use of hierarchy - (student/ principal), worker /superior; (c) other relationships: civilian/law officer; sales clerk/customer.	Sentence completion and cloze tests. Word substitution. Structured writing or speaking task to test appropriate diction.
	Grammar: adjustment of grammatical form for flexibility as appropriate to audience and context, sentence functions (statement, question) and types (simple, compound), for accuracy: number, identification of	Use of grammar check on Microsoft Word. Practice in appropriately structuring and altering statements, questions; synthesis; building complex and compound, sentences. Oral, then written language comparison	Extended writing task to test use of suitable variety of sentences. Synthesis. Extended writing task to test accuracy in the statement of number and concord. Error recognition; error correction; changing

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (a) – Grammar and Mechanics (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
	subject, concord, pronoun reference, possessives, sequence of tenses.	and restructuring drills; proof-reading exercises to identify and correct errors of number, concord, reported speech, journal writing, oral interviews, impromptu speeches.	direct to reported speech.
	Punctuation: appropriate use of capital letter, question mark, exclamation mark, full stop, semi-colon, comma, colon, apostrophe, quotation marks, brackets, dash, hyphen, ellipsis.	Reading aloud; giving, taking dictation; proof-reading exercises. *Editing paragraphs and peer writing*.	Extended writing task to test appropriate use of necessary punctuation marks. Dictation. Correcting an unpunctuated passage.
	Paragraphing: logical division of continuous writing into coherent paragraphs*; as well as* use of conventions of paragraphing shown in writing dialogue.	Outlining a composition by grouping brainstormed (or jumbled) ideas; oral and written expanding of topic sentences into paragraphs; adding properly sequenced paragraphs to create a longer work. Semantic mapping. *Listening to speeches, news items, documenting, show-telling and giving instructions; podcasts to recognise how the flow of ideas helps/hinders audience understanding.* Listening to speeches to note how natural chunking, pausing,	Extended writing task (essay, short story) to test effective paragraphing; dividing passage into paragraphs; correcting faulty paragraphing.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (a) – Grammar and Mechanics (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
		voice change, suggest punctuation.	
Understanding (b) – Informative Discourse			
Students should be able to extract information accurately. This involves the ability to:			
1. recognise facts stated explicitly;	As the first level of questioning, this requires a basic understanding of information presented directly in language to be taken literally.	Use of various subject textbooks, manuals, newspaper reports, notices, recipes, tables, charts, signs, maps, diagrams, audio and visual media, blogs. Use of Internet articles on same/similar topics – analysis of views, and separation of facts from opinion.	Multiple choice, short-answer, oral questions *relating to* explicit information (read, heard or shown in a diagram). Who, what, where, when, why, how questions. Following directions.
2. extract specific information from what is read or heard;	Selection of relevant information, making use of titles, introductions, topic sentences, illustrations*, main ideas*.	Note-taking; making outlines, summaries, paraphrases; giving titles; formulating questions to elicit data.	Written and oral summaries, reports. Reporting data as diagrams, charts. Selecting the outline from an article.
3. extract implied information;	Reading 'between the lines' (a critical skill) is used in interpreting information presented indirectly.	Making inferences from suitable passages, poems; deducing meaning of cartoons, and trends in charts, *maps*, advertisement, other oral, *social* media presentations. Listening/watching visual media: (a) make predictions based on speech, music, atmosphere, body language and on other	Multiple choice, short-answer, or oral questions re implied information (read, heard, or seen in graphic).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (b) – Informative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to extract information accurately. This involves the ability to:			
		(b) behaviours; (c) *Infer* character *traits* based on dress, behaviours, speech; (c) have a discussion on what 'setting' contributes to meaning: hearing and understanding, for example, influence of indoor/outdoor; social location, for example, church/market.	
4. identify stated or implied time sequence;	Important for following instructions and for making good sense of information received in *distorted or non-sequential order*, as in flashbacks.	Re-ordering jumbled directions, picture sequences, planning activities; taking minutes of meetings; chronological listing of events in account; identifying cue-words (first, second, next, then; dates). Assessing the clarity of instructions on the labels of commercial products.	Following instructions, directions. Arranging (events recounted, pictured) in sequence. Numbering logical sequence.
5. draw valid conclusions and inferences from information presented;	Identifying sound and unsound deductions in particular examples, and generalisations from samples.	Recognising faulty reasoning and inadequate or biased samples in prepared explanations, reports.	Differentiating sound from unsound conclusions in given deductions and generalisations.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (b) – Informative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to extract information accurately. This involves the ability to:			
6. recognise cause-effect relationships;	To be distinguished from coincidence to avoid false conclusions.	Identifying cause and effect (and coincidence) in stories, reports of events and experiments.	Identifying (or predicting) effect of given cause (and vice versa) in a passage (narrative or expository).
7. identify main and subordinate ideas and trace their development;	Structure seen through sequence of topics of individual paragraphs *and their level of emphasis and development*. Themes of longer works.	Note-taking; book-reports; analysing structure of paragraphs, short stories, novels, essays, oral narratives. Comparing novel with movie version.	Making summaries, outlines of items read or heard. Identifying themes in essay, story, film and drama.
8. recognise the difference between denotative and connotative language;	Denotative (dictionary meaning) for literal, objective understanding; connotative (suggesting feelings) for subjective, emotional response.	Dictionary work; comparison of similar information presented in contrasting styles; study of effect of word choice on slant, bias in oral and written narratives.	Differentiating between denotative and connotative language in prepared extracts. Giving unbiased equivalents of loaded terms.
9. identify passages in which the main purpose is informative (expository) rather than literary or argumentative;	Expository: to inform or explain. Literary: to entertain, stir feeling. Argumentative: to convince, direct.	Analysis of author's purpose and intended audience; focus on elements of style which support informative purpose. Watch/listen for denotative and connotative use of key words discussed before start of viewing/listening.	Choose expository extracts from a mixed selection. Identify author's precise purpose and intended audience.
10. interpret and respond to tables and pictorial communication, such as diagrams, conventional signs and symbols.	*Visual or graphically presented information is often used to amplify/ condense the verbal presentation.*	Analysis of tables, charts, signs, maps, diagrams; converting the information to verbal form; making inferences from the data.	Identify signs on maps. Extract data. Make inferences from tables and charts. Summarise data in writing. *Continuous writing*

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (b) – Informative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to extract information accurately. This involves the ability to:			
		Recognise and discuss trends; make predictions. *Speak or write about visual impact.*	*exercises, developing what is given in a visual.*
<u>Expression (b) – Informative Discourse</u>			
Students should be able to:			
1. communicate factual information clearly, concisely and adequately, in giving oral/ *written* instructions, reports, summaries, and expositions in appropriate language.	Information discourse takes various forms: essays, summaries, reports, instructions. Clarity of instructions depends upon precise language and careful sequencing of information. Reports are expected to be objective, accurate, comprehensive and *well* organised.	Writing instructions, recipes; designing application forms; explaining how to play a game. Exercises in Giving and following oral instructions. Giving evidence to an investigator; reporting accidents; oral or written reports of surveys, news reports, minutes.	Writing directions and explaining how to operate an appliance. Reporting a missing person. Reporting on a club project. A media report on a sports event. Press releases.
	Summaries require economy of language, the careful selection of relevant main ideas, and the preservation of the intention of the original.	Writing *emails, blogs*, classified advertisements, resumes, minutes of a meeting; summarising a radio news item; condensing a passage, isolating the views of one debater.	Condensing a newspaper report; summarising one of the topics in a recorded conversation; writing *letters, emails*.
	Expositions give information or explanation in an ordered manner, with supporting evidence for each element.	Writing notices, job applications, expository essays. Completing forms, explaining how things work; preparing notes for informational talks.	Describing yourself to a pen pal. Explaining how a sewing machine or car engine works. Expository essays, for example, outlining two

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (b) – Informative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to:			
		Making oral reports on set or observed activities; giving reasoned responses to situations; giving reports; assessing activities. These are to be delivered in limited time and words. Vocabulary "games" relevant to specific situations.	main problems of youth today.
	The appropriateness of language for communicating factual information is largely dependent on the degree of formality (register) expected by the listener or reader. (Process writing encourages writers to generate and arrange ideas, to seek feedback and to draft and redraft, before final proofreading).	Classifying the above reports according to the degree or formality expected; rewriting inappropriately written items.	Identifying inappropriate language use in an item and supplying appropriate alternatives.
Understanding (c) – Literary Discourse			
Students should be able to grasp insights from reading literature by:			
1. *deducing reasons and motives and particular perspectives for specific spoken and written communications (other than those with an overt*	*Engage in metacognitive exercises in which students are made aware of their own thinking.* Distinguish between the purpose of the writer, the speaker, and the narrator. The narrator's	*Helping students to monitor their reading by studying the effect of the written or spoken word on their thoughts.* Exposing students to a wide range of oral and	*In small groups, practise "think aloud" in which students say what they are thinking after reading or hearing the spoken word.* Identifying voice and point of view and commenting on effectiveness.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (c) – Literary Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to grasp insights from reading literature by:			
argumentative *intent);*	or the persona's voice is not necessarily the author's thus two motivations may exist in the same piece of writing.	written extracts, for example, biography, autobiography, narrator independent from author; author speaking through a character; poems, fables, satire, where characters are often not human. Imitating styles of piece studied. *Help students to understand what happens to them when their thoughts wander.*	
2. appreciating the appropriateness of different uses of tone, mood, register, code and style in talks and speeches, and in literary forms (prose, verse and drama), in relation to the author's intention;	Tone: attitude expressed by the speaker or "voice", mood or atmosphere: emotion conveyed in a work. Register: selection of language in indicating level of formality. Code: language peculiar to a specific group. Style: manner of statement, including form, structure, language.	Reading and listening to a range of literary and non-literary material, including poems, short stories, novels, plays, movies and Television items, newspaper, magazines, manuals. Identifying elements and evaluating their appropriateness. (This is an ongoing process, not restricted to English classes). Interpretative dramatisation of selections (all genres). This is not limited to the original piece but must be allowed to include the students' interpretations that may produce new versions. View visual media with alternative conclusions and	Reading and dramatising pieces of literary and non-literary material; Writing evaluative comments. *Practise writing their thoughts about characters and issues in journals.* Comparing and contrasting selections on the same issue, for example, literary and non-literary prose extracts; poems and drama extracts; poems and prose extracts.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (c) – Literary Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to grasp insights from reading literature by:			
		discuss changes in meaning effected. Conduct *self-editing sessions.*	
3. detecting connotations in the use of words and in the presentation of ideas and distinguishing between connotative and denotative meaning;	Connotative: emotional, cultural, social associations given to words. Denotative: standard meaning necessary for precise understanding of meaning.	Learning effective use of dictionary; exploring meanings of words in current use; slang, jargon; studying effect of word choice and shades of meaning on slant and bias in speech or writing (for example, about gender, race, politics, religion, culture).	Ranking words according to their negative and positive connotations; Identifying bias in given examples; Identifying reasons for effect produced in examples of biased writing or speech.
	See also Understanding (b) 8.	Regular practice in identifying and assessing the effects of an increasing range of devices; students creating effects by using their own devices in descriptive writing. Small group activities: reading circles and book clubs; Book reviews.	
4. detecting and assessing the apt use of devices;	Importance of understanding why a particular device such as pun, innuendo, exaggeration, irony and symbolism is used and its effect on meaning.	Reading specifically to detect hidden meanings. Listening to song lyrics (for example: calypso, dub) to understand meanings.	Identifying and explaining the effect of devices in given written passages, oral extracts.
5. recognising and responding to the appropriateness or otherwise of the medium, including form and structure,	Identification and use of verse, stanza, dialogue, reported speech, punctuation, formal and informal writing, first and third person narratives,	Exposure to a variety of material to show the range of forms and structure found in written and spoken statement. Study of	Identifying and describing form and structure found in given examples. Imitating models of form and structure with new content.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (c) – Literary Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to grasp insights from reading literature by:			
used by a speaker, director or author to achieve the intended effect of a talk or speech, letter, article or essay, poem, novel, story or play;	flashbacks, acts, stage directions.	folk expressions – West Indian and others (all contributors to Caribbean culture).	
6. visualising the situation, attitudes, mood and setting of a play and appreciating how they influence the actions and interaction of actors in the performance of that play;	Recognition of the importance of the director and actors to the interpretation of a script; the need for the reader of a play to visualise it in performance.	Seeing a play or film (especially one that has been read) performed on stage or screen; Acting parts of a play in class; practice in reading parts; investigating aspects of putting on plays: casting, set design, costumes, props, advertising. Internet research to locate and study pictures of unfamiliar places; Visits to galleries/study of print/photo collections.	Identifying and explaining differences between a text and movie of the text. Explaining links between setting, action, motives, character. Directing a scene with fellow students.
7. recognising implicit themes;	Theme: a dominant view, or one of the recurring ideas, stated or implied in a work, for example, love, jealousy, heroism, freedom.	Identifying and defining underlying ideas in a text in small groups or individually. *Use visual media to present themes, for example, picture and written text collage comprising pictures/written text on "war".*	Identifying and tracing themes; Assessing a theme's importance to the plot, with supporting evidence. *Graphic representation followed by writing in continuous prose;* *Displays.*
8. (a) responding to good literature	Literature – a reflection of life-experience as well	Identifying (in group discussion and	Identifying values expressed in texts;

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (c) – Literary Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to grasp insights from reading literature by:			
(West Indian and **other literatures in English**): novels, short stories, poems and plays; (b) making critical appraisal of values and concepts expressed in literature; and relating these to everyday living.	as a vicarious extension and enrichment of it; a means of evaluating personal values and those expressed in literature, and sometimes forming new values.	individual writing) values encountered in texts; evaluate them on (a) personal, (b) social, and (c) ethical levels.	Assessing these with reasons and supporting opinions; Assessing identity of a character and explaining motivation.
Expression (c) – Literary Discourse			
Students should derive aesthetic satisfaction from creative writing by:			
1. organising and sequencing ideas to communicate emotions and imaginative interpretations of experience;	*Exploring various forms of self-statement, spoken and written.* *Demonstrating control over the structure of an order of presentation especially when communicating emotional and imaginative slants to experiences.*	Writing and reading stories, verse, dramatic scenes, possibly after discussion of personal experience, a topical event, or some other stimulus. *Express feelings about experiences and observations.* *Recount poignant experiences.*	Submitting outline, drafts and a fair copy of an imaginative piece, for assessment of both final product and process of writing; Practising independent revision of imaginative writing done under test conditions. Produce a personal expressive essay.
2. recognising the various literary devices and their contribution to meaning and demonstrate an ability to interpret, at various levels different creative works;	Metaphors, simile, proverbs and other idiomatic expressions across genres.	Discussion of meaning in works which use the devices well; Assessment of such devices and their contribution to meaning. (See Understanding c Item 4).	Identify the devices as used in various works; Creating short stories/poems which use and respond to such devices. Reading aloud to demonstrate understanding of the work which use the devices.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (c) – Literary Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should derive aesthetic satisfaction from creative writing by:			
3. using language (tone, mood, register, code and style) appropriate to particular situations and contexts.	Effective speech and writing both depend on the suitability of word choice and style to the subject, to the situation, and to the people being addressed.	Evaluating different imaginative and real situations to determine what use of language is appropriate for narrator, character.	Writing *relevant* statements in language suited to different speakers, situations.
	See tone, mood, register, code and style in Understanding 2.	*Demonstrate use of emotive vocabulary. Create rhymes, chants and songs.*	*Compose verses of poetry. Produce imaginative writing.*
Understanding (d) Argumentative Discourse			
Students should be able to recognise and evaluate opinion(s) expressed in various forms. This involves the ability to:			
1. distinguish factual statements from opinion expressed in various forms;	If assertions are capable of being verified (factual, even if shown to be false), the appeal is to reason and the audience can use its judgment; if opinions are given without grounds which can be verified then they are unreliable.	Identifying and analysing statements of different kinds of prepared passages, and in advertisements, letters to the editor, reviews, sports reports; removing all but logical arguments from prepared argumentative passages, listening *to* and viewing tapes of speeches. Reading court reports and reports on trials. Studying short proposals, paying attention to structure and reasoning.	Identifying verifiable and unverifiable statements in a passage. Judging the soundness of selected verifiable assertions. Identifying the more reasonable (logically presented) of two argumentative passages.
2. detect connotations in the use of words and in the presentation of ideas;	*Bias and/or particular perspective may be detected in the choice of words and evidence in the presentation of ideas.*	Discussion of the effect of loaded expressions in advertisements and other argumentative material.	Identifying and evaluating the argumentative effect of given devices.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Understanding (d) Argumentative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to recognise and evaluate opinion(s) expressed in various forms. This involves the ability to:			
		Comparing two accounts of the same event and descriptions of the same scene from different points of view.	
3. evaluate the effectiveness of language devices used to persuade;	*Evaluate the effects of rhetorical questions, repetitions, hyperbole, litotes, irony, sarcasm, paradox, oxymoron, pathetic fallacy, rhyme and other devices of sound, and figurative language.*	Identifying each device in material provided, discussing argumentative effects in context.	Identifying and evaluating the argumentative effect of given devices. *Use guided questions to produce evidenced-based argument.*
4. recognise the range of techniques of persuasion employed in social intercourse and by the mass media and assess the argumentative effects.	Appeals to authority, desires, fears and other emotions; use of statistics; association of ideas; contrast, ridicule; rhetorical questions and other language devices; visual and auditory effects *in the* argumentative *process.*	Discuss likely reasons for the use of particular techniques in advertisements and campaigns; identify various techniques in material recalled or shown in class. Study proposals and reports to see how tables, charts are used. Using the Internet, study visual media clips to note how visuals are used to persuade.	Identifying examples of techniques in given items; explaining the purpose of the technique used in a given example; analysing and assessing the effectiveness of a piece of argumentative language.
Expression (d) – Argumentative Discourse			
Students should be able to communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which persuades or dissuades effectively, namely:			
1. present reasoned evaluative comments on proposals and	*Provide reasoned opinions, draw conclusions logically on the basis of facts. Giving*	Supporting opinions with reasons; providing sound reasons for agreeing or disagreeing	Stating a position, for example, on new transport and traffic proposals, (community projects and

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (d) – Argumentative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which persuades or dissuades effectively, namely:			
situations of various kinds, in language that is clear and appropriate to the occasion;	*opinions which others may not agree with, requires facts or other evidential support.*	with suggestions; practising inoffensive ways of complaining, disagreeing. Preparing arguments for specific contexts (home/school). Constructing and supporting proposals. Role play (impromptu) arguments for and against.	institutions) orally (in a meeting) or in a letter to the newspaper Editor. *Write a letter of complaint. Write a letter of appreciation.*
2. demonstrate the ability to employ, wherever necessary, a range of argumentative techniques for emotional impact;	Psychological persuasion is used, not only to manipulate people into buying goods or supporting beliefs, but to warn those in danger and to strengthen those in distress.	Advertising a product (a) deceptively and (b) responsibly, identifying situations where persuasion targeting emotions may be justified; practising such persuasion in speech and writing.	Writing advertising copy to dissuade children from using illegal drugs; writing *to* a disillusioned teenaged relative to persuade him or her not to give up hope.
3. present a logical argument using justifiable techniques;	Serious argumentative essays and speeches emphasise reason over emotion, though they may be made more attractive by the occasional use of emotive appeals. Both sides of an issue are recognised, and the writer makes his or her stance clear.	Practice in generalising from appropriate evidence, and deducing logically from facts, debating issues, and writing items to persuade with a minimum of emotional appeal, and with opposing views noted and answered.	Writing argumentative essay, letters, and media articles and commentaries. Discussing the effectiveness of chosen advertisements.
4. *critically analyse issues that have come to public attention;*	*Critical issues that affect our lives emerge from time to time. It is necessary to understand them, discuss them and*	*Read newspapers, listen to discussions, note expert views, discuss them, discuss some forms of public*	*State ideas about community and nation.*

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	EXPLANATORY NOTES	SUGGESTIONS FOR *LEARNING ACTIVITY*	SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT
Expression (d) – Argumentative Discourse (cont'd)			
Students should be able to communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which persuades or dissuades effectively, namely:			
	take informed positions.	*behaviour.* *Differentiate between gossip/ propaganda and information.*	

THE ENGLISH A EXAMINATION

♦ CERTIFICATION

The syllabus is offered for General Proficiency certification. A candidate's performance will be indicated on the certificate by an overall numerical grade on a six-point scale as well as a letter grade for each of two profile dimensions, namely, Understanding and Expression.

♦ *DEFINITION OF PROFILE DIMENSIONS*

The knowledge and skills students are expected to develop on completion of this syllabus have been grouped under two profile dimensions:

1. *Understanding*
2. *Expression*

1. Understanding

The ability to:

(a) understand meaning conveyed in reading, through word choice, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing, and to obtain information accurately;

(b) grasp insights from reading literature;

(c) evaluate opinions expressed in various forms.

2. Expression

The ability to:

(a) communicate factual information clearly, concisely, and adequately in giving written instructions, reports, summaries, and expositions in appropriate language;

(b) give aesthetic satisfaction to others in personal, creative and imaginative language;

(c) communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which persuades or dissuades effectively.

♦ FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATIONS: ENGLISH A

The English A examination is offered at the General Proficiency level. The Assessment comprises three papers, Paper 01, Paper 02, and Paper 031 or Paper 032.

Papers 01 and 02 are assessed externally. Paper 031 is the School-Based Assessment (SBA) and is

assessed internally by the teacher and moderated by CXC. Paper 032 is an Alternative to the SBA and is intended for candidates registered as private candidates.

Paper 01 (1 hour 30 minutes – 29 per cent of Total Assessment)

1. Composition of Paper

This paper consists of 60 compulsory multiple-choice items arranged in two sections. **Section One** consists of *25 discrete* items and **Section Two** consists of *35* reading comprehension items based on five stimuli as follows: one poem; one literary extract (for example, novel, short story, biography, diary, letter); one expository extract (for example, encyclopaedia extract, report, instructions, newspaper article, texts of speeches, transcript of conversations); one argumentative extract (for example, an advertisement, a speech or a letter to the editor); one visual extract (for example, table, chart, form, diagram, map, cartoon, *advertisement*).

2. Mark Allocation

(a) One mark will be assigned for each question.

(b) The total number of marks available for this paper is 60.

(c) *This paper contributes 29 per cent towards the final assessment.*

3. Award of Marks

Marks will be awarded under Profile Dimension 1 as follows:

In **Section One**, marks will be awarded for the ability to understand meaning conveyed through word choice, grammar, syntax, sentence structure, punctuation and paragraphing.

In **Section Two**, marks will be awarded for the ability to:

(a) obtain information accurately;
(b) grasp insights from reading literature; and
(c) recognise and evaluate opinions expressed in various forms.

Paper 02 (2 hours and 45 minutes – *50 per cent of Total Assessment*)

1. Composition of Paper

This paper is divided into the following four sections:

Section One consists of one compulsory question – *informative discourse (summary).*

Section Two *consists of one compulsory question – informative discourse (exposition). This question will require candidates to respond to given stimulus material. The response may take the form of an email, letter, report, notice, or article. The question will change from year to year, but will focus on the skills of communicating factual information concisely.*

Section Three *consists of two optional questions. These questions require candidates to produce a short story.*

Section Four consists of one compulsory argumentative essay question. The format for the response may vary from year to year (for example, a speech, letter to Editor, essay).

2. Mark Allocation

(a) Section One is worth 25 marks.

(b) Section Two is worth 30 marks.

(c) *Section Three is worth 25 marks.*

(d) *Section Four is worth 25 marks.*

(e) *This paper is worth 105 marks, and contributes 50 per cent towards the final assessment.*

3. Award of Marks

Marks will be awarded under Profile Dimension 1, as follows:

In **Section One**, marks will be awarded for the ability to:

(a) use appropriate grammatical forms, and suitable punctuation and paragraphing to convey meaning clearly and with facility;

(b) communicate factual information clearly, concisely, and adequately in written instructions, reports and summaries in appropriate language.

In **Section Two**, marks will be awarded for the candidate's ability to:

(a) communicate factual information clearly, concisely, and adequately in written instructions, reports and summaries in appropriate language;

(b) obtain information accurately.

Marks will be awarded under Profile Dimension 2, as follows:

In **Section One *and Two***, marks will be awarded for the ability to:

(a) use appropriate grammatical forms, and suitable punctuation and paragraphing to convey meaning clearly and with facility;

(b) use appropriate language and communicate factual information clearly, concisely and adequately in writing letters, reports and summaries.

In **Section Three**, marks will be awarded for the ability to give aesthetic satisfaction to others in personal, creative and imaginative language.

In **Section Four**, marks will be awarded for the ability to communicate personal opinion clearly and cogently in language which effectively persuades or dissuades.

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

Paper 031, School-Based Assessment – (SBA – 21 per cent of Total Assessment)

A single SBA will be required to complete both aspects of the English Syllabus: English A and English B. A student who does English A only OR English B only OR English A and B will be required to submit ONLY one SBA. The SBA will be credited for both English A and B. The SBA is expected to be done by each student working as an **individual,** and as **a member of a small group** approved by the teacher where:

1. **individual** refers to each student, who has responsibility for his/her own portfolio;

2. **group** refers to 4 – 5 students sharing a general topic, who work together to discuss and solve problems, explain ideas, learn from peers, improve oral skills, and practise social skills and leadership roles.

The marks assigned to a student will consist of:

1. his/her individual mark (Plan of Investigation, Oral Presentation, Reflection, Participation Measure);

2. the mark assigned to the group (Quality of Group Behaviour, Written Report).

PORTFOLIO

Each student will create a Portfolio on an issue/topic/theme/event selected by the students in the group and approved by the teacher. The issue/topic/theme/event will also be orally presented. The issue/topic/theme/event selected **should allow for meaningful research and presentation**.

The Portfolio should include the following:

1. ***PLAN OF INVESTIGATION*** *– an introduction to the issue/topic/theme/event (A satisfactory response should be no more than 100 words).*

(a) *Why did you choose this issue/topic/theme/event?*
(b) *What are the expected benefits to you as a student of English?*
(c) *How do you intend to collect relevant information on your issue/topic/theme/event and use this in your presentation?*

2. ***PARTICIPATION MEASURE –*** A *measure of the candidate's individual participation assessed by self and teacher.*

3. ***INDICATORS OF GROUP ACTIVITY –*** *A minimum of THREE pieces of material, for example, print, audio, visual media must be collected and presented in the Portfolio and should address the issue/topic/theme/event selected. One of the three pieces must be print. These pieces will*

form the basis for the process of enquiry and group work activities (cognitive, psychomotor, affective) in which students will become aware of and practise English language skills.

4. ***REFLECTION*** *– THREE entries in which the student reflects on the issue/topic/ theme/ event selected should be completed. In the first entry the student must indicate how each piece of material helped to shape his or her thinking about the issue/topic/ theme/event. The second entry should discuss the use of language in the material selected and the third entry should state how the process of doing the SBA helped the student to become a better person. The reflection should be written in class under the teacher's supervision.*

5. ***WRITTEN REPORT*** *– A written report of the investigation should be a summary of the processes, procedures and outcomes of the research. It should include the material collected, reasons for selection and analysis of the material. A satisfactory report should be about 250-300 words in total.*

6. ***ORAL PRESENTATION*** *– A personal response related to issue/topic/ theme/ event should be delivered orally in 3 to 5 minutes. The oral presentation should be delivered predominately in standard English and in a genre of the student's choosing, for example, drama, poetry, prose, role play, speech, argument, exposition. The student should deliver a brief overview of the presentation including the genre chosen, the sources used and a comment on the kind of language used. A brief plan of the Oral Presentation must be submitted in the Portfolio.*

Additional guidelines for the School-Based Assessment are provided on pages 45–64.

MODERATION OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

School-Based Assessment Record Sheets are available on the CXC's website (www.cxc.org).

All School-Based Assessment Record of marks must be submitted online using the SBA data capture module of the Online Registration System (ORS). A sample of assignments will be requested by CXC for moderation purposes. These assignments will be re-assessed by CXC Examiners who moderate the School-Based Assessment. Teachers' marks may be adjusted as a result of moderation. The Examiners' comments will be sent to schools.

Copies of the students' assignment that are not submitted must be retained by the school until three months after publication by CXC of the examination results.

Paper 032, Alternative to School-Based Assessment (SBA) (2 hours – 21 per cent of Total Assessment)

Private candidates are required to write Paper 032, an Alternative Paper to the SBA. The Alternative Paper will assess the candidate's acquisition of skills in the same areas of the syllabus identified for the SBA.

This paper will consist of a guided critique of three pieces of stimulus material:

1. *An excerpt from a recent newspaper article on a topical issue;*
2. *A cartoon strip or lyrics to a song on the same topical issue;*
3. *A poem, short story, public speech (extract) on the same issue.*

Candidates will answer three compulsory questions. Two questions will require short answer responses and one question will require the creation of an imaginative piece in response to the theme selected.

Marks will be awarded for content, organization, effective use of language, voice or style, and word choice.

1. *Candidates will be required to respond to questions on:*

   (a) issues raised in the stimulus;
   (b) possible impact on the intended audience;
   (c) language techniques used.

2. *Candidates will be required to respond to questions about an oral presentation. Candidates must research and be aware of the characteristic features of an oral presentation.*

3. *Candidates will select ONE of the issues/situations raised in the stimulus and create a personal response to it. The response can take the form of drama, poetry, prose, lyrics to a song (a satisfactory response for Drama or Prose pieces should be no more than 2 pages in length).*

Tables 1 and 2 present a summary of the assessment scheme for the English A Syllabus.

ASSESSMENT GRIDS FOR ENGLISH A EXAMINATIONS

Table 1 - Marks Allocated to Examination Components

Paper	***Component (Questions)***	***Profile 1 Understanding***	***Profile 2 Expression***	***Raw Mark***	***%***
Paper 01	*1-60*	*60*	*-*	***60***	***29***
Paper 02	***Section One*** *Question 1*	*5*	*20*	***25***	***12***
	Section Two *Question 2*	*10*	*20*	***30***	***14***
	Section Three *Questions 3*	*-*	*25*	***25***	***12***
	Section Four *Questions 4*	*-*	*25*	***25***	***12***
Paper 031/SBA *Paper 032/ Alternate to SBA*		*-*	*45*	***45***	***21***
EXAMINATION	*-*	*75 (36%)*	*135 (64%)*	***210***	***100***

Table 2 - Weighting of Examination Components - English A

	Profile 1 Understanding	***Profile 2 Expression***	***Composite***
Paper 01 *(1 hour 30 minutes)*	*60*	*-*	***29%***
Paper 02 *(2 hours 45 minutes)*	*15*	*90*	***50%***
Paper 03 1 /SBA Paper 032/Alternate *(2 hours)*		*45*	***21%***
Examination *(4 hours 15 minutes)*	*75 (36%)*	*135 (64%)*	***100%***

♦ *REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE CANDIDATES*

Private candidates will be required to write Paper 01, Paper 02 and Paper 032, the Alternative to the SBA. A private candidate must enter through a school, a recognised educational institution or the Local Registrar's Office.

♦ *REGULATIONS FOR RESIT CANDIDATES*

Candidates may elect to resit the examination at any time. However, resit candidates who have earned a moderated score of 50 per cent of the score for the SBA may elect not to repeat this component, provided they rewrite the examination no later than two years immediately following their first attempt. These candidates must rewrite Papers 01 and 02 of the examination for the year in which they re-register. Resit candidates who have obtained a moderated score of less than 50 per cent of the score for the SBA must repeat the component at any subsequent sittings.

Resit candidates may enter through schools, recognised educational institutions or the Local Registrar's Office.

THE ENGLISH B EXAMINATION

INTRODUCTION

In English B, teachers guide students to explore how writers, poets and dramatists craft their work to influence our feelings and thoughts about life. Literature is a storehouse of humankind's collective imagination and ideas. As teachers guide students to explore the rich world of literature they are confronted with many facets of the human experience as presented by literary artists. Historical, current or future events may stimulate them to peer into the mirror of shared psychological and social realities. This exposure supports students forging national and personal identities and creates a heightened sense of appreciation for the commonalities and differences in our human experience.

The exploration of literature is intended to foster students' awareness on how writers create their literary worlds; to encourage students to make critical evaluations of those attitudes, values and beliefs that are portrayed, and to develop in students a sense of empathy as they see their own humanity reflected in literary characters and situations.

EXAMINATION

The English B examination is intended to provide a test of the skills outlined below and those general skills listed on pages 3 – 4 of the syllabus under Understanding (c). Together with the English A examinations, this will provide a complete test of the full range of skills which the integrated syllabus is designed to develop.

It is designed to be a test of candidates' acquisition of those skills that would enable them to understand how literature functions and to pursue the study of literature at an advanced level.

The examination is designed to test a range of skills which include the ability to:

1. respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgements, states of consciousness and other concepts *explored* in literature, and to relate these to everyday living;

2. describe (the outlining of relevant content), analyse (break down, select and comment on the significance of relevant details) and synthesise (bring together and condense in a new form) information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question);

3. communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism;

4. produce balanced critical analyses;

5. recognise the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour);

6. recognise and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text;

7. grasp concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

♦ CERTIFICATION

The syllabus is offered for General Proficiency certification. A candidate's performance will be indicated on the certificate by an overall numerical grade on a six-point scale as well as a letter grade for each of three profile dimensions: Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction.

♦ *DEFINITION OF PROFILE DIMENSIONS*

The knowledge and skills students are expected to develop on completion of this syllabus have been grouped under three profile dimensions:

1. *Drama.*

2. *Poetry.*

3. *Prose Fiction.*

1. Drama

This profile dimension will emphasise the study, teaching, and understanding of drama as a discrete literary *genre*. Although it shares literary elements with the other literary *genres*, it possesses elements that are unique to drama, for example:

(a) performance as its main vehicle;

(b) stage directions;

(c) character;

(d) spectacle;

(e) the development of character, theme, and atmosphere through elements such as lighting, costuming, stage props.

Such dramatic elements ought to be the primary focus of teaching and study.

2. Poetry

This profile dimension will emphasise the study, teaching, and understanding of poetry as a discrete literary *genre*. Although it shares literary elements with the two other literary *genres*, there are elements specific to poetry, such as:

(a) fixed forms, metre, rhythm and rhyme;

(b) the economy of language;

(c) the organic relationship between sound and sense;

(d) the figurative language employed to give the poem levels of meaning.

Such elements ought to be the primary focus of the teaching and study of poetry.

3. Prose Fiction

Prose Fiction is more often than not the most expansive and experimental of the literary genres and it is for many the most accessible. Following are some of the elements of prose fiction that must be studied, taught, and understood:

(a) narrative technique and the use of first-person and third-person narrators;

(b) structure, that is, the way in which a work of prose fiction is put together, for example, whether it is an unbroken narrative, or a narrative divided into chapters, or into larger sections or more than one narrative put together to form a longer narrative;

(c) the difference between narration and description;

(d) the presentation of humankind in a social setting;

(e) characterisation;

(f) themes.

Such elements ought to be the primary focus of the teaching and study of the novel and the short story.

In each of the three literary genres the following skills will be tested:

1. Understanding

(a) Knowledge of Text and Insight:

(i) Relevance and adequacy of content;

(ii) Relevance and accuracy of examples.

2. Expression

(a) Organisation of Response:

(i) Structure and development of responses;

(ii) Clear and logical argument.

(b) Quality of Language:

(i) Clarity and appropriateness of expression used;

(ii) Mechanics of writing (sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling).

♦ FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATIONS: ENGLISH B

The English B examination is offered at the General Proficiency level. The Assessment comprises three papers, Paper 01, Paper 02, and Paper 031 or Paper 032.

Papers 01 and 02 are assessed externally. Paper 031 is the School-Based Assessment (SBA) and is assessed internally by the teacher and moderated by CXC. Paper 032 is an alternative to the SBA and is intended for candidates registered as private candidates.

Paper 01 (1 hour 45 minutes – *29 per cent of Total Assessment*)

1. Composition of Paper

All questions are compulsory. This paper will consist of three questions, one question from each genre – drama, poetry and prose fiction. In each question candidates will be required to give approximately *5– 7 short answers*.

2. Mark Allocation

(a) *Twenty* marks will be allocated for each question in this paper.

(b) The total number of marks available for this paper is *60*.

(c) This paper contributes *29 per cent* to the whole examination.

3. Award of Marks

Marks will be awarded in each profile dimension for relevance and accuracy of content, relevance and accuracy of illustration, and quality and clarity of argument.

Paper 02 (2 hours 10 minutes – 50 per cent of Total Assessment)

1. Composition of Paper

This paper is divided into three sections:

(a) Section ONE – Drama (Shakespeare and Modern Drama). This section consists of TWO Type A questions, ONE on each text. *Thirty-five* marks are allocated for each question. Candidates must answer one question from this section.

(b) Section TWO – Poetry (a selection of 20 poems). *This section consists of two Type B questions, one generic question allowing candidates to use two appropriate choices from the prescribed poems and one question based on two named poems from the prescribed list. Thirty-five* marks are allocated for each question. Candidates must answer one question from this section.

(c) Section THREE – Prose Fiction (**EITHER** West Indian novel **OR** other novels in English **OR** West Indian short story and other short stories in English). *This section consists of FOUR questions: TWO Type A questions, ONE on each prescribed novel and two Type*

B questions, one generic question allowing candidates to use two appropriate choices from the prescribed short stories and one question based on two named short stories from the prescribed list. Thirty-five marks are allocated for each question. Candidates must answer one question from this section.

2. Number of Questions

This paper consists of 8 optional extended-essay questions arranged under *the* three sections outlined above. There are two types of questions in this paper:

(a) Type A – Questions that require knowledge and study of one text;

(b) Type B – Questions of comparison that require knowledge and study of 20 poems and 10 short stories.

Candidates will be required to use 2 poems and/or 2 short stories to respond to the questions in the respective sections.

3. Mark Allocation

Each question will be worth 35 marks. This paper is worth 105 marks.

4. Award of Marks

Candidates are expected to show knowledge, insight and clear and logical argument, and organisation of response.

Marks will be awarded for relevance and accuracy of content, relevance and accuracy of illustration and clear and logical argument. Marks will also be awarded for the structure and development of relevant ideas or points into coherent paragraphs, and for competence in the mechanics of writing.

5. Organisation of Paper 02

Drama [Section One]

Question 1 Type A question [35 marks]

Question 2 Type A question [35 marks]

Poetry [Section Two]

Question 1 Type B question [35 marks]

Question 2 Type B question [35 marks]

Prose Fiction [Section Three]

Novel

Question 1 Type A question [35 marks]

Question 2 Type A question [35 marks]

Short Stories

Question 5 Type B question [35 marks]

Question 6 Type B question [35 marks]

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

Paper 031, School-Based Assessment (SBA – 21 per cent of Total Assessment)

A single SBA will be required to complete both aspects of the English Syllabus: English A and English B. A student who does English A only OR English B only OR English A and B will be required to present ONLY one SBA. The SBA will be credited for both English A and B. The SBA is expected to be done by each student working as an **individual** and as **a member of a small group** approved by the teacher where:

1. **individual** refers to each student, who has responsibility for his/her own portfolio;

2. **group** refers to 4 – 5 students sharing a general topic, who work together to discuss and solve problems, explain ideas, learn from peers, improve oral skills, and practise social skills and leadership roles.

The marks assigned to a student will consist of:

1. his/her individual mark (Plan of Investigation, Oral Presentation, Reflection, Participation Measure);

2. the mark assigned to the group (Quality of Group Behaviour, Written Report).

PORTFOLIO

Each student will create a Portfolio on an issue/topic/theme/event selected by the students in the group and approved by the teacher. The issue/topic/theme/event will also be orally presented. The issue/topic/theme/event selected **should allow for meaningful research and presentation**.

The Portfolio should include the following:

1. ***PLAN OF INVESTIGATION*** *– an introduction to the issue/topic/theme/event (A satisfactory response should be no more than 100 words).*

(a) *Why did you choose this issue/topic/theme/event?*

(b) *What are the expected benefits to you as a student of English?*

(c) *How do you intend to collect relevant information on your issue/topic/theme/event and use this in your presentation?*

2. ***PARTICIPATION MEASURE –*** A *measure of the candidate's individual participation assessed by self and teacher.*

3. ***INDICATORS OF GROUP ACTIVITY –*** *A minimum of THREE pieces of material, for example, print, audio, visual media must be collected and presented in the Portfolio and should address the issue/topic/theme/event selected. One of the three pieces must be print. These pieces will form the basis for the process of enquiry and group work activities (cognitive, psychomotor, affective) in which students will become aware of and practise English language skills.*

4. ***REFLECTION*** *– THREE entries in which the student reflects on the issue/topic/ theme/event selected should be completed. In the first entry the student must indicate how each piece of data helped shape his or her thinking about the issue/topic/ theme/event. The second entry should discuss the use of language in the material selected and the third entry should state how the process of doing the SBA helped the student to become a better person. The reflection should be written in class under the teacher's supervision.*

5. ***WRITTEN REPORT*** *– A written report of the investigation should be a summary of the processes, procedures and outcomes of the research. It should include the material collected, reasons for selection and analysis of the material. A satisfactory report should be about 250-300 words in total.*

6. ***ORAL PRESENTATION*** *– A personal response related to issue/topic/ theme/ event should be delivered orally in 3 to 5 minutes. The oral presentation should be delivered predominately in standard English and in a genre of the student's choosing, for example, drama, poetry, prose, role play, speech, argument, exposition. The student should deliver a brief overview of the presentation including the genre chosen, the sources used and a comment on the kind of language used in the data. A brief plan of the Oral Presentation must be submitted in the Portfolio.*

Additional guidelines for the School-Based Assessment are provided on pages 45-64.

MODERATION OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

School-Based Assessment Record Sheets are available on the CXC's website (www.cxc.org).

All School-Based Assessment Record of marks must be submitted online using the SBA data capture module of the Online Registration System (ORS). A sample of assignments will be requested by CXC for moderation purposes. These assignments will be re-assessed by CXC Examiners who moderate the School-Based Assessment. Teachers' marks may be adjusted as a result of moderation. The Examiners' comments will be sent to schools.

Copies of the students' assignment that are not submitted must be retained by the school until three months after publication by CXC of the examination results.

Paper 032, Alternative to School-Based Assessment (SBA) – (2 hours - 21 per cent of Total Assessment)

Private candidates are required to write Paper 032, an Alternative Paper to the SBA. The Alternative Paper will assess the candidate's acquisition of skills in the same areas of the syllabus identified for the SBA.

This paper will consist of a guided critique of three pieces of stimulus material:

1. *An excerpt from a recent newspaper article on a topical issue;*
2. *A cartoon strip or lyrics to a song on the same topical issue;*
3. *A poem, short story, public speech (extract) on the same issue.*

Candidates will answer three compulsory questions. Two questions will require short answer responses and one question will require the creation of an imaginative piece in response to the theme selected. Marks will be awarded for content, organization, effective use of language, voice or style; and word choice.

1. *Candidates will be required to respond to questions on:*

   (a) *issues raised in the stimulus;*
   (b) *possible impact on the intended audience;*
   (c) *language techniques used.*

2. *Candidates will be required to respond to questions about oral presentations. Candidates must research and be aware of the characteristic features of oral presentations.*

3. *Candidates will select ONE of the issues/situations raised in the stimulus and create a personal response to it. The response can take the form of drama, poetry, prose, lyrics to a song (a satisfactory response should be no more than 2 pages in length).*

Tables 1 and 2 present a summary of the assessment scheme for the English B Syllabus.

ASSESSMENT GRIDS FOR ENGLISH B EXAMINATIONS

Table 1: Marks Allocated to Examination Components

Proficiency	*Profile*	*Paper 01*	*Paper 02*	*Paper 031/032*	*Composite*
General	*Drama*	*20 (9.5%)*	*35 (16.67%)*	*15 (7%)*	*70 (33.33%)*
	Poetry	*20 (9.5%)*	*35 (16.67%)*	*15 (7%)*	*70 (33.33%)*
	Prose Fiction	*20 (9.5%)*	*35 (16.67%)*	*15 (7%)*	*70 (33.33%)*
	Total	*60 (29%)*	*105 (50%)*	*45 (21%)*	*210 (100%)*
	Time	*1 hour 45 minutes*	*2 hours 10 minutes*	*2 hours*	*5 hours 55 minutes*

Table 2: Weighting of Examination Components – English B

		Drama	*Poetry*	*Prose Fiction*	*Components*
Paper 01	*1 hour 45 minutes*	*9.5%*	*9.5%*	*9.5%*	*29%*
Paper 02	*2 hours 10 minutes*	*16.67%*	*16.67%*	*16.67%*	*50%*
Paper 031/ Paper 032	*- 2 hours*	*7%*	*7%*	*7%*	*21%*
Examination	*5 hours 55 minutes*	*33.33%*	*33.33%*	*33.33%*	*100%*

♦ *REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE CANDIDATES*

Private candidates will be required to write Paper 01, Paper 02 and Paper 032, the Alternative to the SBA. A private candidate must enter through a school, a recognised educational institution or the Local Registrar's Office.

♦ *REGULATIONS FOR RESIT CANDIDATES*

Candidates may elect to resit the examination at any time. However, resit candidates who have earned a moderated score of 50 per cent of the score for the SBA may elect not to repeat this component, provided they rewrite the examination no later than two years immediately following their first attempt. These candidates must rewrite Papers 01 and 02 of the examination for the year in which they re-register. Resit candidates who have obtained a moderated score of less than 50 per cent of the score for the SBA must repeat the component at any subsequent sittings.

Resit candidates may enter through schools, recognised educational institutions or the Local Registrar's Office.

♦ PRESCRIBED TEXTS FOR ENGLISH B

TEXTS PRESCRIBED FOR THE JUNE 2018 – JANUARY 2023 EXAMINATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS

TEXT	***AUTHOR OR EDITOR***
DRAMA ***Two Questions will be set***	
The Tempest	*William Shakespeare*
Ti-Jean and his Brothers	*Derek Walcott*
POETRY ***Two Questions will be set***	
Selections from A World of Poetry for CXC (New Edition)	*Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Mark McWatt*

<u>Poems Prescribed for the JUNE 2018 – JANUARY 2023 Examinations are as Follows</u>

Two type B Questions will be set

TEXT	***AUTHOR***
An African Thunderstorm	*David Rubadiri*
Once Upon a Time	Gabriel Okara
Birdshooting Season	*Olive Senior*
West Indies, U.S.A.	Stewart Brown
Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge	William Wordsworth
Orchids	Hazel Simmons-McDonald
The Woman Speaks to the Man who has Employed Her Son	Lorna Goodison
It is the Constant Image of your Face	Dennis Brutus
God's Grandeur	Gerard Manley Hopkins
A Stone's Throw	Elma Mitchell
Test Match Sabina Park	Stewart Brown
Theme for English B	Langston Hughes
Dreaming Black Boy	James Berry
My Parents	*Stephen Spender*
Dulce et Decorum Est	Wilfred Owen
This is the Dark Time, My Love	Martin Carter
Ol'Higue	Mark McWatt
Mirror	*Sylvia Plath*
South	Kamau Brathwaite
Little Boy Crying	*Mervyn Morris*

PROSE FICTION

Novel – Two Type A questions will be set.

West Indian

Breath, Eyes, Memory	*Edwidge Danticat*
To Kill a Mocking Bird	*Harper Lee*

Short Story – Two Type B Questions will be set from the ten named short stories

Selections from A World of Prose for CXC (New Edition)	*David Williams and Hazel Simmons-McDonald*

Short Stories Prescribed for the JUNE 2018 – JANUARY 2023 Examinations are as Follows

TEXT	***AUTHOR***
The Two Grandmothers	*Olive Senior*
Blackout	Roger Mais
Emma	Carolyn Cole
The Man of the House	Frank O'Connor
Blood Brothers	*John Wickham*
The Day the World Almost Came to an End	Pearl Crayton
The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream	Olive Senior
Berry	Langston Hughes
Mom Luby and the Social Worker	Kristin Hunter
To Da-duh, in Memoriam	Paule Marshall

TEXTS PRESCRIBED FOR THE JUNE 2023 – JANUARY 2027 EXAMINATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS

TEXT	***AUTHOR***
DRAMA ***Four Type A Questions will be set***	
Twelfth Night	*William Shakespeare*
Anansi	*Alistaire Campbell*
POETRY ***Two Type B Questions will be set***	
Selections from A World of Poetry (New Edition)	*Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Mark McWatt*

Poems Prescribed for the JUNE 2023–JANUARY 2027 Examinations are as Follows

TEXT	***AUTHOR***
An African Thunderstorm	David Rubadiri
Once Upon a Time	Gabriel Okara
Little Boy Crying	Mervyn Morris
West Indies, U.S.A.	Stewart Brown
Sonnet Composed Upon Westminister Bridge	William Wordsworth
Birdshooting Season	*Olive Senior*
The Woman Speaks to the Man who has Employed Her Son	Lorna Goodison
It is the Constant Image of your Face	Dennis Brutus
A Lesson for this Sunday	Derek Walcott
A Stone's Throw	Elma Mitchell
Test Match Sabina Park	Stewart Brown
My Parents	Stephen Spender
Landscape Painter, Jamaica	*Vivian Virtue*
Dulce et Decorum Est	Wilfred Owen
This is the dark time, my love	Martin Carter
Ol'Higue	Mark McWatt
Mirror -	Sylvia Plath
South	Kamau Brathwaite
Death be Not Proud	*John Donne*
Dreaming Black Boy	*James Berry*

PROSE FICTION

Novel – Four Type A questions will be set.

For the Life of Laetitia	*Merle Hodge*
Animal Farm	*George Orwell*

Short Story – Two Type B questions will be set from the ten named short stories.

Selections from A World of Prose for CXC (New Edition)	*David Williams and Hazel Simmons-McDonald*

Short Stories Prescribed for the JUNE 2023 – JANUARY 2027 Examinations are as Follows

TEXT	***AUTHOR***
Raymond's Run	*Tony Cade Bambara*
Blood Brothers	*John Wickham*
The Man of the House	Frank O'Connor
Georgia and Them There United States	Velma Pollard
The Two Grandmothers	Olive Senior
Berry	Langston Hughes
Mom Luby and the Social Worker	Kristin Hunter
To Da-duh, in Memoriam	Paule Marshall
What Happened?	*Austin Clarke*
Mint Tea	*Christine Craig*

♦ *SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT*

School-Based Assessment is an integral part of student assessment in the course covered by this syllabus. It is intended to assist students in acquiring certain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are associated with the subject. The activities for the School-Based Assessment are linked to the syllabus and should form part of the learning activities to enable the student to achieve the objectives of the syllabus.

During the course of study for the subject, students obtain marks for the competence they develop and demonstrate in undertaking their School-Based Assessment assignments. These marks contribute to the final marks and grades that are awarded to students for their performance in the examination.

The guidelines provided in this syllabus for selecting appropriate tasks are intended to assist teachers and students in selecting assignments that are valid for the purpose of School-Based Assessment. The guidelines provided for the assessment of these assignments are intended to assist teachers in awarding marks that are reliable estimates of the achievement of students in the School-Based Assessment component of the course. In order to ensure that the scores awarded by teachers are in line with the CXC standards, the Council undertakes the moderation of a sample of the School-Based Assessment assignments marked.

School-Based Assessment provides an opportunity to individualise a part of the curriculum to meet the needs of students. It facilitates feedback to the student at various stages of the experience. This helps to build the self-confidence of students as they proceed with their studies. School-Based Assessment also facilitates the development of the critical skills and abilities that are emphasised by this CSEC subject and enhances the validity of the examination on which candidate performance is reported. School-Based Assessment, therefore, makes a significant and unique contribution to the development of relevant skills and the testing and rewarding of students for the development of those skills.

The Caribbean Examinations Council seeks to ensure that the School-Based Assessment scores are valid and reliable estimates of accomplishment. The guidelines provided in this syllabus are intended to assist in doing so.

Features of the SBA Tasks Appropriate for English A and English B

1. *SBA tasks should provide opportunities and space to enable all secondary students to:*

   (a) ***produce*** *language (spoken, written) for a wide variety of purposes;*

   (b) ***understand*** *language (spoken, written) as used in homes, schools, the community, the market place, and the playing field;*

   (c) ***use*** *language as a principal tool in their cognitive, metacognitive and affective development and growth.*

2. *SBA tasks should motivate each student to engage in searching for relevant information. That is:*

   (a) every student in the English programme should be required to ***search***, ***collect*** *and* ***record*** *relevant information (as is presently done in real life).*

   (b) the tasks should involve distinctive activities usually undertaken in English A and

English B. However, both English A and B are essentially social events. They both are primarily concerned with being lucid in oral communications; with using language and bodily expressions which are easily and readily produced or received in classrooms, in playing fields and in the community; with the cognitive, the affective and the metacognitive facets of all human behaviours; explicitly and implicitly, privately and publicly, and randomly and purposively.

Thus, each student working as a member of a small group (4 or 5) is expected to participate in a set of group activities, one of which will be assessed by the teacher.

(c) every student is expected to engage in self-to-self transactions which may assume many tangible forms such as keeping diaries, making and keeping notebooks, writing poems to oneself, engaging in a blogfest, reflecting-restructuring-recording images of one's changing perspectives on real-life issues, monitoring and evaluating how the individual solves problems, how the individual learns how to learn and how to project useful affective states onto cognitive tasks.

3. Some of the tasks (SBA) should be done by the students under normal classroom conditions and supervised by the classroom teacher.

4. Every student has a carefully defined role in the SBA assignment:

(a) *Displaying (and thereby defining), through oral and written language, his or her communicative independence.*

(b) *Analysing texts (oral and written) that have been identified, selected and recorded as expressions of creativity and imagination.*

(c) *Self-monitoring the development and growth of the abilities to reflect, plan, review, evaluate and redesign.*

(d) *Evaluating the impact of a learning strategy (used in English) in terms of:*

(i) *the issue to be resolved and making sense of the complexities and subtleties of the texts being analysed; and*

(ii) *the cognitive and affective development of the student and deepening the student's perception of him/herself.*

***IMPORTANT** – The teacher is responsible for ensuring that each student's work is his or her own work. **Plagiarism and cheating will be penalised**. A simple way to establish authenticity is to insist on check points for students to show how their work is progressing.*

Teachers may also use brief oral questions to verify that candidates did indeed engage in the research activities. Some teachers may require candidates to submit preliminary drafts along with the final version, although only the final version will be assessed.

GUIDELINES TO TEACHERS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

The guidelines for the assessment of the School-Based Assessment (SBA) for English A are outlined on pages 29–31 and pages 38–39 for English B of the syllabus. It is required of all candidates and will be marked by the teacher in accordance with the criteria set out in the SBA mark scheme on pages 54–56 of the syllabus.

The English A and B School-Based Assessment (SBA) is to be marked out of a total of 45 which is 21 per cent of the overall grade.

The SBA assignments for English A and English B must be **planned**, **researched**, **conducted**, **written** or **word-processed**, and **reviewed** as suggested below:

1. The assignment must be presented as a portfolio.

2. Some sections of the portfolio must be done in the classroom by the student under supervised conditions.

3. Other sections of the portfolio should be done according to the **student's schedule (see page 48)**. This schedule should be prepared by the student listing his/her planned activities and timelines for conducting the assignment. The schedule must be approved by the teacher.

4. Some of the sections listed in the student's schedule may be done as a small group activity. The members of the working group of **4 – 5 students** must be approved by the teacher.

An example of how the teacher can manage this process is provided below.

<u>Establishing ownership of work done</u>

This task was done **as a classroom assignment**, individually and independently, by each student **under the supervision of the teacher**.

It was **formatively** assessed by the teacher and was returned to the student with appropriate feedback comments.

The final version of this task was written up by the student again **under the supervision of the teacher**.

1. First version written: _____
   Day/Month/Year

2. Feedback comments returned to student: _____
   Day/Month/Year

3. Final version written: _____
   Day/Month/Year

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Day/Month/Year

Student Schedule

Schedule drawn up by student for conducting English SBA assignment

Major Activities	Estimated Time for Activity	Persons Involved
1.	Weeks: Days: Hours:	
2.		
3.		
4.		

Name of Student: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Day/Month/Year

Approved by Teacher:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Day/Month/Year

Small Group Activities

In conducting my English assignment, I plan to collect relevant data by:

1. **searching** Internet sources and **printing** relevant pages;
2. **interviewing** persons in schools, homes, market places, and the community and **recording** their responses;
3. **collecting articles** written in newspapers over a given period and **analysing** their content; (name activity)

I wish to conduct these activities working with a small group of students who plan to do similar assignments or activities. The members of the group are:

Name	Assignment
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Name of Student: _____

Date: _____

Suggested Ways of Working with Large Classes

1. Teacher-led discussion classes/students share knowledge and generate knowledge while cultivating good speech habits. Care must be taken to include as many students as possible in the oral aspects.

2. After one session of managed discussion, the class writes out the main issues and views shared – without comment.

3. Brainstorming sessions on topics which draw out ideas for later in-depth big discussion.

4. Division into long-term small-groups with individual responsibilities for executing aspects of an assignment.

5. Individual assignments and instructions with guidelines for completion and assessment rubrics. This allows attention to be devoted to individuals while small groups are working in the room.

6. Creation of small groups – (one for each period of teaching). The teacher works with one group per period to give them help in reading or completing an assignment and spends time with each group in the week. This is particularly useful in helping with essay writing, for example, structuring an essay.

7. Introduction of tasks to be done. Involve the class in outlining the related activities.

Together:

(a) construct an appropriate time-line;
(b) encourage students to accept responsibility for speaking to particular parts.

The Role of the Teacher in Managing School-Based Assessment

Since the SBA is an integral part of the evaluation of the syllabus, teachers are expected to guide and monitor students' progress and assess the finished product according to the criteria set out in the mark scheme.

The teacher is expected to:

1. inform students of the areas available for assignment;

2. approve students' assignment plans;

3. inform students about the deadlines for completion and submission of the assignment;

4. advise students on the nature of the task and the scope and depth of research required to complete it;

5. advise students on the availability of resource material;

6. *monitor students' progress by advising them on the quality of their work in progress and suggesting ways to improve quality;*

7. *use techniques such as review of students' progress reports and preliminary drafts to establish authenticity of their work;*

8. *collect and mark the assignments;*

9. *keep a record of students' marks and submit these together with samples of work as requested by CXC.*

The Role of the Student in Managing School-Based Assessment

Students may use different kinds of texts (literary and non-literary):

Biographies	Advertisements
Histories	Brochures
Novels	Cartoon Strips
Poems	Diaries
Plays	Magazines
Reports	Newspaper articles
Short Stories	Pamphlets
Speeches (public)	

Students should learn how to interrogate the text.

Example:

1. As you read the "text", practise:

   (a) thinking about what you are reading;
   (b) reflecting on what you are reading;
   (c) asking yourself questions about what you are reading;
   (d) making guesses about what you are reading.

2. Practise close reading by:

   (a) outlining key points of what you read;
   (b) paraphrasing what you read;
   (c) predicting what you will read next.

3. Unravel how the paragraph is organised:

   (a) A main idea followed by a set of minor points; or
   (b) Two or more contrasting ideas; or
   (c) A sequence of activities.

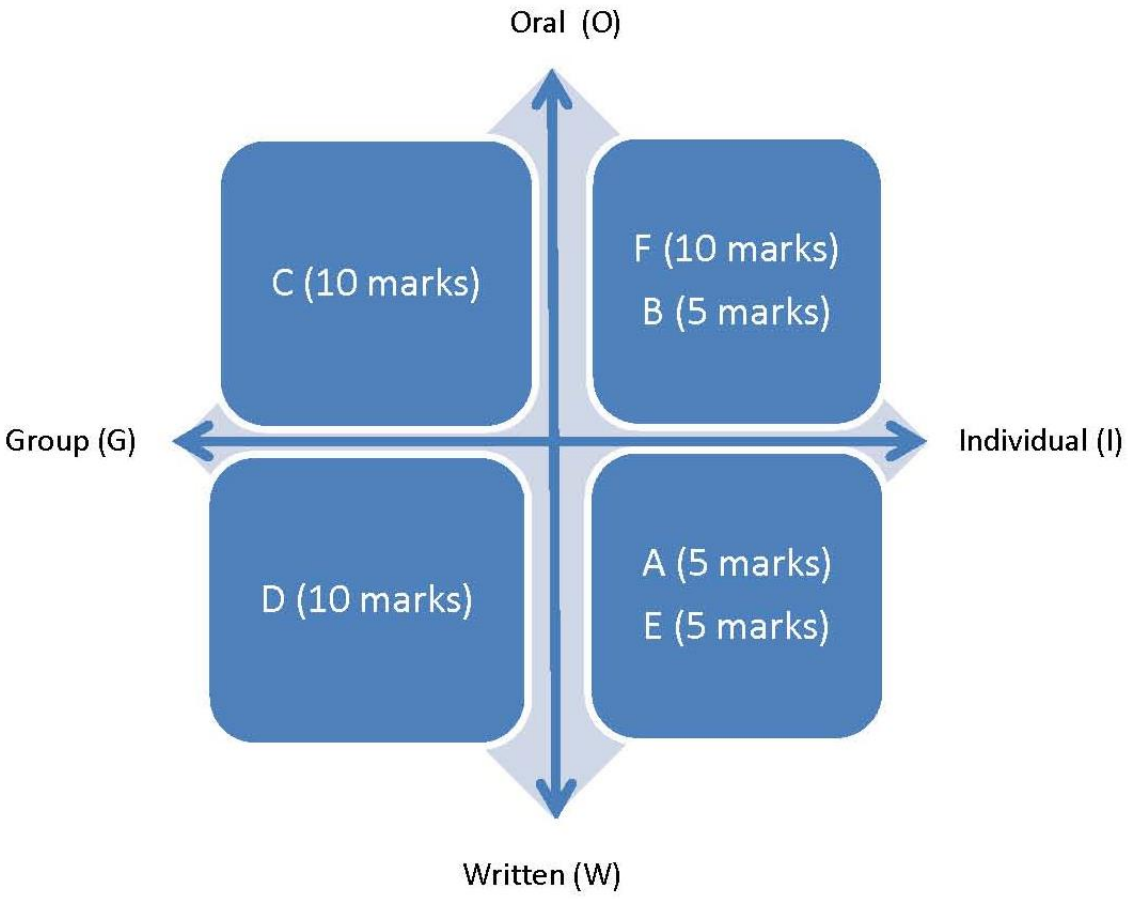
4. In "listening and speaking", you must always:

   (a) speak to the purpose;
   (b) keep the audience in focus;
   (c) notice the context in which you are participating.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The SBA portfolio is internally assessed by the teacher, and then externally moderated by a CXC-appointed examiner using assessment criteria that relate to specified objectives of English A and English B.

Map of Assessment Criteria



♦ *CRITERIA FOR MARKING THE SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT*

A. SCORING RUBRIC FOR PLAN OF INVESTIGATION

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Introduction

You are expected to:

(a) propose a title for the investigation/the inquiry/the research/the survey;

(b) state in manageable and specific terms, the tasks to be done;

(c) give brief reasons for selecting and investigating this topic.

(i) Title of topic:

[1 mark]

_____

_____

_____

(ii) Tasks to be done:

[2 marks]

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(iii) Reasons for selecting topic

[1 mark]

Total = 4 marks

2. **Ways of collecting material**
Ways of applying English language skills to study 'texts'
Ways of making inferences and drawing conclusions

You are expected to

(a) state what material should be collected and used;

(b) how the material will be investigated, probed and researched by means of **discussions**, **consultations**, **interactions** among students, **exchanging viewpoints**, **explaining perspectives**, **cross referencing**, **comparing two or more versions**, **cooperatively** searching for solutions, and **evaluating peer contributions**;

(c) propose how to obtain valid conclusions.

(i) Nature of the material/Sources of the material

[1 mark]

(iii) Some English language skills that may be used in analysing the material (for example, identifying main ideas, writer's techniques, accurate use of words, tone, register, connotative and denotative use of words)

[1 mark]

(iv) Some conclusions that may be obtained:

[1 mark]

Total = 3 marks

3. **Ensuring the soundness of techniques used in your investigation.**

You are expected to:

(a) understand and appreciate many things happening in school, the community and the world;

(b) share these experiences with others.

These two objectives are usually achieved by **engaging in systematic and well-planned thinking** within small groups.

Thus, the "**soundness**" of the techniques used depends on

(i) how **appropriately** were the texts selected from various sources;

(ii) how **carefully** were the 'texts' investigated using English language skills; and

(iii) how **thoughtfully** were the findings selected.

List THREE factors that can interfere with the soundness of the conclusions of your SBA research.

[2 marks]

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe ONE way you plan to minimise the effects of ONE of the factors listed above.

[1 mark]

_____

Total = 3 marks

Total marks for Plan of Investigation = 10 marks.

Scale down to 5 marks (10 ÷ 2) = 5 marks.

B. SCORING RUBRIC FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION

Use this rating scale below to help your teacher to assess your participation.
For these experiences, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

		Disagree	Uncertain	Agree
1.	I know what I am expected to do to work well in a team	-1	0	+1
2.	It is easy to focus on what is taking place in my group	-1	0	+1
3.	In the group, I feel self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy.	-1	0	+1
4.	I know how to manage how I behave in the group	-1	0	+1
5.	I always manage my tasks on time and thoroughly	-1	0	+1

Total = 5 marks

The Total Mark for Individual Participation will be 5 marks based on the responses obtained from the rating scale above.

This scale should be completed by the student in discussion with the teacher on two different occasions. After the first assessment, discussion should take place and feedback should be given to the student to allow for improvement. The second assessment should produce the final mark out of five agreed on by the student and teacher.

Guidance to the Student for Individual Participation

Think of your experiences as you worked and participated in the activities of your small group.

Especially, reflect on 4 things:

1. How your mind kept wandering away from what the group was doing.
2. How you felt when it was your turn to share your ideas with your group.
3. How you listened to what each person was saying and waited your turn to speak.
4. How you became involved in sharing what each person was doing.

C. SCORING RUBRIC FOR QUALITY OF WITHIN – GROUP ACTIVITIES

Name of Group:_____
Date: _____

Facets of process		Rating Scale				Score
		0	1	2	3	
1	**Communication**	Plan of work not known to all members	The plan of work exists and may be seen, if requested	All members have seen and read notes of the plan of work	All members have seen, and discussed the plan of work	
2	**Collaboration**	No awareness of what other groups are doing	Some interest in what other groups are doing	Group discussing work of other groups	Members seek out and are aware of the work of other groups	
3	**Leadership**	Same person leads group all the time	Leadership of group is rotated	Leadership is rotated and members feel comfortable with it	Each member willingly takes his/her place in turn	
4	**Norms of Group**	Not agreed on a set of norms for the group	Norms are written for the group, but not observed	Norms are written and mostly observed	All members feel responsible for norms being observed	
5	**Diaries/Journals/Notebooks**	Not open to persons inside the group	Available to some members of the group	Diaries are helpful to all in the group – knowing what is being done	Diaries tell rich story of the activities in the group	
6	**Reflection**	Group members show no evidence of reflecting on their work	Reflection on work is practised at the end of each activity or session	Members undertook work in groups, and reflected on work during sessions	Reflection on members' work was an ongoing focus of group	
7	**Interaction**	There is misunderstanding among members. Members feel distant	Members are beginning to trust one another and resolving misunderstandings	Members are actively creating interaction with each other and displaying trust and respect	Members respect and appreciate each other; and show empathy to all members	
8	**Equality**	Hierarchy exists within group	Some members have more influence than others	Members support equality, but not always seen	Equality is evident in all behaviour of group members	
9	**Expert Voices**	Members rely on what they already know	Members bring some literature only	Members identify experts, books, visual media, and bring some to sessions	Members actively seek and invite expert voices	
10	**Experimentation**	No interest in trying new strategies or materials	Hesitant to try new strategies	Members use some new strategies	Members share results (obtained from using new strategies) among themselves	
Total marks for Quality of Within-Group Activities = 30 marks Scale down to 10 marks					**Total Score**	

Score awarded group = $\frac{Total\ Score}{3}$ = _____* (*Round up to the next nearest whole number)

Name of Teacher: _____ Time/Date: _____

Definitions for Quality of Within-Group Activities

	Facet of Process	Definition
1	**Communication**	The means and processes under which information is constructed and transmitted from person to person, within and among groups, by speaking, writing and non-verbally.
2	**Collaboration**	The social conditions of learning, developing affective skills, and solving problems relating to acquiring language skills. Group members each work towards a common goal; this interdependence motivates and serves to develop positive interpersonal and intrapersonal skills within and among groups.
3	**Leadership**	The role played by the chairperson, the recorder of notes, as well as other members during group meetings.
4	**Norms of Group**	The ways of behaving agreed by group members. Six essential ways of behaving in a group are suggested (Slavin 1987): (a) Focusing on the topic (b) Listening and respecting the opinions of other members of the group (c) Recognising all group members as equals (d) Rotating leadership roles among all members (e) Giving constructive advice (f) Sharing workload
5	**Diaries/Journals/ Notebooks**	The systematic recording of the thoughts, ideas, feelings, plans, activities, phrases and sentences deemed worthy of being recorded and committed to memory, by a single person or group of persons.
6	**Reflection**	The bringing together in "easily accessible" memory, the mental images of what the individual student **thinks**, **feels** and **does** as he/she participates in group activities. These mental images are then manipulated – analysed, compared, applied, and evaluated anew – in order to impact on the individual.
7	**Interaction**	The act of enabling persons within a group to engage in two-way flows of thoughts, feelings and emotions, so that any one person can act upon and influence the thoughts, or feelings or emotions of another person, and reciprocally.
8	**Equality**	The state which exists among members of a group where the contributions of each member are assumed to be of equal worth in achieving the two main objectives of the group, namely, maintaining the wellbeing of the group and cooperatively finding solutions to problems.
9	**Expert Voices**	The oral and written language by trained teachers, experienced adults, professional speakers and writers; in the form of texts, speeches, audio recordings, visual media recordings, poems, short stories, emails and other electronic sources.
10	**Experimentation**	The group members individually or as a group engaged in planning, constructing and then testing strategies in order to improve their analysis.

D. SCORING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN REPORT

Facets of Task	Rating Scale				
	0	1	2	3	4
1. Content of report	Findings inappropriate Source of material unclear	Key points not clearly identified Limited coverage of what was done Report inadequate	Context of task implied, not stated Some important key issues not addressed Key issues mentioned Repetitious in parts Vague in parts	Sources of material referenced Important issues addressed Key issues discussed and adequately developed	Context explicitly stated Tasks for each student are clearly linked to group task Issues are clearly defined and fully explored
2. Evidence of investigation/inquiry/research	Many responses misrepresent the issue Inadequate use of referencing	Experiences of participants not well used Weak use of sources Summary inadequate	All analysis focuses on the key issues Discussion well focused Analysis probes patterns of text Ample evidence of research	Excellent summary, analysis of text focuses on key issues Sources well used and documented Significant evidence of research	
3. Language use and vocabulary	Many basic grammatical errors which affect the readability of the report	Basic words not used well Limited range of grammatical expressions Paragraphs contain little cohesion Sentences are stilted	Good control of basic grammar Good use of appropriate words Paragraphs carefully constructed Varied sentence structure	Excellent use of language Few grammatical errors Well developed paragraphs Accurate spelling Wide range of sentences Report clearly organised	

Total marks for Written Report = 10 marks

Score awarded = _____ + _____+ _____ = _____

Name of student: _____

Name of assessor: _____

Time/Date of assessment: _____ /_____
Time Date

Guidance to the Student for the Written Report

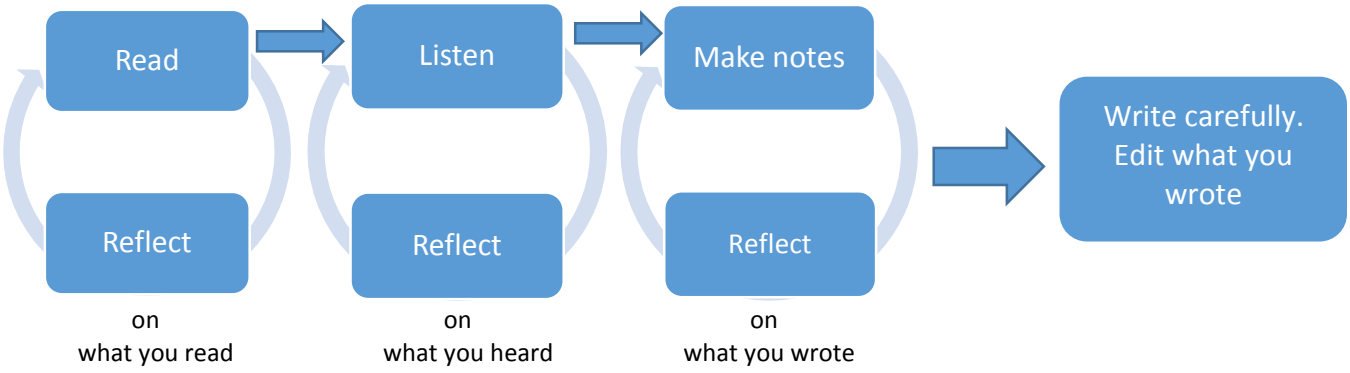
Written Report

What should you do in order to enhance your performance on the Written Report?

In your personal notebook:

1. Take notes of what your group members say about the 'text' you selected.
2. Summarise the text you read, and cite the 'text' accurately.
3. Write sentences that support what you **think** or **feel** about the 'texts'.
4. Use your personal experiences to tell what you think or feel about the texts used in your group.
5. Write your opinions boldly. However, find facts and opinions expressed by other persons to support your opinions.

Follow this rule:



E. SCORING RUBRIC FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

Rating Scale					
Facets of Tasks	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Fluency of delivery	jerky, halting	choppy fragmentary long pauses	awkward but acceptable intonation; continuous; natural	Intelligible; clear; smooth; well-paced flow	
2. Structure, Comprehensibility, and development of topic	connections with topic/issue unclear incomprehensible not depicted key issues style of presentation does not always aid in depicting the key issues	Connections with topic/issue unclear; Very incoherent in parts; Utterance incorrect	Limited comprehension lacks elaboration; Slightly incoherent in parts; Somewhat limited;	Coherent; Key issues well developed Well expressed in many parts; very effective style	Clear organization of ideas; Sustained treatment of topic/theme/issues; Style very effective and impactful in communicating
3. Language use and vocabulary	lacks basic words; lack specificity; very many errors in words and sentences	Ideas limited to inadequate words and jargon Lacks specificity Limited range of grammar	Adequate style of presentation Basic sentences are used; Control of basic grammatical structures; Reliance on practical expressions;	Accurate use of grammar Effective use of grammar and vocabulary; High degree of fluency; Rich vocabulary	

Score awarded = _____ + _____+ _____ = _____

Name of student: _____

Name of assessor: _____

Time/Date of assessment:_____ /_____
Time Date

Guidance to the Student for the Oral Presentation

Oral Presentation

What should you do in order to enhance your performance on the Oral Presentation?

1. **View a copy** of the Scoring Rubrics for Oral Presentation.

2. **Read and discuss** within your small group the concepts defined for each of the three facets and the behaviour expected for each level of the facets.

3. **Practise your oral presentation** skills in about 3 or more ways:

   (a) before a full-length mirror at home;
   (b) before an adult (preferably, a parent), giving you eedback;
   (c) use an audio recording of an oral presentation, listen to the recording two or more times, and perform a self-assessment using the Scoring Rubric.

F. SCORING RUBRIC FOR REFLECTION

The assessment of this component will be based on the following:

1. Theme factors – critical knowledge related to theme, how material shaped thinking.
2. Language factors – analysis of language, good organisation.
3. Process factors – personal value, benefits clearly identified.

Reflection on topic/issue/theme ,use of language, process and its effects

Candidate produces a reflection that integrates the treatment of the issue in the three pieces, with excellent analysis of language and discussion of the process and its effect.	5 marks
Candidate produces a reflection that addresses the issue with good use of language and some discussion of the process and its effect.	4 marks
Candidate produces a reflection on the issue, with satisfactory use of language but no discussion of the process and its effect.	3 marks
Candidate produces a reflection on the issue with unsatisfactory use of language and no discussion of the process and its effect.	2 marks
Candidate produces a reflection that mentions the issue, with very weak use of language and no discussion of the process and its effect.	1 mark

Total = 5 marks

♦ SUGGESTED READING LIST

(For selecting literature for class study and library reading)

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
NOVELS			
Achebe, Chinua	Arrow of God	Heinemann	5
Adams, Douglas	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	Ballantine Books of Canada	3 and 4
Adams, Richard	Watership Down	Penguin	3, 4 and 5
Adler, Elizabeth	The King's Shadow	Tandem Library	4 and 5
Aidoo, Ama	The Dilemma of a Ghost/Anowa	Longman	4 and 5
Aiken, Joan	Night Fall	Holt, Rinehart & Winston	4
Akpabot, Anne	Aduke Makes Her Choice	Nelson	4 and 5
Alcott, Louisa May	Eight Cousins	1st World Library Literary Society	1 and 2
Allen, Eric	The Latchkey Children	Heinemann Educational	1
Allende, Isabel	City of the Beasts	Harper Collins	3, 4 and 5
Altmann, Martina	Jeremiah, Devil of the Woods	Pan Macmillan	1 and 2
Amadi, Elechi	The Concubine	Heinemann	4 and 5
Amis, Kingsley	Lucky Jim	Victor Gollancz	4 and 5
Anaya, Rudolfo	Bless Me, Ultima	Grand Central Publishing	4 and 5
Angelou, Maya	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Anne, Frank Centre	Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary	Puffin	4 and 5
Anthony, Michael	Green Days by the River	Heinemann	4 and 5
Apple, Arnold	Son of Guyana	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Armstrong, William H.	Sounder	HarperCollins	*1 and 2*

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Austen, Jane	Emma	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Ba, Marianna	So Long a Letter	Heinemann	5
Bagnold, Enid	National Velvet	Morrow	1
Bailey, Nahdja	*Telling Tales from St Lucia*	*Mayers Printing Company*	*1, 2 and 3*
Baldwin, James	Go Tell It on the Mountain	Delta Trade Paperbacks	5
Ballard, J.	Empire of the Sun	Heinemann	3
Banks, Lynne Reid	One More River	Valentine, Mitchell	3
Blume, Judy	Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret	Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing	1 and 2
Bosse, Malcolm J.	Ganesh	Crowell	3
Braithwaite, E.R.	To Sir With Love	Signet Book	3 and 4
Brickhill, Paul	The Dam Busters	W. W. Norton	4 and 5
Brontë, Charlotte	Jane Eyre	Penguin	4 and 5
Brontë, Emily	Wuthering Heights	Signet Classic	4 and 5
Burnett, F. Hodgson	The Secret Garden	Signet Classic	1
Butler, Octavia	Kindred	Beacon Press	4 and 5
Byars, Betsy	Cracker Jackson	Puffin	1, 2, and 3
Byrne, Donn	Gandhi	Longman	4 and 5
Carpenter, Richard	Catweazle	Penguin	1 and 2
Carroll, Lewis	Alice in Wonderland	Digital Scanning Inc.	1
Chambers, Aidan	The Present Takers	Harper & Row	3, 4 and 5
Chesterton, G. K.	The Man Who was Thursday	Penguin	3 and 4
Chinodya, Shimmer	Harvest of Thorns	Heinemann	4 and 5
Christopher, John	The Guardians	Hamish Hamilton	4 and 5
Cisneros, Sandra	The House on Mango Street	Vintage Books	2 and 3

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Clarke, Arthur	Dolphin Island	Gollancz	1 and 2
Cleary, Beverly	Fifteen	HarperCollins	2
Cliff, Michelle	Abeng	Plume	4 and 5
Collins, Merle	Angel	Seal Press	4 and 5
Conly, Jane Lesley	Rasco and Rats of Nimh	Heinemann New windmills, Puffin	1, 2 and 3
Conrad, Joseph	Lord Jim	Courier Dover Publications	5
Cooper, J. California	Family	Anchor Books	4 and 5
Cooper, Susan	Over Sea. Under Stone	Puffin	1 and 2
Coppard, Yvonne	Not Dressed Like that You Don't	Piccadilly Press Ltd.	3
Cormier, Robert	I am the Cheese	Alfred Aknopf	5
Crane, Stephen	The Red Badge of Courage	Prentice Hall	5
Craven, Margaret	I Heard the Owl Call My Name	Dell	4 and 5
D'Costa, Jean	Escape to Last Man Peak	Longman	1
Dahl, Roald	Matilda	Penguin	1
Darke, Marjorie	The First of Midnight A Long Way to Go	Seabury Press Kestrel Books	3 3
De Jong, Mendert	The House of Sixty Fathers The Wheel on the School	Harper & Row Harper & Row	1 and 2
De Lisser, Herbert	Jane's Career	Heinemann	4 and 5
Defoe, Daniel	Robinson Crusoe (Abridged)	Penguin	2, 3 and 4
Desai, Anita	The Village by the Sea	Chivers	2
Dickens, Charles	A Christmas Carol David Copperfield (Abridged)* Great Expectations Oliver Twist (Abridged)	Macmillan Gerald Duckworth & Co. Pearson Education Barnes & Noble	2 4 and 5 4 and 5

*Contained in the classics published by Longmans.

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Penguin	3
	The Return of Sherlock Holmes	1st World Publishing	3
Drayton, Godfrey	Christopher	Heinemann	1, 2 and 3
Duder, Tessa	Alex	Oxford University Press	3
Dumas, Alexandre	The Three Musketeers	Wildside	2
Durrel, Gerald	Three Singles to Adventure	F.A. Thorpe	2
Edgell, Zee	Beka Lamb	Heinemann	3, 4 and 5
	The Festival of San Joaquin	Heinemann	4 and 5
Ellison, Ralph	The Invisible Man	Sparknotes	5
Ekwensi, Cyprian	Burning Grass	Heinemann	3 and 4
Eliot, George	Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe	Kessinger	5
Emecheta, Buchi	The Joys of Motherhood	Heinemann	4 and 5
Fairclough, Peter	Three Gothic Novels	Penguin	4 and 5
Faulkner, William	Sanctuary	Vintage International	4 and 5
Fisk, Nicholas	Trillions	Nelson	2
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	The Great Gatsby	Demco Media	5
Fitzhugh, Louise	Harriet the Spy	Random House Children Books	1
Forbes, Curdella	Songs of Silence	Heinemann	4 and 5
Foster, E. M.	A Passage to India	Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	5
Francis, Dick	Odds Against	Berkley	4 and 5
Gallico, Paul	Jennie	Penguin	1
	The Small Miracle	Doubleday	1
	The Snow Goose	Knopf	1
Garnett, Eve	The Family from One-End Street	F. Muller	1
	Further Adventures of the Family from One End Street	Penguin	1

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
George, Jean	My Side of the Mountain	Thorndike	1
Gilmore, Kate	Of Griffins and Graffiti	Penguin	3
Gilroy, Beryl	Frangipani House	Heinemann	4 and 5
	Boy Sandwich	Heinemann	4 and 5
Godden, Rumer	Listen to the Nightingale	Penguin	4 and 5
	Thursday's Children	Viking	4 and 5
Goldsmith, Oliver	The Vicar of Wakefield	Wordsworth	4 and 5
Gordimer, Nadine	July's Children	Longman	4 and 5
Grahame, Kenneth	The Wind in the Willows	Heinemann New Windmills, Methuen, Puffin, Wordsworth Publishers	1 and 2
Green, Roger Lancelyn	The Adventures of Robin Hood	Puffin	2
	King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table	Penguin	2
	Myths of the Norsemen	Penguin	2
	Tales of Ancient Egypt	Sagebrush	2
	Tales of the Greek Heroes	Penguin	2
	The Luck of Troy	Penguin	2
	The Tale of Troy	Penguin	2
Greene, Graham	The Fallen Idol/The Third Man	Penguin	4 and 5
	The Heart of the Master	Heinmann, Mandarin, Penguin	5
Guy, Rosa	And I Heard A Bird Sing	Delacorte	3, 4 and 5
	Paris, Peewee and Big Dog	Orion	1
	The Disappearance	Tandem	5
Haddon, Mark	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time	Alexandria	4 and 5
Haggard, H. Rider	King Solomon's Mines	Wildside	3
Hardy, Thomas	Far from the Madding Crowd	Plain Label	4 and 5
	The Mayor of Casterbridge	Norton	5
	Tess of the D'Urbervilles	Reprint Services Corporation	5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Harold, Gwyneth	Bad Girls in School	Heinemann	4 and 5
Hart, James V.	The Novelisation	Penguin	4 and 5
Hartley, L. P.	The Go-Between	Heinemann	4 and 5
Hautzig, Esther	The Endless Steppe	Penguin	3
Hawthorne, Nathaniel	The Scarlet Letter	Houghton Miffin	5
Head, Bessie	Mary	Heinemann	4 and 5
Hearne, John	Voices Under the Window	Pepal Tree	4 and 5
Hemmingway, Ernest	A Farewell to Arms	Charles Scribner's Sons	4 and 5
	For whom the Bell Tolls	Simon & Schuster	4 and 5
	The Old Man and the Sea	Klett Ernst	4 and 5
Hentoff, Nat	The Day They Came to Arrest the Book	Dell	3
Herriott, James	All Creatures Great & Small	St. Martin's	4 and 5
	All Things Bright and Beautiful	Bantam	4 and 5
	All Things Wise and Wonderful	St. Martin's	4 and 5
	Every Living Thing	St. Martin's	4 and 5
	The Lord God Made Them All	St. Martin's	4 and 5
Higgins, Jack	The Eagle has Landed	Penguin	4 and 5
Hines, Barry	A Kestrel for a Knave	Penguin	*4 and 5*
Hinton, S. E.	The Outsiders	Lions Tracks	*3,4 and 5*
	That Was Then, This Is Now	Turtleback	*4 and 5*
Hodge, Merle	Crick Crack Monkey	Heinemann	3
	For The Life of Laetitia	Farrar Straus and Giroux	3, 4 and 5
Holman, Felice	Slake's Limbo	Aladdin Paperbacks	5
Holme, Anne	I am David	Harcourt Children's Books	1
Hughes, Richard	A High Wind In Jamaica	Penguin	3
Huxley, Aldous	Brave New World	Klett Ernst	5
Imoja, Nailah	Pick of the Crop	Heinemann	4 and 5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Jacob, Debbie	*Wishing for Wings*	*Ian Randle Publishers*	*4 and 5*
James, C.L.R.	Minty Alley	University Press of Mississippi	4
James, Henry	The Turn of the Screw Portrait of a Lady	Courier Dover Galley Press	4 and 5 4 and 5
Jerome, J. K.	Three Men in a Boat	Kessinger	4 and 5
Johnson, Samuel	History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia	J. Limbird	4 and 5
Jones, Evan	Skylarking	Longman	1
Jones, Toeckey	Go Well, Stay Well	Harper & Row	4 and 5
Kanawa, Kiri Te and Foreman, Michael	Land of the Long White Cloud	Arcade	1
Kastner, Erich	Emil and the Detectives	Overlook	1
Kaye, M. M.	The Ordinary Princess	Penguin	1
Keyes, Daniel	Flowers for Algemon	Harcourt, Brace & World	4 and 5
Khan, Ismith	The Jumbie Bird	I. Obolensky	4 and 5
Kincaid, Jamaica	Annie John	Farrar, Straus & Giroux	2, 3 and 4
Kipling, Rudyard	Jungle Book The Second Jungle Book	1st World Publishing Kessinger	1 2
L'Engle, Madeline	A Wrinkle in Time	Collins Educational	1 and 2
Lamming, George	In the Castle of My Skin	University of Michigan	5
Le Guin, Ursula	A Wizard of Earth Sea City of Illusions Left Hand of God Very Long Way From Anywhere Else	DemcoMedia Berkley Longman Harcourt New Windmills	1, 2 and 3 4 and 5 4 and 5 3
Lee, Harper	To Kill a Mockingbird	HarperCollins	4 and 5
Lessing, Doris	The Grass is Singing	Heinemann	5
Lester, Julius	Basketball Game Long Journey Home	Penguin Dial Books	3, 4 and 5 4

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
	To Be a Slave	Penguin	3 and 4
Lewis, C. Day	The Otterbury Incident	Putnam	2 and 3
Lewis, C. S.	The Chronicles of Namia:		
	Book I: The Lion the	HarperCollins	1
	Witch and the Wardrobe	HarperCollins	1
	Wardrobe	HarperCollins	1
	Book II: Prince Caspian		
	Book III: The Voyage of the	HarperCollins	1
	"Dawn Treader"	HarperCollins	1
	Book IV: The Silver Chair		
	Book V: The Horse and His Boy	HarperCollins	1
	Book VI: The Magician's Nephew	HarperCollins	1
	Nephew		
	Book VII: The Last Battle		
Lindgren, Astrid	Pippi Goes Abroad	Oxford University Press	1
	Pippi Longstocking	Oxford University Press	1
	Pippi in the South Seas	Oxford University Press	1
Lindsay, Joan	Picnic at Hanging Rock	Buccaneer	3, 4 and 5
Lingard, Joan	The Guilty Party	Penguin	1 and 2
Little, Jean	Mama's Going to Buy you a Mocking Bird	Penguin	1
Lively, Penelope	A Stitch in Time	Dutton	1
Lofting, Hugh	Doctor Doolittle	Tom Doherty	1
London, Jack	The Call of the Wild	Heinemann, Penguin, Wordsworth Publishers	1, 2 and 3
	White Fang	Heinemann New Windmills, Puffin	2
Lovelace, Earl	The Schoolmaster	Heinemann	4 and 5
	The Dragon Can't Dance	Persea	4 and 5
	Wine of Astonishment	Heinemann	4 and 5
Lowry, Lois	*The Giver*	*EMC*	*2 and 3*
Maartens, Maretta	Paper Bird	Nelson	5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
MacDonald, George	At the Back of the North Wind	Kessinger	1
	The Princess and the Curdie	Kessinger	1
	The Princess and the Goblin	Kessinger	1
MacDonald, Ian	The Hummingbird Tree	Heinemann	4 and 5
MacKay, Claire	The Minerva Programme	Puffin	1
McKay, Claude	Banana Bottom	X Press	4
Mais, Roger	Black Lightning	Heinemann	4 and 5
	Brother Man	Heinemann	4 and 5
	The Hills Were Joyful Together	Heinemann	4 and 5
Mankowitz, Wolf	A Kid for Two Farthings	ISIS	1
Marshall, Alan	I Can Jump Puddles	Longman	3
Marshall, James Vance	A River Ran Out of Eden	Sundance	2, 3, 4 and 5
	Walkabout	Sundance	2, 3, 4 and 5
Marshall, Paule	Reena and Other Stories	Feminist	4 and 5
	Brown Girl, Brownstones	Feminist	4 and 5
	Praise song for the Widow	Penguin	4
Matthews, P.E.	State of the Heart	Penguin	3
Maugham, W. S.	The Razor's Edge	Vintage	4 and 5
McCormick, Patricia	Sold	Hyperion	3 and 4
McCutcheon, Elsie	The Storm Bird	Farrar, Straus, Giroux	4 and 5
Meniru, Teresa	Uzo	Evans	3
Milne, A. A.	Winnie the Pooh	Puffin	1
Mittelholzer, Edgar	Corentyne Thunder	Heinemann	4 and 5
	My Bones and My Flute	Longman	4
Monk Kidd, Sue	*The Secret Life of Bees*	*Viking*	*2, 3 and 4*
Montgomery, L.M.	Anne of Avonlea	Courier Dover	1
	Anne of Green Gables	1st World Publishing	1
	Anne's House of Dreams	Haynes Barton	1
	Anne of Ingleside	Bantam	1
	Anne of the Island	Hayes Barton	1
	Anne of Windy Willows	Puffin	1

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Moore, Brian	Lives of Silence	Longman	4 and 5
Morrison, Toni	Song of Solomon	Vintage	5
Morrow, H. L.	The Splendid Journey	Harcourt Education	2 and 3
Munonye, John	The Only Son	Heinemann	3
Naipaul, Shiva	The Chip-Chip Gatherers	Vintage	4 and 5
Naipaul, V.S.	A House for Mr. Biswas	Penguin	5
	Miguel Street	Heinemann	3
	The Mimic Men	Deutsch	4 and 5
	They Mystic Masseur	Vintage	4 and 5
	The Suffrage of Elvira	Penguin	4 and 5
Narayan, R. K.	The Guide	Viking	4 and 5
	Man-Eater of Malgudi	Penguin	4 and 5
Nash, Ogden	Custard and Company	Little Brown & Co.	2
Nesbit, E.	The Complete Adventures of the Treasure Seekers	Puffin	1
	The Enchanted Castle	Echo Library	1
	Five Children and It	Courier Dover	1
	The House of Arden	New York Review	1
	The Last of the Dragons and some Others	Penguin	1
	The Magic World	Penguin	1
Nesbit, E.	New Treasure Seekers	Penguin	1
	The Phoenix and the Carpet	Kessinger	1
	The Railway Children	Courier Dover	1
	The Story of the Treasure Seekers	Biblio Bazaar	1
	The Wouldbegoods	Kessinger	1
Ngugi, James	The River Between	Heinemann	4 and 5
	Weep Not, Child	Heinemann	4 and 5
Nicholls, Millis	A Father for Christmas	Nelson Caribbean	1
Norton, André	Crystal Gryphon	Atheneum	1
	Iron Cage	Penguin	1 and 2
Norton, Mary	The Borrowers	Thorndike Press	1
	The Borrowers Afield	Harcourt	2
	Borrowers Afloat	Harcourt	2
	The Borrowers Avenged	Harcourt	2

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Nwapa, Flora	Efuru	Heinemann	4 and 5
O'Brien, Robert	Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh	Aladdin	4 and 5
	Z for Zachariah	Simon Pulse	4 and 5
O'Dell, Scott	Island of the Blue Dolphin	HMco Children's Books	3 and 4
	My Name is No Angelica	HMco Children's Books	3
	Streams to the River, River to Sea	Fawcett Juniper	3
O'Hara, Mary	My Friend, Flicka	HarperCollins	1
Okoro, Nathaniel	The Twin Detectives	Evans Bros	4 and 5
Orwell, George	Animal Farm	Random House	4 and 5
Palmer, C. Everard	A Cow Called Boy	Macmillan	1
	Baba and Mr Big	Collins	1
	Big Doc Bitterroot	Macmillan	1
	My Father Sun Sun Johnson	Deutsch	1
	The Cloud with the Silver Lining	Macmillan	1
	The Hummingbird People	Deutsch	1
	The Sun Salutes You	Bobbs Merrill	1
	The Wooing of Beppo Tate	Nelson Thornes	1
Parris, Terry	Jason Whyte	Oxford University Press	1
Paton, Alan	Cry, The Beloved Country	Spark	4 and 5
Patterson, Orlando	The Children of Sisyphus	Bolivar	5
Pausewang, Gudrun	Fall-Out	Viking	2, 3, 4 and 5
Pearce, Phillipa	A Dog So Small	Chivers North America	1
	Downhill All the Way	Oxford University Press	2
	Who, Sir? Me, Sir?	Oxford University Press	2
Phillips, Marlene Nourbese	Harriet's Daughter	Heinemann	4 and 5
Poe, Edgar Allan	Tales of Mystery and Terror	Penguin	4 and 5
Pollard, Velma	Homestretch	Longman, Caribbean	3, 4 and 5
Ramsay, Paulette	Aunt Jen	Heinemann	4 and 5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Ransome, Arthur	Swallows & Amazons	David R. Godine	2
Redmond, Diane	The Comic Strip Odyssey	Penguin	1
Reid, V.S.	Peter of Mount Ephraim	Jamaica Publishing House	2
	Sixty Five	Longman	2
	The Leopard	Viking	4
	The Young Warriors	Longman	1
Rhue, Morton	The Wave	Delacorte	4
Rhys, Jean	Wide Sargasso Sea	W.W. Norton	4 and 5
Rowling, J.K.	The Harry Potter Series	Scholastic Trade	1 through 5
Salinger, J.D.	The Catcher in the Rye	Little, Brown	4 and 5
Salkey, Andrew	A Quality of Violence	Hutchinson	5
Schaefer, Jack	Shane	HMco Children's Books	2, 3, 4 and 5
Scott, Paul	Staying On	Avon	4 and 5
Selormey, Francis	The Narrow Path	Praeger	3, 4 and 5
Selvon, Samuel	A Brighter Sun	Longman	3 and 4
	The Lonely Londoners	Penguin	4 and 5
	Ways of Sunlight	Longman Kenya	3 and 4
Serrailler, Ian	The Clashing Rocks	Walck	2
	The Enchanted Island	Oxford University Press	2
	The Road to Canterbury	Kestrel	2
	The Silver Sword	Heinemann New Windmills	2
	The Way of Danger	Oxford University Press	2
Sewell, Anna	Black Beauty	Pearson Prentice Hall	1 and 2
Shelley, Mary	Frankenstein	Courier Dover	4 and 5
Sherlock, Philip M.	The Iguana's Tail	Nelson	1
	Three Finger Jack's Treasure	St. Martin's Press	1
Shute, Nevil	No Highway	House of Stratus	2 and 3
	Silver Sword	Heinemann New	2
Smith, Dodie	The Hundred and One Dalmations	Viking	1

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Smith, Wilbur	Elephant Song	Random House	4 and 5
Smucker, Barbara	Underground to Canada	Clarke, Irwin	1
Spark, M.	The Prime of Ms Jean Brodie	Penguin	4 and 5
Sparks, Beatrice	*It Happened to Nancy: A True Story from the Diary of a Teenager*	*Bt. Bound*	*3, 4 and 5*
Sperry, Armstrong	The Boy Who Was Afraid	Heinemann	1
St. Omer, Garth	Lights on the Hill	Heinemann	4 and 5
St. Rose, Marlene	*Into the Mosaic*	*Athen*	*1, 2 and 3*
Steinbeck, John	Cannery Row	Penguin	4 and 5
	Of Mice and Men	Penguin	4 and 5
	The Red Pony	Penguin	3
	The Grapes of Wrath	Modern Library	4 and 5
	The Pearl	Bantam	3
Stevenson, R. L.	Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	Bantam	2
	Kidnapped (Abridged)	Signet Classic	2
	Treasure Island	Oxford University Press	1 and 2
Stoker, Bram	Dracula	Signet Classic	4 and 5
Storr, Catherine	The Boy and the Swan	Deutsch	2
Stowe, Harriet Beecher	Uncle Tom's Cabin	Prentice	3 and 4
Stratton, Allan	*Chanda's Secrets*	*Longman*	*4 and 5*
Streatfield, Noel	Ballet Shoes	Random House	1
Stuart, Morna	Marassa and Midnight	Heinemann	1, 2 and 3
Sutcliff, Rosemary	Dawn Wind	Oxford University Press	2 and 3
	The Mark of the Horse Lord	Front	2 and 3
	Three Legions	Oxford University Press	2
Swarthout, Glendon	Bless the Beasts and Children	Doublday	3
Swift, Jonathan	Gulliver's Travels (Abridged)	Nelsons	3

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Taylor, Mildred	Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Puffin	2 and 3
Taylor, Theodore	The Cay	Laurel Leaf	1 and 2
	Timothy of the Cay	Harcourt	1 and 2
Temple, Francis	The Ramsay Scallop	Harper Trophy	3,4 and 5
Theroux, Paul	A Christmas Card	Puffin	1
Tolkien, J. R. R.	The Hobbit	Houghton Mifflin	3
Twain, Mark	The Prince and the Pauper	Penguin	2
	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Dent, Heinemann, Longman, Penguin	4 and 5
		Heinemann, Nelson, Penguin	2, 3 and 4
Ullstein, Susan	Martin Luther King	Longman	5
	Mother Theresa	Gareth Stevens	5
Van Der Leoff, A. R.	Avalanche	Penguin	2
	Children of the Oregon Trail	Puffin	2
Verne, Jules	Around the World in Eighty Days	Puffin	2
	The Mysterious Island	Signet	2
	Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea	Dodo Press	2
Walker, Alice	The Color Purple	The Women's Press	5
Warner, Rex	Greeks and Trojans	Heinemann New Windmills	2
	Men and Gods	NYRB Classics	1 and 2
Waugh, Evelyn	A Handful of Dust	Penguin	4 and 5
Webster, Jean	Daddy Long Legs	Penguin	2 and 3
Westall, Robert	The Machine Gunners	Heinemann	5
Wharton, Edith	The Age of Innocence	Signet	4 and 5
White, Patrick	The Aunt's Story	Trafalgar Square	4 and 5
	The Tree of Man	Vintage	4 and 5
Wiggin, K. D.	Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm	Penguin	4 and 5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Wilde, Oscar	The Happy Prince and Other Stories	Dover	4 and 5
	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Prestwick House Inc.	4 and 5
Wilder, Laura	Farmer Boy	Harper Trophy	1
	Little House in the Big Woods	Harper Fastival	1
	Little House on the Prairie	Harper Trophy	1
Williams, Tennessee	The Glass Menagerie	Penguin	4 and 5
Williamson, Henry	Tarka the Otter	Puffin	1
Wodehouse, P.G.	Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best	Penguin	4 and 5
	The Collected Blandings Short Stories	Penguin	4 and 5
Woodford, Pegy	Misfits	Heinemann New Windmills	3
Wright, Richard	Native Son	Blooms Literary Criticism	4 and 5
Wyndham, John	The Chrysalids	Penguin	4 and 5
Wyss, J. D.	The Swiss Family Robinson	Signet	1 and 2

ANTHOLOGIES OF SHORT STORIES AND/OR EXCERPTS FROM NOVELS

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
West Indian			
Adler, Sue	Mightier Than the Lipstick	Penguin	5
Anthony, Michael	Cricket In the Road The Chieftain's Carnival and Other Stories	Deutsch Longman	1 4 and 5
Black, C. V.	Tales of Old Jamaica	Collins	3
Brown, Orville	*Sunday in Granny's Church and other Stories*	*Create Space Independent Publishing*	*4 and 5*
Collins, Merle	Rain Darling	Women's Press	4
Ellis, Zoila	On Heroes, Lizards and Passion	Cubola Productions	2, 3, and 4
Faustin, Charles	Under the Storyteller's Spell: Folk Tales from the Caribbean	Puffin, Viking	1
Goodison, Lorna	Baby Mother and the King of Swords	Longman	4
Gordimer, Nadine	Some Monday for Sure	Heinemann	4 and 5
Gray, Cecil	Response	Nelson	2 and 3
Guiseppi, Neville and Undine	Backfire	MacMillan	2
Wallace, R. et al	*The Gold Anthology: Award Winning Pieces From the Jcdc Literary Festival 1999-2006*	*Pelican Publishers Limited*	*3, 4 and 5*
Lovelace, Earl	A Brief Conversation and Other Stories	Persea Books	5
Mais, Roger	Listen, the Wind	Longman	5
Marshall, Paule	Reena and Other Stories	Feminist Press	3, 4 and 5
McKenzie, Alecia	Satellite City and Other Stories	Longman	4 and 5
McKenzie, Earl	Two Roads to Mount Joyful A Boy Named Ossie	Longman Heinemann	4 and 5 2, 3 and 4

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Narinesingh, R & C	Insights	Nelson	3
Porritt, Jonathon	Once Upon a Planet	Puffin	1
Satchwell, Deryck	The Alchemy of words: An Anthology of Belizean Literature for Secondary Schools (2 volumes)	Cubola Productions	1, 2 and 3
Senior, Olive	Summer Lightning	Longman Caribbean	4 and 5
	Arrival of the Snake Woman	Longman Caribbean	4 and 5
Sherlock, Philip M.	West Indies Folk Tales	Oxford University Press	1
Waters, Erika J.	New Writing from the Caribbean	MacMillan	5
Young Colville	Pataki Full	Cubola Productions	3 and 4
Other			
Arnott, Kathleen	African Myths and Legends	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Ashley, Bernard	Puffin Book of School Stories	Puffin	1
Barnes & Egford	Twentieth Century Short Stories	Nelson	4 and 5
Barnes, D. R.	Short Stories of Our time	Harrap	4 and 5
Callendar, Timothy	It so Happen	Heinemann	2
Denny, Neville	Pan African Short Stories	Evans, Humanities	3
Dhondy, Farrukh	East End at Your Feet	Nelson	5
Fisk, Nicholas	The Puffin Book of Science Fiction Stories	Puffin	1 and 2
Forster, E.M.	Collected Short Stories	Readers Union	5
Goodwyn, Andrew	Science Fiction Stories	Oxford University Press	4
Gordimer, Nadine	Crimes of Conscience. Selected Short Stories	Heinemann	4 and 5
Gray, J.E.B.	Indian Tales and Legends	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Hewett, R.	A Choice of Poets	Nelson	4 and 5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Hunter, Jim	Modern Short Stories	Faber	4 and 5
Ireson, Barabara	In a Class of Their Own	Puffin	2 and 3
James, Joyce	Dubliners	Penguin, Wordsworth Publishers, Prestwic House	4 and 5
Kerven, Rosalind	Earth Magic, Sky Magic	Cambridge	3 and 4
Kipling, Rudyard	Just So Stories	Puffin	1
Lawrence, D.H.	Love Among the Haystack and Other Stories Selected Tales	Viking	5 4 and 5
Lester, Julius	Long Journey Home	Puffin	4 and 5
Martinez, Christina	The Earth Needs Friends	Penguin	1 and 2
Maugham, W. Somerset	The Kite and Other Stories	Macmillan	2
Phinn, Gervase	The Turning Tide and Other Short Stories	Nelson	2
Reeves, James	Heroes and Monsters: Legends of Ancient Greece	Hippocrene Books	1
Rich, Hilary and Mann, Ann	Frankie Mae and Other Stories	Nelson	5
Rutherford & Hannah	Commonwealth Short Stories	Holmes and Meier	5
Smyth, W. M.	Good Stories	Edward Arnold	3
Taylor, Mildred D.	The Friendship and Other Stories	Puffin	2
Thomas, Dylan	A Prospect of the Sea Quite Early One Morning (Part 1)	Aldine New direction Publishing	4 and 5 4 and 5
Walker, Alice	Everyday Use and Other Stories	Rutgers University Press	4 and 5
Wambeu, Daniel	A Girl for Sale and Other Stories	Evans	5
Welch, John	Stories from South Asia	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Woodford, Peggy	Misfits	Teens	4

SOURCES OF POEMS

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
West Indian			
Bailey, Nahdjla	Time for Poetry	Nelson	5
Bennett, Paula	The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English	Penguin	5
Brathwaite, Edward	The Arrivants	Oxford University Press	5
Brown, Stewart	Caribbean Poetry Now	Edward Arnold	5
Bryan, Beverley and Styles Morag	*Teaching Caribbean Poetry*	*Routledge*	*Teachers*
Foster, John	Spaceways. An Anthology of Space Poetry	Oxford University Press	1
Figueroa, J. F.	Caribbean Voices (2 Vols.)	Evans	4
Gasztold, Carmen Bernos	Prayers from the Ark	Penguin	1, 2 and 3
Gray, Cecil	Bite In – Stage 2 Bite In – Stage 3 Bite In 3	Nelson Nelson Nelson	2 3 4
Guiseppi, Neville and Undine	Out for Stars 1	MacMillan	1, 2 and 3
Irish, J. A. George	There is An Isle Somewhere	Caribbean Research Centre	5
Mansfield and Armstrong	Every Man Will Shout	Oxford University Press	2, 3 and 4
McKay, Claude	Selected Poems	Dover	3
Morris, Mervyn	The Pond & Other Poems	New Beacon Books	4 and 5
Mordecai, P. and Walker-Gordon, G.	Sun Song 1	Longman	2
Nash, Ogden	Custard and Company	Viking	1
Nichols, Grace	Poetry Jump Up	Puffin Books	
Phinn, Gervasse	Lizard Over Ice	Nelson	1, 2 and 3

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Pollard, Velma	Anansesem	Longman	3
Ramchand & Gray	West Indian Poetry	Longman	3, 4 and 5
Seymour, A. J.	Selected Poems	Blue Parrot Press	4
Walmsley, Anne	The Sun's Eye	Longman Caribbean	2 and 3
Wilson, Donald	New Ships	Oxford University Press	2 and 3

Other

Belloc, Hilaire	Cautionary Verses for Boys and Girls	Puffin	2 and 3
Benson, Gerard	This Poem Doesn't Rhyme	Puffin	2
Bleiman, Barbara	Five Modern Poets	Longman	4 and 5
Collins, V.H.	A Book of Narrative Verses	Oxford University Press	4 and 5
Forde, A.N.	Talk of the Tamarids	Hodder Murray	3
Frost, Robert	Selected Poems	Cliff Road Books	4 and 5
Gasztold, Carmen Bernos	Prayers from the Ark	Penguin	2 and 3
Guiseppi, Neville and Undine	Out for Stars	MacMillan	2 and 3
Hewett, R.	A Choice of Poets	Nelson	5
Hughes, Ted	Here Today	Nelson Thornes Ltd.	4 and 5
Magee, Wes	The Puffin Book of Christmas Poems	Puffin	3 and 4
Porrit, Johnathan	Once Upon a Planet	Puffin	2
Rosen, Michael	Culture Shock	Puffin	2

PLAYS

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
West Indian			
Braithwaite, Edward	Odale's Choice	Evans	3
Campbell, Alistaire	Anansi	Nelson	3, 4 and 5
Hill, Errol	The Ping Pong[1]	MacMillan	4
	Plays for Today	Longman	3, 4 and 5
Hillary, Samuel	Chippy	UWI Extra Mural Department	3
James, C. L. R.	Beyond a Boundary	Random Housing U.K.	5
Noel, Keith	Carlong Caribbean Drama for the Classroom	Carlong Publishers	3
Redhead, Wilfred	Canaree and Pot[2]	UWI Extra Mural Department	1
	Hoist Your Flag[2]	UWI Extra Mural Department	1
	Three Comic Sketches[2]	UWI Extra Mural Department	1
Roach, Eric	Belle Fanto	UWI Extra Mural Department	4 and 5
	Calabash of Blood	UWI Extra Mural Department	5
Rhone, Trevor	*Bella's Gate Boy*	*Macmillan Caribbean*	*4 and 5*
	Two Can Play and Other Plays	*Macmillan Caribbean*	*4 and 5*
	Old Story Time	*Longman*	*3, 4 and 5*
Stone, Judy	*Champions of the Gayelle*	*MacMillan Caribbean*	*4 and 5*
Waite-Smith, Cicely	Africa Sling-Shot	UWI Extra Mural Department	2
Walcott, Derek	Malcauchon, or Six in the Rain	UWI Extra Mural Department	5

NB [1]The Ping Pong by Errol Hill is available in Carray! A collection of six plays, edited by James Lee Wah, published by MacMillan. Other plays in the collection are: Africa Sling shot by Cicely Waite-Smith; dog and Iguana by Gladys Stuart; Riding Haas by Colville Young; Goose and Gander by Wilfred Redhead and Tears in the Gayelle by Dennis Noel.

[2]Plays for classroom activity and production in the first year.

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Walcott, Roderick	The Harrowing of Benjy	UWI Extra Mural Department	2
Other			
Anouilh, Jean	Antigone (French language edition)	French & European Pub.	4 and 5
Bolt, Robert	A Man for all Seasons	A & C Black	4 and 5
Brecht, Bertolt	The Caucasian Chalk Circle	University of Minnesota Press	5
	The Life of Galileo	Penguin	5
Chapman, Robert and Coxe, Louise	Billy Budd	Hill and Wary	4 and 5
Chekhov, Anton	The Cherry Orchard	Diareads.com	5
Daviot, Gordon	Richard of Bordeaux	Little Brown	5
Gheon, Henri	Christmas in the Market Place	J. Miller Ltd.	2
Gogol, Nikolai	The Government Inspector	Oberon Books	4 and 5
	The Long and Short and the Tall	Heinemann	5
Hansberry, Lorraine	To Be Young, Gifted and Black	Vintage, 1st Vintage Books	4 and 5
	A Raisin in the Sun	Vintage	5
Ibsen, Henrik[1]	Noah	Penguin	5
	An Enemy of the People	Modern Library	4 and 5
Jones, Toeckey	In Search of Dragon's Mountain	Nelson	4 and 5
Miller, Arthur[2]	Death of a Salesman	Penguin	5
	The Crucible	Heinemann, Penguin	4 and 5
O'Casey, Sean	Juno and the Paycock	Players Press	4 and 5
Pomerance, Bernard	The Elephant Man	Grove Press	5
Priestly, J.B.	An Inspector Calls	Dsmatists Play Service Inc.	5

N.B.: **[1]Isben Plays Two published by Methuen, contains both An enemy of the People and A doll's House as well as Hedda Gabler.**

[2]Miller Plays published by Methuen, contains the following plays: All My sons, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible and A Memory of Two Mondays.

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
Rattigan, Terrence	The Winslow Boy	Nick Hern Books	3
Rose, R.	Twelve Angry Men	Penguin	4 and 5
Wood, E. R.	The Eight Windmill Book of One-Act Plays	Heinemann Educational Publishers	2
Schiach, Don	The Wild Bunch and Other Plays	Nelson	3, 4, and 5
Shakespeare, William	As You Like It Hamlet	Collins, E. Arnold, Heinemann, Longman, MacMillan, Methuen, Oxford University Press, Penguin	4 and 5
	Julius Caesar	Cambridge University Press, Collins, E. Arnold, Heinemann, Longman, MacMillan Oxford University Press, Penguin, Rout, Stanley Thornes	3, 4 and 5
	Macbeth	Blackie, Cambridge University Press, Circle Press Publications, Collins, E. Arnold, Heinemann, Hodder, Longman, MacMillan, Methuen, Oxford University Press, Penguin	3, 4 and 5
	The Merchant of Venice	Cambridge University Press, Collins, E. Arnold, Heinemann, Hutchinson, Longman, MacMillan, Methuen, Oxford University Press, Penguin, Routledge, Stanley Thornes	3, 4 and 5
	Richard III	Oxford University Press, Penguin	4 and 5
	Romeo and Juliet	Cambridge University Press, Collins E. Arnold, Heinemann, Longman, MacMillan	4 and 5

AUTHOR OR EDITOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RECOMMENDED YEAR GROUP
	Twelfth Night	Cambridge, E. Arnold, Heinemann, MacMillan, Methuen, Penguin	4 and 5
	A Midsummer's Night Dream	Oxford World's Clssics	3 and 4
Shaw, George Bernard	Pygmalion Saint Joan	Nu Vision Publication	4 and 5 5
Sheridan, Richard	The Rivals The School for Scandal	Book Jungle Digireads.com	4 and 5 5
Swift, Paul	No Man's Land	Nelson	4 and 5
Synge, John	Riders to the Sea	Dodo Press	4 and 5
Thomas, Dylan	Under Milk Wood	New Directions Publishing	4 and 5
Wesker, Arnold	Chips with Everything	Random House	5
Wilde, Oscar	The Importance of Being Earnest	Prestwick House Inc.	5
Wilder, Thornton	Our Town	Harper Perennial Modern Classics	4 and 5
Williams, Tennessee	Glass Menagerie A Streetcar Named Desire	New Directions Publishing New Directions Publishing	4 and 5 4 and 5
SOURCES OF IDEAS FOR DRAMA ACTIVITIES			
Adland, D. E.	Group Drama (Books 1–4)	Longman	1
Allington, A.	Drama and Education	Blackwell	1
Chilver, Peter	Improvised Drama	Batsford	1
Kissoon, Freddie	101 Creative Exercises in Drama	Space Printers	1
Nuttall, Kenneth	Let's Act (Book 1–4)	Longman	1
Slade, Peter	Child Drama	University of London Press	1
Way, Brian	Development Through Drama	Humanity Books	1

♦ GLOSSARY OF KEY WORDS USED IN THE ENGLISH A AND B EXAMINATIONS

WORD	TASK
Compare	Examine the similarities as well as differences to reach a general conclusion. **For example**: Compare the ways in which the two parents in the poems "Ana" and "Little Boy Crying" demonstrate their love for the children.
Compare and Contrast	Examine the similarities as well as differences to reach a general conclusion. **For example**: Compare the ways in which the two parents in "Ana" and "Little Boy Crying" demonstrate their love for the children. It must be noted that the word "compare" used by itself takes into consideration both similarities and differences. However, the word contrast used by itself indicates that only the differences must be provided. **For example**: Discuss TWO ways in which Lady Macduff is contrasted with Lady Macbeth.
Comment	Examine how the writer uses different elements (for example, literary device, stage props) to create effect and meaning. The overall effect on the piece of work must also be provided. The effect must take into account the writers purpose, and other elements of the piece of work, for example, theme, structure, diction and tone. **For example**: Comment on the shifts of mood in the scene in which Lady Macduff appears.
Describe	Provide a detailed account, including significant characteristics or traits of the issue in question. **For example**: Describe Macbeth's conflicting thoughts and feelings as he contemplates the murder.
Discuss	Provide an extended answer exploring related concepts and issues using detailed examples but not necessarily drawing a conclusion. **For example**: Discuss the importance of Katherina's final speech in <u>The Taming of the Shrew</u>
Explain	Focus on what, how and why something occurred. State the reasons or justifications, interpretation of results and causes. **For example**: Explain the dramatic significance of this scene.

WORD	TASK
Identify	Extract the relevant information from the stimulus without explanation. **For example**: Identify TWO phrases in the last four lines that create the atmosphere of abandonment. In English B Paper 02 questions can also ask for an explanation. **For example**: Identify and explain TWO ways in which Shakespeare later impresses upon his audience what a horrible crime it is to kill a king.
Illustrate	Provide examples to demonstrate or prove the subject of the question. **For example**: Identify the character traits that can be seen in Amanda from the beginning of the play to this point. Illustrate EACH of the character traits you have identified.
List	Itemise the requested information. Details are not required. **For example**: List the main points of the opening speech.
Outline	Show or trace the development of something from the point of origin to that specified in the question. **For example**: Briefly outline what happens in the poems "Richard Cory" and "God's Work".
State	Provide short concise answer without explanation. **For example**: State TWO factors which the fitness proponents recommend that society should emphasise more.
Summarise	Present the main points, ideas or concepts in your own words as far as possible. **For example**: Summarise the MAJOR factors which contribute to the disadvantages encountered by women in the labour market.

Western Zone Office
February 2015

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate®

ENGLISH A and B

Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes/Keys

Specimen Papers: - Paper 01
Paper 02
Paper 032

Mark Schemes and Keys: - Paper 01
Paper 02
Paper 032

TEST CODE **01218010**

SPEC 2015/01218010

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH A

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 01 – General Proficiency

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This Specimen Paper consists of 60 items. You will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to answer them.

2. In addition to this test booklet, you should have an answer sheet.

3. Each item in this test has four suggested answers lettered (A), (B), (C), (D). Read each item you are about to answer and decide which choice is best.

4. On your answer sheet, find the number which corresponds to your item and shade the space having the same letter as the answer you have chosen. Look at the sample item below.

   Sample Item

   Choose the word that BEST completes each sentence.

   Someone who is suffering from influenza needs to be isolated as the disease is _____.

   (A) lasting
   (B) serious
   (C) destructive
   (D) contagious

   Sample Answer

   The best answer to this item is "contagious," so (C) has been shaded.

5. If you want to change your answer, erase it completely before you fill in your new choice.

6. When you are told to begin, turn the page and work as quickly and as carefully as you can. If you cannot answer an item, go on to the next one. You may return to that item later.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

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Items **1–5**

Instructions: Each sentence in this section has ONE underlined word. Choose from the four options, the word which is closest to OPPOSITE in meaning to the underlined word.

1. The guest speaker's words reinforced the view that capital punishment can influence the rate of crime in a country.

(A) destroyed
(B) damaged
(C) demolished
(D) dispelled

2. The barren land was a result of agricultural practices that have been passed down from generation to generation.

(A) stony
(B) fertile
(C) infertile
(D) unproductive

3. The affluence displayed in the beach-side communities indicated the significant difference in economic status from dwellers in the city.

(A) misery
(B) wealth
(C) poverty
(D) richness

4. John's parents acknowledged that his recent behaviour was contemptible and therefore deserved the outcome.

(A) correct
(B) regretful
(C) trustworthy
(D) commendable

5. He was always adept at evading questions at interviews, and that skill was often needed to reduce conflict.

(A) polite
(B) careless
(C) unskilled
(D) convincing

Items **6–10**

Instructions: Each sentence in this section is followed by four sentences, A, B, C and D. Choose the one NEAREST IN MEANING to the original sentence. Be sure to read all four options before you select your answer.

6. When Mr Peets was transferred on promotion from South Point to Maraval Mrs Adams succeeded him.

(A) Mrs Adams worked at Maraval after Mr Peets left on promotion.
(B) Mr Peets was succeeded by Mrs Adams when he was promoted to a post at Maraval.
(C) Both Mr Peets and Mrs Adams were transferred on promotion: Mr Peets to Maraval and Mrs Adams to South Point.
(D) In order to be promoted, Mr Peets had to be transferred to Maraval to allow Mrs Adams to work at South Point.

7. Recent floods have made the route impassable.

(A) People are unable to travel because of the floods.
(B) The road cannot be used as a result of the floods.
(C) Travelling has been brought to a standstill because of floods.
(D) Because of heavy showers, commuters were forced to detour.

8. The competitors in the long jump event were daunted by the performance of Kevin Jones.

(A) Kevin Jones was the best participant in the long jump event.
(B) No one expected to do better than Kevin Jones in the long jump.
(C) The long jump event daunted all the competitors except Kevin Jones.
(D) Since Kevin Jones jumped so well the other competitors in the event were discouraged.

9. An interest in their nation's development plans should be displayed by its young people.

(A) Young people should take an interest in plans for national development.
(B) National development is dependent upon the youth.
(C) Young people ought to be aware of plans for the purpose of national development.
(D) The nation will advance through plans proposed by its young people.

10. In spite of their size, whales are no longer an even match for man.

(A) Whales are no longer even a match for man.
(B) Men are no longer a match for whales in spite of their size.
(C) Because of their size whales should be better able to hold their own against man.
(D) Although they are large, whales can no longer adequately defend themselves against man.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Items **11–15**

Instructions: Revise each of the following sentences according to the directions that follow it. You may delete or include words but do not change the meaning of the original sentence. Look at the options A, B, C, D for the word or phrase that must be included in your revised sentence and mark the corresponding space on your answer sheet.

11. The masqueraders who were jumping to the rhythm of the steel band music became very exhausted after a while and had to go home early.

Substitute so for very

(A) and consequently they
(B) and they
(C) for they
(D) that they

12. She told her parents a lie in order to escape punishment.

Substitute in order that for in order to

(A) she might escape
(B) she escaped
(C) she escape
(D) she will escape

13. The Australian cricketers fought valiantly against the West Indies team, but all their efforts were in vain.

Begin the sentence with:
Despite their valiant efforts

(A) would defeat
(B) were defeated
(C) defeated
(D) would be defeated

14. She found, even after she had made several attempts to regulate the sprinkler, that the water was still reaching the furniture on the verandah.

Begin the sentence with:
Having made

(A) she found that
(B) she had found that
(C) she was finding that
(D) and finding that

15. Intending to declare the innings closed, the captain told his bowlers to conserve their energy.

Begin the sentence with:
"I intend to declare the innings closed," the captain said

(A) "so conserve your energy"
(B) "and their energy should be conserved
(C) "because they should conserve their energy"
(D) "if your energy should be conserved"

Items **16–20**

Instructions: Some of the following sentences are unacceptable because of inappropriate grammar, idiom or vocabulary. Some sentences are acceptable as they stand. No sentence contains more than one inappropriate element.

Select the ONE underlined part that you feel is inappropriate and choose the appropriate letter A, B, C. If the sentence is acceptable as it stands, choose D.

16. While driving through the fields (A) on a conducted (B) tour the farmers were appal (C) to see several diseased cattle. No error (D)

17. The soundness of the proposal introduced (A) by the opposition members was (B) quite evident, though the presentation was both (C) criticised by the President and the Secretary of State. No error (D)

18. We always feel good (A) whenever our cricketers play well enough (B) to win a (C) series of matches convincingly. No error (D)

19. The two robbers, not knowing (A) the value of the loot, were unable to agree on (B) how to divide it among (C) themselves. No error (D)

20. One must be aware (A) of threats to your (B) health if happy living is one's goal (C). No error (D)

Items **21–25**

Instructions: Select the option A, B, C, or D that BEST describes EACH of the sentences and mark your choice on your answer sheet.

(A) The sentence is acceptable as it stands.
(B) The sentence contains clichés or misused metaphors.
(C) The sentence is incorrect grammatically or faulty in diction.
(D) The sentence is too wordy, that is, repetitive or contains redundancies.

21. In my opinion, I think that your suggestion to upgrade housing facilities in rural areas is impractical.

22. It is his view, and one which he strongly holds, that constitutionally elected governments should not be toppled by force of arms.

23. When the clerk raised his voice in protest, his boss asked him to hold his tongue since empty vessels made the most noise.

24. The extremely extravagant girl was so animated, cheerful and high-spirited, she was invited to many parties.

25. Is it any wonder why the children that Miss Brown knows behave like delinquents when they have a heroine that thinks the worst of them and their kind?

Items **26–31**

Instructions: Read the following poem carefully and then answer Items 26–31 on the basis of what is stated or implied.

Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the bough
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W.H. Davies, "Leisure".
In Ten Twentieth-Century Poets, 1957, p.35.

26. When the poet says "full of care" (line 1) he means a life full of

(A) anger
(B) duties
(C) boredom
(D) happiness

27. The poet uses the idea "stare as long as sheep or cows" (line 4) because he thinks we should

(A) relax beneath the boughs
(B) stop being busy and relax
(C) gaze at the beauty of the skies
(D) stand and observe our surroundings

28. The poet implies that we need leisure in our life for it to be

(A) vital
(B) relaxing
(C) important
(D) meaningful

29. "Streams full of stars, like skies at night" (line 6) is an example of

(A) rhyme
(B) simile
(C) repetition
(D) onomatopoeia

30. "No time to turn … her eyes began" (lines 7–10) is an example of

(A) pun
(B) simile
(C) personification
(D) onomatopoeia

31. In which of the following lines does the poet answer the question asked in lines 1 and 2?

(A) Line 3
(B) Line 5
(C) Line 9
(D) Line 11

Items **32–39**

Instructions: Read the following passage carefully and then answer Items 32–39 on the basis of what is stated or implied.

After a decade of hard work, 2006 was the year Richie Spice joined the top tier of international reggae artists. Who can forget that summer's soundtrack, "Brown Skin"? Its infectious lyrics and heavy rotation across the islands had boys serenading girls, and dance floors grooving until the early hours. It brought Spice invitations to perform in New York, London, Port of Spain, and elsewhere, alongside artists like Anthony B and Capleton, and won him a reputation for mesmerizing live performances. November saw the release of Spice's latest album, *In the Streets of Africa*, featuring, alongside newer tracks, "Youths So Cold", "Open the Door" and "Brown Skin". It was the culmination of years of effort, plus immense talent, a supportive record label, and an enthusiastic international fan base.

Born Richell Boner in Kingston, Spice endured years of label-less grind on his own — playing stage shows, writing lyrics, and recording singles with little support — before Devon Wheatley and his label, *Fifth Element*, came along. "The songs were there," Spice recalls. "They were all good songs, but they weren't getting any promotion, and with just me going out there singing them, it was like one man against the world." According to Spice, *Fifth Element* came along and put their strength and promotion behind the songs, and people took to them and accepted them.

With his *Fifth Element* album release, 2004's *Spice in Your Life*, his emotive singing and sincere message got noticed in the United States. Ignoring any urge to kick back and relax after his first taste of hype, Spice kept working hard to maintain momentum, worried that his sincerity could work against him. "When you are singing positive songs, success may take a little longer, but it has to manifest," says Spice philosophically.

After his long journey to reggae's "higher heights", Spice offers this advice to others setting out to make it: "Whenever you reach anywhere, there is a lot of work to be done, so just go to it and do the necessary things until you reach that space where you are supposed to be." As 2006 has proven, he certainly knows what he is talking about.

Dylan Kerrigan, "Higher Heights", Caribbean Beat, *November/December, 2006, p80.*

32. Based on paragraph one, which adjective BEST describes the song "Brown Skin"?

(A) Lyrical
(B) Romantic
(C) Conscious
(D) Provocative

33. Richie Spice had to work hard for years because he

(A) recorded few singles
(B) had to perfect his talent
(C) hadn't developed viable music
(D) needed a record label to promote him

34. Richie Spice's international success BEST shows that

(A) it takes ten years to succeed in music
(B) the music industry is difficult to enter
(C) a record label is essential for any artist
(D) live performance is the basis of a music career

35. Which of the following does the passage suggest lead to an artiste's popularity?

I. Faith
II. Talent
III. Support
IV. Persistence

(A) I and II only
(B) II and III only
(C) I, III and IV only
(D) II, III and IV only

36. The word "grind" (line 10) indicates that trying to achieve success without a label

(A) wastes time
(B) is very boring
(C) demands determination
(D) uses up physical energy

37. "The world" (line 14) refers to

(A) audiences
(B) record labels
(C) radio stations
(D) competing artistes

38. The MAIN intention of the author is to

(A) outline Richie Spice's path to success
(B) advise budding artistes about record labels
(C) instruct readers of the pitfalls in a music career
(D) highlight the particular things that made Richie Spice successful

39. The purpose of the passage is to

(A) direct
(B) inform
(C) persuade
(D) entertain

Items **40–47** refer to the following passage.

Instructions: Read the following passage carefully and then answer Items 40–47 on the basis of what is stated or implied.

From time immemorial, men have hunted wild animals in forests, tilled the soil and, caught fish in the sea and rivers, all with the object of obtaining food, that basic commodity essential to existence. Agriculture is part and parcel of life, and is as old as mankind. Yet, even in the most primitive times, man always had certain tools, hunting implements, knives, spears, and flints, to help him conquer nature and support himself.

As knowledge progressed over the centuries, so man developed more and more devices to aid and adorn his life; the corn from the soil was ground into flour and baked into bread; textile and clothing were made, and buildings such as castles and churches were created. The art of printing was discovered, and this led to the production of more and more books. Metal goods were turned out at forges and workshops throughout the country; great sailing vessels were constructed and a whole host of goods, ever increasing in variety as time went by, were manufactured by men.

Industry, which is the name given to those occupations in which something is manufactured, has thus for a very long time been an important part of man's existence. Tinkers, tailors, candlestick makers, ironmongers, blacksmiths, tanners, weavers, spinners, and many others were all an essential part of life in olden days. These were the people who manufactured the goods and articles that society wanted and needed.

The manufacturing industry was very closely associated with agricultural life. Many of the spinners, weavers and others did not work in the cities or towns, but in their own cottages in the rural villages. During sowing, ploughing and harvest time all activity was concentrated on the fields, but in the long winter months, with little or nothing to be done on the land, industrial work took the place of agricultural work. Spinning wheels spun wool into yarn, and weaving looms wove yarn into cloth.

In many parts of the country, agricultural labourers in summer became industrial workers in winter.

(Source Unknown)

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40. Man has always been involved in agriculture in order to

(A) earn a living
(B) conquer nature
(C) become wealthy
(D) obtain his food

41. According to the passage, which of the following has man used throughout his life to improve his agricultural production?

(A) Tools
(B) Books
(C) Nature
(D) Machines

42. The word "adorn" as used in line 7 is CLOSEST in meaning to

(A) protect
(B) improve
(C) lengthen
(D) decorate

43. According to the passage, tinkers, tailors, candlestick makers and weavers were all important in the olden days because they

(A) set the trends in fashion
(B) provided employment for the society
(C) were considered the providers in the society
(D) established themselves as people in authority

44. In medieval times, spinning and weaving were considered

(A) cottage industries
(B) heavy industries
(C) weekend jobs
(D) pastimes

45. The writer makes it clear that many villagers were

(A) disenchanted with life in the city
(B) underemployed during the winter
(C) threatened by the growth of industry
(D) involved in both manufacturing and farming

46. The writer suggests that the overall result of manufacturing has been to

(A) raise living standards
(B) increase food production
(C) mechanize the production of goods
(D) increase the spread of information

47. From the passage it is evident that

(A) man has turned increasingly to industry
(B) many labourers did not like agricultural work
(C) manufacturing industries did not exist in primitive times
(D) there were many large factories for manufacturing goods

Items **48–54**

Instructions: Read the following advertisement carefully and then answer items 53–60 on the basis of what is stated or implied.

Caribbean Jewel Beach Resort

Nestled among the grandeur of unspoiled Caribbean mountainside, the Caribbean Jewel Beach Resort is an idyllic, serene island retreat with spacious, luxuriously appointed rooms, each with its own dramatic view of the Bay and the Caribbean Sea. An unmatched private atmosphere coupled with Saint Lucia's finest views of picturesque Rodney Bay, Pigeon Island and neighbouring Martinique make this intimate setting one of the island's most sought-after destinations.

The resort is in close proximity to the many leisure amenities Saint Lucia has to offer. Shops, restaurants, an international marina and the island's best beach are all at the foot of the property.

48. The word "nestled" (line 1) suggests that

(A) the resort compliments its environment
(B) the resort buildings are as majestic as the mountain
(C) the foliage and mountain surround the buildings of the resort
(D) the guests can consider themselves as safe as birds in a nest

49. The use of the word "unmatched" (line 3) in the extract is an appeal to the human desire to be

(A) ahead of the rest
(B) envied by others
(C) better than others
(D) among an elite group

50. What does the Caribbean Jewel Beach Resort highlight as its BEST feature?

(A) Private ambiance
(B) Beautiful scenery
(C) National popularity
(D) Convenient location

51. Who is the MOST likely intended audience for this extract?

(A) Couples
(B) Families
(C) Adventurers
(D) Yachtsmen

52. Which of the following words in the extract BEST indicate that the resort's clientele are usually NOT nationals of Saint Lucia?

I. "international marina"
II. "unspoiled Caribbean mountain-side"
III. "idyllic, serene island retreat"

(A) I only
(B) II only
(C) I and III only
(D) II and III only

53. The expression "Caribbean Jewel" is an example of

(A) metaphor
(B) symbolism
(C) metonymy
(D) synecdoche

54. Visitors to the Caribbean Jewel Beach Resort are MOST likely to describe their experience as

(A) calm
(B) relaxing
(C) romantic
(D) stimulating

Items **55–60**

Instructions: Read the following advertisement carefully and then answer Items 55–60 on the basis of what is stated or implied.

ACNE * BE * GONE * # * 1 * PRODUCT * IN * THE * WORLD

Teenagers across the Caribbean are all talking about it

ACNE BE GONE!™

#1 product on the market

Tested by Dermatologists

APPROVED

Do you want to clear all unsightly blemishes?
Do you want your confidence back?
Do you want a date for graduation?
You can do all these things with

ACNE BE GONE!™

Now available in stores near you at this special introductory price of

~~$20.00~~
~~$15.00~~
$9.99
(while stocks last)

It really works!
Take the CHOCOLATE TEST!
You can eat anything you want and not break out with

ACNE BE GONE!™

Side effects include swelling and rashes. Consult your doctor.

ACNE * BE * GONE * # * 1 * PRODUCT * IN * THE * WORLD

55. The advertisers use the word "unsightly" to

(A) motivate people to use Acne Be Gone!
(B) suggest that acne should be hidden
(C) ensure that the reader visualizes the problem
(D) make the reader feel more ashamed of his/her blemished appearance

56. The graphical representation of the product is MAINLY used to

(A) show people what the product looks like
(B) illustrate the packaging and suggest that the product is magical
(C) portray the product as being better than its competitors
(D) demonstrate visually the blemish removing power of Acne Be Gone!

57. Which of the following techniques are used to persuade in this advertisement?

I. Financial enticement
II. Showing of the container
III. Appeal to fears and desires

(A) I and II only
(B) I and III only
(C) II and III only
(D) I, II and III

58. A language device used in the advertisement to persuade is

(A) paradox
(B) metaphor
(C) hyperbole
(D) rhetorical questions

59. The size of the font used to describe the side effects

(A) hides possible consequences of using the product
(B) suggests that the side effects are minor
(C) misdirects the reader and leads to erroneous conclusions about acne
(D) demonstrates that the problems are minor in comparison to the benefits

60. The words "while stocks last!" under the checked price MOST likely would have the effect of

(A) enticing the customer to save money
(B) persuading the reader to buy the product quickly
(C) prompting Caribbean people to go in search of the product
(D) fooling the prospective buyer into thinking he/she needs the product

END OF TEST

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH A

SPECIMEN PAPER 2015

Item No.	Key	Syllabus Reference
1	D	U.A.
2	B	U.A.
3	C	U.A.
4	D	U.A.
5	C	U.A.
6	B	U.A.
7	B	U.A.
8	D	U.A.
9	A	U.A.
10	D	U.A.
11	D	U.A.
12	A	U.A.
13	B	U.A.
14	A	U.A.
15	A	U.A.
16	C	U.A.
17	C	U.A.
18	D	U.A.
19	C	U.A.
20	B	U.A.
21	D	U.C.
22	A	U.C.
23	B	U.C.
24	C	U.C.
25	C	U.C.
26	B	U.C.
27	B	U.C.
28	D	U.C.
29	B	U.C.
30	C	U.C.

Item No.	Key	Syllabus Reference
31	D	U.C.
32	B	U.C.
33	D	U.C.
34	C	U.C.
35	D	U.C.
36	C	U.C.
37	A	U.C.
38	A	U.C.
39	B	U.C.
40	D	U.B.
41	A	U.B.
42	B	U.B.
43	C	U.B.
44	A	U.B.
45	D	U.B.
46	A	U.B.
47	A	U.B.
48	C	U.D.
49	C	U.D.
50	B	U.D.
51	A	U.D.
52	C	U.D.
53	A	U.B.
54	B	U.B.
55	A	U.B.
56	C	U.B.
57	D	U.B.
58	D	U.B.
59	B	U.B.
60	D	U.B.

TEST CODE **01218020**

SPEC 2015/01218020

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH A

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 02 – General Proficiency

2 hours 55 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper consists of FOUR sections: A, B, C and D.
2. Section A consists of **ONE** question. You MUST answer this question.
3. Section B consists of **ONE** question. You MUST answer this question.
4. Section C consists of **TWO** questions. You MUST answer ONE question from this section.
5. Section D consists of **ONE** question. You MUST answer this question.
6. You are advised to take some time to read through the paper and plan your answers.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

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SECTION A

(Suggested time: 40 minutes)

You MUST answer this question.

Write your answer on the RULED PAGES provided, pages 4 and 5. There may be more space than you need. There is a blank page for any notes you may want to make. THIS WILL NOT BE MARKED.

1. Read the following article on tattoos carefully and list FIVE MAIN points discussed, then write a summary of the article in NOT MORE THAN 120 words. If this limit is exceeded, only the first 120 words of your answer will be read and assessed.

As far as possible, use your own words. Your summary must be in continuous prose. You may use your answer booklet to jot down a plan.

In your answer, you will be assessed on how well you

(a) identified the main ideas and opinions in the extract
(b) organized and expressed these ideas and opinions in your own words
(c) used appropriate grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

Tattoos

Since the beginning of civilization, they have served as marks of identification, spiritual protection and decoration. Now at the cusp of another millennium, tattoos and other varieties of body markings are resurfacing as a popular form of individual self-expression.

Tattoos are timeless and can be as unique as the bearers they adorn. They don't fade away like favourite T-shirts, or get lost or broken like school rings. They stay with you forever, until death. They become a part of you from the day you sit in the artist's chair, etching your emotions alongside the needle's sting, transforming an instant of your life into a symbol for the world to see.

Tattoos and other body markings arrived in the Caribbean with African slaves and indentured workers from China and India. They were sometimes the only permanent keepsakes of peoples snatched from their ancestral places. The Caribbean's original Amerindian inhabitants also used tattoos to mark spiritual milestones. The Taino of the Northern Caribbean Islands, for instance, used vegetable dyes to affix images of their guardians onto their skin. These images also indicated an individual's lineage, or his or her social position. Each tattoo was both a personal history book and a mark of belonging.

Over the centuries, however, tattoos and other forms of bodily adornment have mutated, exchanging religious and cultural significance for individualist associations. Sometimes that mark of individuality has been confused with rebellion and non-conformity, often alluding to a stain of bad character. Tattoo-wearers have seemed wild, dangerous, even just plain bad.

But today, tattoos have come full circle. Celebrities, writers, lawyers, housewives, all proudly display their marks of rebellion. An entirely new perception of the art of tattooing has arisen, which is more than just a preoccupation with style. This rediscovered form of expression has spawned an entire subculture of individuals among us. They carry this common bond of distinction through their daily routines. Via the images on their forearms, shoulders, ankles, or torsos, they connect to each other, announcing to the world that it is OK to be unique and different.

Adapted from "Pictures made flesh". Caribbean Beat*, July/August 2003.*

Total 25 marks

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION A

You may make notes here. This will NOT be marked.

SECTION A

Question 1.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION A

Question 1.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION B

(Suggested time: 35 minutes)

You MUST answer this question.

Write your answer on the RULED PAGES provided, pages 8 and 9. There may be more space than you need. There is a blank space for any notes you may want to make. THIS WILL NOT BE MARKED.

2. Study the situation presented below and then answer the question that follows.

You purchased an item from a supermarket. On arrival home you noticed that the expiry date had passed. You attempted to return the item but you were told that it was on sale and the manager refused to give you a refund or replacement.

Write a letter to a consumer protection group or the editor of a newspaper in which you complain about the quality of the product and treatment which you received.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you

- **formatted your letter**
- **selected relevant and complete information**
- **organized and expressed the information in your letter**
- **used appropriate grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.**

Your letter MUST be in continuous prose.

Make sure to include all the details that would help in highlighting the matter. Your letter should include:

- Details of the complaint, for example:
    - Date and time of purchase
    - Cost of the item
    - Specific condition of the item
    - Response of staff

Total 30 marks

SECTION B

You may make notes here. This will NOT be marked.

SECTION B

Question 2.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION B

Question 2.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION C

(Suggested time: 45 minutes)

You MUST answer ONE question from this section.

Your answer should be approximately 400 to 450 words in length.

You MUST write in Standard English. However, dialect may be used in conversation.

Write your answer on the RULED PAGES provided, pages 13 - 16. You are expected to write within the word limit. There may be more space than you need. There is a blank space for any notes you may want to make. THIS WILL NOT BE MARKED.

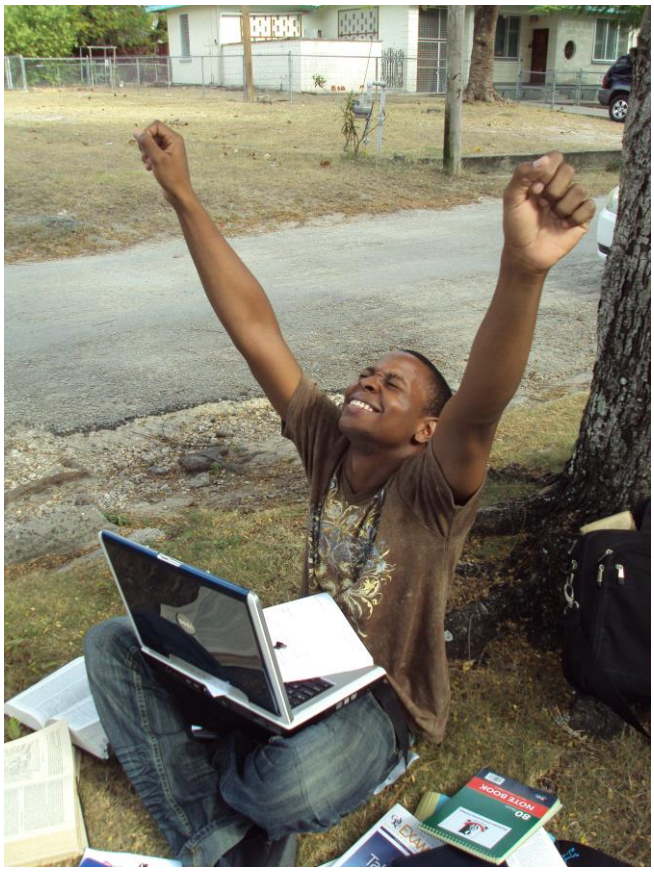
In your answer, you will be assessed on how well you

(a) **used the stimulus provided**
(b) **developed and organized the content of your writing**
(c) **used language appropriate to your audience, purpose and content**
(d) **used appropriate grammar, sentence structure, paragraphs, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.**

EITHER

SHORT STORY

3. Write a story based on the picture below.



(25 marks)

OR

4. She held her son close by her side as she walked quickly along the narrow road. This was the moment.

Write a story which includes these words. **(25 marks)**

SECTION C

You may make notes here. This will NOT be marked.

SECTION C

Write your answer to the question you have chosen to answer in Section C here.

Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

Question No. [ ]

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SECTION C

Write your answer to the question you have chosen to answer in Section C here.

Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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SECTION C

Write your answer to the question you have chosen to answer in Section C here.

Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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SECTION C

Write your answer to the question you have chosen to answer in Section C here.

Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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SECTION D

(Suggested time: 45 minutes)

You MUST answer this question.

Your answer should be approximately 250 to 300 words in length.

You MUST write in Standard English. Write your answer on the RULED PAGES provided, pages 20-21. You are expected to write within the word limit. There may be more space than you need. There is a blank page for any notes you want to make. THIS WILL NOT BE MARKED.

In your answer you will be assessed on the

(a) clarity, organization and development of your argument
(c) correctness of grammar, sentences, paragraphs, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

5. You are a member of a school board that is considering reforms. One of the suggestions is that all schools should make provisions for students who have disabilities of any kind. Write the speech you would make to the board, giving your views on the statement.

(25 marks)

SECTION D

You may make notes here. This will NOT be marked.

SECTION D

Question 5.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION D

Question 5.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

SECTION D

Question 5.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

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END OF TEST

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS TEST.

The Council has made every effort to trace copyright holders. However, if any have been inadvertently overlooked, or any material has been incorrectly acknowledged, CXC will be pleased to correct this at the earliest opportunity.

EXTRA SPACE

If you use this extra page, you MUST write the question number clearly in the box provided

Question No. ☐

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EXTRA SPACE

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Question No. ☐

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L
HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02

MARK SCHEME

SPECIMEN PAPER 2015

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **1**

P_1 UNDERSTANDING PROFILE: Maximum - **5 marks** **Content - 5**

P_2 EXPRESSION PROFILE: Maximum - **20 marks** **Organization - 10**
Mechanics - 10

Marks are to be awarded on the basis of information within the first 120 words.

Marks will be awarded as follows:

(1)	Content	-	**5 marks**
(2)	Organization of Content	-	**10 marks**
(3)	Language Usage/Mechanics	-	**10 marks**

(1) CONTENT

The candidate's response will be judged for its adequacy with respect to the following criteria within the set word limit:

- Selection, accuracy and completeness of main points identified
- Achieving purpose, and intent of the message
- Establishing a tone with roughly similar features

(2) ORGANIZATION OF CONTENT

- Arrangement of material with regard to sequencing, coherence, conciseness and sense of audience

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **1** cont'd

(3) LANGUAGE USAGE

The following will be considered in awarding the grades:

(i) Correct use of structure and language:

- Sentences must be complete
- Sentences must be clear and meaningful
- There must be effective and appropriate transition between sentences
- Subjects and verbs must agree
- Pronouns must agree with their antecedents
- There must be consistency in the use of tense

(ii) Accuracy of mechanics

Correct spelling and punctuation (for example, use of capitals, full stops, commas, question marks, etc.)

Marks will be awarded on the following scale:

N.B. Students who have performed incompetently in Areas(1)and(2) will be limited to **4 marks** in Mechanics of Writing/Language.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

The following grid should be used in the assessment of Question 1.

SUPERIORITY	6.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Superiority in addressing the criteria (3) Excellent, efficient and error-free use of language (as indicated under points 1 and 2 in Mechanics of Writing)	**5**	**10**	**10**
	5.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Superiority in addressing the criteria (3) Very good use of language though there may be the occasional lapse in accuracy	**4**	**9**	**9**
COMPETENCE	4.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Competence in addressing the criteria (3) Effective and accurate use of language though there may be a few lapses	**3**	**7-8**	**7-8**
	3.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Competence in addressing the criteria (3) Some ability to use language accurately and effectively but with some inconsistency in accurate usage	**2**	**5-6**	**5-6**
INCOMPETENCE	2.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Incompetence in addressing the criteria (3) Inability to use language accurately OR: Insufficient information presented in some area	**1**	**4**	**4**
	1.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Total incompetence in addressing the criteria (3) Frequent, inaccurate use of language. OR: Too little information presented to make an assessment	**0**	**0**	**0**

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

POINTS

- Tattoos are permanent markings which have been around from the beginning of civilization.
- They were brought to the Caribbean from Africa, China and India, but the Amerindians wore them even before.
- They were used by people in the Caribbean for religious, ethnic and cultural purposes
- Over the years they came to be personal expressions identified with rebellion and deviance.
- Attitudes have changed towards tattoos and today they have become acceptable as marks of uniqueness and difference.

(5 marks)

SAMPLE SUMMARY

From the beginning of civilization tattoos and other body markings have been marks of identification, spiritual protection and decoration.

Tattoos are permanent markings which vary greatly and can be personally very revealing. A tattoo is an instant of your life etched forever on you for the world to see.

Tattoos and other body markings were characteristic of the Amerindians of the Caribbean as well as of the Africans, Chinese and Indians who came there. For all these people they had cultural, spiritual and ethnic significance.

Over the centuries tattoos and other body markings have changed back and forth from group significance to individual significance, presenting a daily image of difference and uniqueness.

(20 marks)

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **2**

P_1	UNDERSTANDING PROFILE:	Maximum - **10 marks**	**Content**	**- 10**
P_2	EXPRESSION PROFILE:	Maximum - **20 marks**	**Organization**	**– 10**
			Language, Mechanics	**- 10**

Marks will be awarded as follows:

(1)	Content	-	**10 marks**
(2)	Organization of Content	-	**10 marks**
(3)	Language Usage, Mechanics	-	**10 marks**

(1) CONTENT

The answer will be judged for its adequacy with respect to the following criteria:

- Format and conventions	-	**3 marks**
- Relevance and clarity of information	-	**3 marks**
- Accuracy, completeness, appropriateness	-	**4 marks**

(2) ORGANIZATION OF CONTENT

- Arrangement of information with regard to sequencing, coherence, conciseness and sense of audience

(3) LANGUAGE USAGE

The following will be considered in awarding the grades:

(i) Correct use of structure and language:

- Sentences must be complete.
- Sentences must be clear and meaningful.
- There must be effective and appropriate transition between sentences and between paragraphs.
- Subjects and verbs must agree.
- Pronouns must agree with their antecedents.
- There must be consistency in the use of tense.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(ii) Accuracy of mechanics

Correct spelling and punctuation (for example, use of capitals, full stops, commas, question marks, apostrophes, semicolons, hyphens)

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

The following grid should be used in the assessment of Question 2.

SUPERIORITY	6.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Superiority in addressing the criteria (3) Excellent, efficient and error-free use of language (as indicated under points 1 and 2 in Mechanics of Writing)	**10**	**10**	**10**
	5.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Superiority in addressing the criteria (3) Very good use of language though there may be the occasional lapse in accuracy	**9**	**9**	**9**
COMPETENCE	4.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Competence in addressing the criteria (3) Effective and accurate use of language though there may be a few lapses	**7-8**	**7-8**	**7-8**
	3.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Competence in addressing the criteria (iii) Some ability to use language accurately and effectively but with some inconsistency in accurate usage	**5-6**	**5-6**	**5-6**
INCOMPETENCE	2.	Suggests: (1)&(2) Incompetence in addressing the criteria (3) Inability to use language accurately OR: Insufficient information presented in some area	**4**	**4**	**4**
	1.	Demonstrates: (1)&(2) Total incompetence in addressing the criteria (3) Frequent, inaccurate use of language. OR: Too little information presented to make an assessment	**0-3**	**0-3**	**0-3**

Question **2** cont'd – Sample Letter

No 67 Happy View
St James

October 12, 2014

The Manager
The Fair Trade Commission
Green Hill
Barbados

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to complain against Best Line Supermarkets from which I purchased a box of cereal on October 10, 2014. I have two areas of concern: the treatment I received, and the quality of the product.

The item was on sale and I paid $8.45 for it. On arrival home I realized that the product had expired since September. I returned the package, with the bill, and was directed to speak with the supervisor. He simply said that it was my duty to check any product I wanted to buy.

I went to the manager, explained the issue and expressed my disappointment. I also requested a refund but he too told me that I should have checked the date before making the purchase. In addition, he said that their policy is no exchange or refund on sale items. He promised to speak to his colleague, then he dismissed me and went to the telephone. I believe this treatment is unjust and would like you to intervene to rectify this matter.

Yours sincerely

Hadia Rogers

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Questions **3** and **4** Short Story (25 marks)

EXPRESSION C: **25 marks**

The following criteria will be used to assess the composition:

(a) Content and relevance of story:

(i) Story Line/Plot - Action Structure

- The story line must be clearly developed (for example, the events in the story must be linked appropriately).
- Links must be maintained appropriate to the choice of technique.
- Conflict(s) must be satisfactorily resolved.
- Action must be satisfactorily concluded.
- Actions/events must be clearly motivated (for example, there must be some plausible reason(s) for the things that happen).
- Setting must be established (for example, there must be a clear indication of where and when the action takes place).

(ii) Characterization:

- Characters must be believable (for example, characters must act and use language that is consistent with who they are).
- Any change in character (for example, personality/behaviour) must be clearly established.
- Characters must be sufficiently developed.
- Dialogue, when used, should be functional (for example, may develop character, action and atmosphere).

(b) Organization:

- Details/events must be logically and effectively sequenced.

(c) (i) Effective use of language:

- Appropriate choice of words to create characters, atmosphere and setting.
- Economic and lively use of language to create story elements listed under (a) and (b).

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Questions **3** and **4** Short Story (25 marks)

(ii) Correct use of structures of the language:

- Sentences must be complete.
- Sentences must be clear.
- Sentences must be meaningful.
- There must be effective and appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
- Subjects and verbs must agree.
- Pronouns must agree with their antecedents.
- There must be consistency in the use of tense.

(iii) Accuracy of mechanics:

- Correct spelling, punctuation (for example, use of capitals, full stops, question marks)
- Paragraphing

N.B. If the student's response satisfies no criteria in (a) page 10, the response must be given **zero marks**.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

The following grid should be used in the assessment of Questions 3 and 4.

SUPERIORITY	6.	Demonstrates: (a) Excellent manipulation of features of action structure and characterization (b) Excellent organization (c) Excellent, effective and error-free use of language	**24-25**
	5.	Suggests: (a) Very good manipulation of features of action structure characterization (b) Very good organization (c) Very good use of language though there may be the occasional lapse in accuracy	**20-23**
COMPETENCE	4.	Demonstrates: (a) Good manipulation of features of action structure but with some unevenness in the presentation of these features (b) Good organisation (c) Effective and accurate use of language, though there may be a few lapses	**15-19**
	3.	Suggests: (a) Inconsistency in the manipulation of features of action structure (b) Some ability to organize events/details (c) Some ability to use language accurately and effectively but with some slight inconsistency in accurate usage	**10-14**
INCOMPETENCE	2.	Suggests: (a) An inability to manipulate vital features of action structure (b) An inability to organize events and details in a logical manner (c) Frequent, inaccurate use of language OR: Insufficient information presented in some areas	**5-9**
	1.	Demonstrates: (a) Total inability to manipulate features of action structure (b) Total inability to organize events and details. (c) Inability to use language accurately OR: Too little information presented to make an assessment	**0-4**

Note: A response that is too short (less than one page, 200 words) should not be given a mark higher than 14/3.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **5**(25 marks)

EXPRESSION D: **25 marks**

Marks will be awarded for the following:

Area I:

1. Content - Argument and Comment

   (a) The selection of information/details must be relevant to the focus of the argument.
   (b) The argument must show a clear sense of the writer's awareness of audience (for example, the writer may take the position that the audience: (i) knows nothing about the topic or (ii) shares basic information about the topic).
   (c) The writer must use register and tone appropriate to the audience selected.
   (d) The writer's purpose must be clearly linked to audience needs (indicated in (b) (i) and (ii), for example, (i) to inform, persuade and convince of a point of view (ii) to persuade/convince).
   (e) The supporting details that are used to develop the argument must fulfil one or more of the following functions: (i) expand, (ii) explain, (iii) illustrate (for example, by means of anecdotes, etc.) the main argument(s).
   (f) In illustrating, explaining or expanding the argument, the writer must make use of a range of strategies, for example, defining, showing causes and effects, making meaningful comparisons.
   (g) The writer must argue from a consistent point of view, this means the writer may anticipate the opposition's arguments but must not contradict his/her own argument(s)/position.

2. Organization - Logical development and reasoning

   (a) The writer must present the details in a logical sequence that maintains the focus of the argument.
   (b) The logical sequence of ideas/details must be clear within sentences, across sentences in paragraphs and between paragraphs.
   (c) The conclusions the writer draws must arise naturally and logically from the arguments presented.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **5**(25 marks)

Area II

Expression (A) skills

1. Correct use of structures of the language:

   - Sentences must be complete (for example, subordinate clauses chosen must be of the appropriate type).
   - Sentences must be clear.
   - Sentences must be meaningful.
   - There must be effective and appropriate transitions between sentences and between paragraphs.
   - Subjects and verbs must agree.
   - Pronouns must agree with their antecedents.
   - There must be consistency in the use of tense.

2. Accuracy of mechanics:

   - Correct spelling, punctuation (for example, use of capitals, full stops, question marks)
   - Paragraphing

ENGLISH A

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

The following grid should be used in the assessment of Question 5.

			Area I	**Area II**
SUPERIORITY	6.	Demonstrates: (a) Excellent management of argument and content as indicated under Area I (a)-(g). (b) Excellent organization of arguments and details as indicated under Area I(a)—(c) (c) Excellent, effective and error-free use of language as indicated under Area II	**14-15**	**10**
	5.	Suggests: (a) Very good management of argument and content as indicated under Area I (a)—(g) (b) Very good organization of arguments and details (c) Very good use of language though there may be the occasional lapse in accuracy	**11-13**	**8-9**
COMPETENCE	4.	Demonstrates: (a) Good management of argument and content as indicated under Area I (a)-(g) (b) Good organization of arguments and details (c) Good use of language, though there may be a few lapses	**7-10**	**6-7**
	3.	Suggests: (a) Inconsistency in the management of argument and content as indicated under Area I (a)-(g) (b) Some ability to organize arguments and details (b) Some ability to use language accurately and effectively but with some inconsistency in accurate usage	**6-9**	**4-5**
INCOMPETENCE	2.	Suggests: (a) An inability to manage vital features of argument as indicated under Area I (a)-(g) (b) An inability to organize arguments and details (c) Frequent, inaccurate use of language OR: Insufficient information presented	**4-5**	**1-3**
	1.	Demonstrates: (a) Total inability to manage features of argument (b) Total inability to organize arguments (c) Inability to use language accurately OR: Too little information presented to make an assessment	**0-3**	**0-1**

TEST CODE **01219032**

SPEC 2015/01219032

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH A

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 032 – General Proficiency

2 hours

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper consists of **THREE** questions. Answer ALL questions.
2. Write your answers in the spaces provided in this booklet.
3. You are advised to take some time to read through the paper and plan your answers.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO

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Read the THREE texts carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Text 1 – Editorial from a Newspaper

DISCIPLINE IS AT THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE

It was triggered weeks ago when two female students wearing natural hair posted their pictures on Facebook complaining that their principal expressed disapproval of their hairstyles. In an interview with this newspaper, the principal said her only edict which she indicated clearly to students, was that they be neat and tidy in their school uniforms and that certain hairstyles were simply not appropriate for classes.

We endorse these comments by the principal, whose intention, it appears, is to set standards for the school she leads and the students in her charge. Students need to clearly understand there are rules that govern the regular operation of schools and those that speak to the deportment of those attending these institutions.

President of the National Council of Parent–Teacher Associations, put the issue into perspective when she said this was not about hair, but discipline and respect for rules.

We also agree with her on the point that schools are not just about the teaching of Mathematics and English. Schools help prepare students for life. From schools, students go on to the world of work and if they find it difficult to follow school rules, how will they fare on the job when there are regulations in place that must be obeyed?

While there are natural rights and freedoms which cannot be suppressed, children in school must conform to the standards set.

This issue came to the fore again just yesterday when this newspaper revealed that a new dress code was implemented for police officers banning them from wearing dreadlocks, make-up, extreme hair colour or having visible tattoos. Some police officers are reportedly upset by the new rules outlined in a section of the RBPF Policy on General Appearance of Police Officers dated January 15, 2015.

We do not believe the issue at hand is simply the wearing of natural hair. The larger point speaks to upholding discipline in society and the need for respect for rules and authority, whether it is in our schools or police force. Without these, we would be a lost society.

Adapted from "Discipline is at the crux of the issue", Editorial, Nation News, 22 January, 2015.

Text 2 – Song by India Arie

I am not my hair

Little girl with the press and curl
Age eight I got a Jheri curl
Thirteen I got a relaxer
I was a source of so much laughter
At fifteen when it all broke off
Eighteen and went all natural
February two thousand and two

I went and did
What I had to do
Because it was time to change my life
To become the women that I am inside
Ninety-seven dreadlock all gone
I looked in the mirror
For the first time and saw that HEY…

I am not my hair
I am not this skin
I am not your expectations no no
I am not my hair
I am not this skin
I am a soul that lives within

What'd she do to her hair?
I don't know it look crazy
I like it. I might do that.
Umm I wouldn't go that far.
I know.. ha ha ha ha

Good hair means curls and wave
Bad hair means you look like a slave
At the turn of the century
It's time for us to redefine who we be
You can shave it off
Like a South African beauty

Or get in on lock
Like Bob Marley
You can rock it straight
Like Oprah Winfrey
If it's not what's on your head
It's what's underneath and they say HEY…

"I am Not my Hair", India Arie, Songs of Windswept Pacific, Retrieved 09 March 2015

Text 3 – Poem by Sunkissed Gem

Resilience

Perfectly patterned particles
push perpetually,
emerging: emancipated, elated,
enthusiastic.
Pushing proudly
up through layers upon layers of denial.
Past denaturing chemicals
and excessive heat;
curls emerge: triumphant.
Blatant refusal
to be ignored.
Blatant defiance of standards.
Despite countless chemicals
and incessant heat curls return:
a complexly simple statement
and reminder
of identity and culture.
Our hair is
as our land is
as we are:
EVER BEAUTIFULLY
RESILIENT.

Sunkissed Gem, "Resilience", Retrieved 27 February 2015 from
http://www.naturallycurly.com/curltalk/newreply.php?do=newreply&p=945996

1. (a) Outline the **main** issue addressed in EACH of the THREE texts.

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(**6 marks**)

(b) For any ONE of the texts given, assess the appropriateness of that medium for the purpose of communicating the specific issue.

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(**3 marks**)

(c) For any TWO of the texts given, choose ONE language technique used in EACH and explain its effectiveness.

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(**6 marks**)

Total 15 marks

2. (a) State THREE features that distinguish an oral presentation from a written presentation.

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(**6 marks**)

(b) You have been asked to make an oral presentation on ONE of the issues identified in 1 (a) on page 5. List THREE points you would discuss in the oral presentation.

_____

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(**3 marks**)

(c) Identify THREE features of the group to which the presentation would be made and THREE techniques that you would use to hold the attention of the group.

_____

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(**6 marks**)

Total 15 marks

3. Create a response based on ONE of the points listed in 2 (a) above. You can use drama, poetry, lyrics to a song or prose. Your response will be assessed for

- relevance of content
- organization of ideas
- effective use of language
- vivid word choice
- unique voice/style

Total 15 marks

END OF TEST

You MUST write your answer to Question 3 on this page.

You MUST write your answer to Question 3 on this page.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®

EXAMINATION

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SPECIMEN PAPER 2015

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **1**

(a) While the three stimulus pieces chosen deal with the topic of the wearing of natural hair it is dealt with from varying perspectives. The editor who penned the newspaper editorial used the topic to address the issue of the need to conform to standards and show respect for rules and authority if we want to maintain discipline in our society. The poet's main issue is that wearing natural hairstyles is an expression of the person you are and it cannot be denied while in the lyrics to the song the point is being made that who you are is much more important than how you choose to style your hair.

(6 marks)

(b) In the song, the issue is presented through the use of rhythm, repetition of the idea of you being more than your hair, as well as the references made to well known personalities. It is an entertaining way of dealing with a serious issue that would be appealing.

(3 marks)

(c) The writer in the article uses generalities, mentioning that students need to understand that there are rules that govern the regular operation of schools and officers are expected not to just uphold the law but to also uphold discipline. Since most people would tend to agree with these statements they are effective in persuading people to accept the argument.

In the poem, the first four lines make use of alliteration. This technique helps to add emphasis and causes the reader to pay attention to the message as it creates a pleasant rhythmic effect.

(6 marks)

Total 15 marks

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **2**

(a) Three features that distinguish an oral presentation from a written presentation are:

- The speaker can gauge audience reaction and adjust his message accordingly
- It allows for audience interaction and clarification of misunderstandings
- The voice can be used to create a desired effect and this can help to promote understanding of the message

(b) In a presentation on the issue of persons wearing natural hairstyles as an expression of who they are, I would make these three points:

- This promotes an understanding of cultural diversity
- The texture of the hair allows for creativity in developing distinguished hairstyles
- It is a choice which supports a healthy approach to the treatment of your hair

(c) The oral presentation is being made to a group made up of:

- Females
- 14-16 years
- Participants in a cosmetology course

The following techniques would be used to hold the attention of the group.

- Integrate relevant, supportive, attractive visual aids, props and samples to heighten the interest and stimulate the imagination of the audience to the possibilities for natural hairstyles.
- Allow for audience participation through the use of 'hands up' feedback to questions giving them an opportunity to feel connected to the issue.
- Make eye contact and display enthusiasm to help to transfer some of my energy and interest to the audience.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **3** – Personal Response (15 marks)

The following criteria will be used to assess the composition:

(a) Content and relevance of response

- The focus of the response must be clear and must be fully developed.
- Actions/events must be clearly motivated (for example, there must be some plausible reason(s) for the things that happen).
- Rich detail must create a clear and authentic picture and hold reader's attention.

(b) Organization

- Details/events must be logically and effectively sequenced.
- There must be a memorable introduction and conclusion (explicit or implicit).
- Transitions must tie the ideas together.

(c) Effective use of language

- Sentences must be clear.
- Sentences must be deliberately used to affect style.
- Sentence structure is varied and complex.

(d) Voice/Style

- The writing must be reflect a unique, consistent personal voice.
- Connection to audience and purpose must be clear.
- Individual commitment to the topic must be obvious.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(e) Word Choice

- Vivid natural language must create a clear picture of characters and atmosphere.
- Strong verbs, precise nouns and appropriate adjectives must be used to enhance meaning.
- Original phrases and words must allow for reflection and thoughtful insight.

SPEC 2015/01219010

TEST CODE **01219010**

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

Paper 01 – General Proficiency

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper consists of THREE questions. Each question is worth 20 marks.
2. Answer ALL questions.
3. Write your answers in the spaces provided in this answer booklet.
4. Do NOT write in the margins.
5. You are advised to take some time to read through the paper and plan your answers.
6. If you need to rewrite any answer and there is not enough space to do so on the original page, you must use the extra lined page(s) provided at the back of this booklet. **Remember to draw a line through your original answer.**
7. **If you use the extra page(s) you MUST write the question number clearly in the box provided at the top of the extra page(s) and, where relevant, include the question part beside the answer.**

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

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SECTION A — DRAMA

1. Read the following extract carefully and answer ALL the questions that follow.

[*BOY enters followed by as many men and women as possible. They all shuffle around looking wide-eyed.*]

ALL: Mother, we are here.
ANOWA: I see you. Listen. Has any of you heard of a woman whose husband wanted to divorce her but would not tell her why?[*They look bewildered and answer 'No' as if it were a line in a musical round, sung softly: no, no, no, no, no, no…They all whisper aloud to each other.*] Then please you may go… [*They all turn round at once.]* No wait…Eh—eh… I would like to send some of you. I am sending you to the oldest and wisest people on this land; go ask them if they have ever heard of a man who sought to divorce his wife and would not tell her why. [*Points at random to different people*.] Go quickly and come back today and walk as you have never walked before. Come quickly, for already I hear too many noises in my head and you must come back before my mind flies and gets lost. [*The crowd disperses through all available exits. Exhausted but still excited, ANOWA paces around KOFI AKO who is now very silent.*] I have known this was coming for weeks and I have feared. Boy!
BOY: [*Running*] Mother, I am here.
ANOWA: I hear Nana Abakrampahene Kokroko is here. He and the other chiefs are meeting with the Governor. Go whisper in his ears that he is to come to me.
KOFI AKO: [*Raising himself up*] Anowa, what are you doing all this for?
ANOWA: The times are past when our individual actions had to be explained to each other.

[*BOY looks away in embarrassment*.]

KOFI AKO: Perhaps you are going out of your senses.
ANOWA: That should not mean anything to you.
KOFI AKO: That is not what concerns me, but you shall not let this out before Nana. *[He stamps his feet*.]
ANOWA: Just sit there and look at me.
KOFI AKO: [*Shouts*] You may go away, Boy. Forget what your Mother told you.
BOY: Yes Father. [*He retires*.]
ANOWA: Who are you to say what you shall allow and what you shall not allow me?
KOFI AKO: [*Loud with anger*] Nana is my friend and not yours.
ANOWA: That is why I am asking him to come.
KOFI AKO: Anowa, you shall not disgrace me before him.
ANOWA: Are you not disgracing me before the whole world?
KOFI AKO: Your strange speeches will not persuade me…
ANOWA: I am not trying to. It is a long time since my most ordinary words ceased to have any meaning for me.
KOFI AKO: I say once more that Nana is the only man in this world I respect and honour.
ANOWA: My good husband, in the old days how well I knew you. That is why I want to consult him too.
KOFI AKO: Anowa, if you do not leave me quietly, but go consulting anybody about this affair. I just want you to leave me, that's all.
ANOWA: Oh the Gods of my fathers, what is it? What is it?
KOFI AKO: I shall have the little house built for you, as I promised, but in Yebi…

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

ANOWA: But I cannot go and live there.
KOFI AKO: I will give you half of the trade and half of the slaves if you want them.
ANOWA: I don't want anything from you.
KOFI AKO: Take away with you all the jewellery.
ANOWA: I say I want nothing…
KOFI AKO: And you must leave immediately. I myself shall come to Yebi, or send people you can respect to come and explain everything to your family…
ANOWA: No, no, no!
KOFI AKO: ...I shall ask a few men and women to go with you now, and carry your personal belongings.
ANOWA: But…
KOFI AKO: Boy!
ANOWA: Stop!
KOFI AKO: What? [*Unknown to the two, not only Boy but several of the slaves, men and women, appear*.]
ANOWA: You cannot send me away like this. Not to Yebi, or anywhere. Not before you have told me why. I swore to Mother I was not returning. Not ever.[*Not shedding a tear but eyes shining dangerously*] No, I am not in rags. But…I do not have children from this marriage. Ah! Yes, Kofi, [*She moves to him and whispers hoarsely and audibly*] we do not have children, Kofi, we have not got children.

Ama Ata Aido, "Anowa." In <u>*Dilemna of a Ghost and Anowa*</u>*,*
Pearson Education Limited, 1985, pp. 18–21.

(a) Describe what is happening in lines 4–15.

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(**2 marks)**

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

(b) Describe the role of the following characters in the play:

(i) The Boy

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(2 marks)

(ii) The onlookers

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(2 marks)

(c) State what you learn about Kofi Ako from any TWO stage directions.

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(4 marks)

(d) What does the statement, "The times are past when our individual actions had to be explained to each other" (line 19), indicate about the relationship between Kofi and his wife?

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(2 marks)

(e) Comment on the dramatic effect of the use of the ellipses in the extract.

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(3 marks)

(f) Suggest ONE reason for the marital conflict. Support you answer with evidence from the extract.

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(2 marks)

(g) What is the effect of the marital conflict on the other characters in the play? Support your answer with evidence from the extract.

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(3 marks)

Total 20 marks

SECTION B — POETRY

2. Read the following poem carefully and answer ALL the questions that follow.

To A Daughter

He never hoped for you, he never not:
It was you who gave birth to a father.

A baby, you often wanted to play
with the only friend you had all day long

but the drug of Work would pull him away
to a desk, piano, easel or stove.

If he felt you were keeping him from other
life like salt running out, he might bark

Leave me alone, in the anger of fear
and he would feel his voice quiver your spine.

But you never stopped running to embrace
him, teaching how gratuitous is love.

Your father's love for you, shadowed by pain,
clouded by duty, was never as free.

Yet though you're now 'tall as a lantern post',
you still sit on his knee and hug his neck;

but that he once frightened you still frightens him
should he snap Leave me alone, meaning now Don't.

Brian Chang, "To A Daughter."
In The Oxford Book of Caribbean Verse,
Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 246.

(a) State TWO qualities of the father. Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

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(4 marks)

(b) Explain the meaning of line 2, "It was you who gave birth to a father."

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(3 marks)

(c) Identify ONE simile OR metaphor used in the poem and comment on its effectiveness.

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(3 marks)

(d) Suggest ONE instance in the poem when the mood changes and give ONE reason for this change.

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(3 marks)

(e) Who is the speaker in the poem? Provide ONE reason for your answer.

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(3 marks)

(f) Suggest how the structure of the poem reinforces the meaning.

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(4 marks)

Total 20 marks

SECTION C — PROSE FICTION

3. Read the following extract carefully and answer ALL the questions that follow.

He stood awkwardly, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, looking through the open pantry window with the dancing eyes of a boy about to receive a treat of good things. But it wasn't the jam tarts that the maid, Miranda, was taking from the oven and putting in a dish that held his gaze, rapt. It was Miranda herself.

Her trim figure in her blue uniform, chic, neat-fitting, made his eyes swim in his head. It was as though, whenever she was in sight he couldn't take his eyes off her. She ravished his senses. And simple country yokel that he was he didn't know how to set about making a girl like Miranda. For Miranda was city-bred, and house broke, and all the things that he wasn't. She had training. She had refinement, culture.

And she let him help her after his work in the garden was over. She had let him stand near as near to her over the kitchen sink and wash dishes and feel the presence of her, the delicious, maddening nearness of her go through him like sharp knives, like red hot needles. She smelt like a lady. It made his head reel. Made him aware of his own grossness, his own inferiority, his own lack of polish and refinement. Made him aware of his own soiled and patched clothes, and his own large bare feet, his own rough red skin.

Once or twice he saw her walking out with nice looking young men — chauffeurs, and such. He envied them. Not alone because she was walking out with them, but because of something they had that he lacked. A poise, a certain assurance that was almost swagger. Shoes on their feet. The way they wore their clothes.

One evening as he walked home with her — he suddenly blurted out ... "I would like for you to come out with me, once in a while. Eh?"
"How? Where?"
"Movies?" It was a bold gesture. He had never been to a movie in his life ... now he was asking this girl to go with him. Just like that.
Unconsciously, he was taking on to himself some of the easy swagger of the young men he'd seen Miranda with.
He said, coming closer to her, "What say we go to a movie Sat'day night? You'n me. Eh?"
She looked up at his face ... and away ... and down at his feet.
Suddenly, unexpectedly, she burst out laughing. She just fell on the bank and squealed with laughter. She *was* one for laughing!
But it did something to him.

Adapted from Roger Mais, "Red Dirt Don't Wash".
In <u>The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories</u>,
Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 62–69.

(a) State TWO effects that Miranda has on the narrator. Support your answer with evidence from paragraphs 1 and 2.

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(4 marks)

(b) Identify TWO differences between Miranda and the narrator. Support your answer with evidence from the extract.

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(4 marks)

(c) (i) What is the narrative point of view of the extract?

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(1 mark)

(ii) How does the narrative point of view affect the way the story is told?

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(2 marks)

(d) Why did the protagonist envy the young men who walked out with Miranda?

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(2 marks)

(e) Identify the figurative device in ONE of the following and comment on its effectiveness:

- "She ravished his senses" (lines 6–7)
- "the delicious, maddening nearness of her go through him like sharp knives, like red hot needles" (lines 11–12)

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(3 marks)

(f) Comment on the writer's use of dialogue in the extract.

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(2 marks)

(g) Suggest what effect Miranda's laughter had on the narrator (lines 29–31).

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(2 marks)

Total 20 marks

END OF TEST

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS TEST.

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C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

Paper 01 - General Proficiency

SPECIMEN PAPER

KEY AND MARK SCHEME

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **1** – Drama

(a) Award 2 marks for a complete response as follows:
Anowa claims that her husband, (Kofi Ako) is trying to divorce her and she does not know his reason for doing so. In lines 4–15 she announces this to a group of bewildered people instructing them to journey throughout the land and find out from the oldest and wisest amongst them if they had ever heard of such a thing.
Award 1 mark if the candidate gives a partial response such as a Kofi Ako wants to divorce his wife.

[2 marks]

(b) In EACH case, award 1 mark for identification of the role and 1 mark for description of how that role is demonstrated.

(i) The Boy plays the role of the messenger. Anowa sends him to call Nana Kokoroko and Kofi Ako tells him not to do so.

[2 marks]

(ii) The onlookers play the role of mediators. They act as third party community witnesses to the unfolding scenario between Anowa and Kofi Ako. They first arrive on the scene, seemingly at Anowa's initial request for their presence.

[**2 marks]**

(c) Award 1 mark EACH for EACH aspect of character (1+1)
Award 1 mark EACH for appropriate support provided by the stage direction.
(1+1)

Any TWO of the following:

- **Aspect of character:** Angry/impatient/seeks to keep his personal life private

Support from stage direction: When Kofi Ako "*stamps his feet*" it indicates that he is angry at his wife Anowa but more than that, he wants to keep their personal life private while Anowa seeks to consult with everyone on the issue. The stamping of his feet indicates his frustration, anger and impatience with his wife's behaviour.

- **Aspect of character:** Domineering and intimidating

  Support from stage direction: Kofi Ako "*shouts*" at the Boy telling him to ignore Anowa's request that he seek out Nana. While Kofi is frustrated and angry that his wife Anowa wants his friend Nana, an elder and a chief to come and mediate in their marital conflict, he perhaps fears being belittled before Nana whose views he respects and whom he honours. He does not want Nana to be involved in his domestic situation. He shouts to intimidate the Boy.

- **Aspect of character:** Conservative /Private

  Support from stage direction: Kofi Ako speaks to Anowa "*loud with anger*" because he is especially sensitive to her inviting Nana to mediate between them in their marital dispute. He considers Nana his friend whom he honours and respects and he is angry at his wife for bringing his friend into their personal, private lives.

(2+2) [4 marks]

(d) Award 2 marks for a detailed response as follows:
Their relationship has deteriorated to such an extent that they no longer consult each other regarding the decisions that they make.

[2 marks]

(e) For any ONE effect given below award 1 mark and award 2 marks for explanation of the effect. The ellipses in the extract have the following dramatic effect:

- **They increase tension —** When Kofi Ako says "Your strange speeches will not persuade me… " the ellipses at the end of the statement indicate the growing tension in their marital relationship.
- **They increase pace —** When Kofi Ako tells his wife, "I shall have the little house built for you, as I promised, but in Yebi…" the ellipses at the end of that statement reinforce Anowa's dismissal but also her 'banishment' to Yebi introducing even more conflict into an already heated situation.
- **They introduce suspense —** When Anowa tells her husband, "I say I want nothing…" then twice her words end with "But …" followed by ellipses, the audience becomes anxious for Anowa's survival when she declares she wants nothing and is twice interrupted by her husband until the suspense is further increased with her realization that the divorce might be connected to their not having children.

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(1+2)[3 marks]

(f) Award 1 mark for reason and 1 mark for evidence.

The most obvious reason for the marital conflict is the lack of children in the marital relationship between Kofi Ako and Anowa. This is clear from Anowa's realization when she repeated three times, "But…I do not have children from this marriage. Ah! Yes, Kofi, [*She moves to him and whispers hoarsely and audibly*] we do not have children, Kofi, we have not got children."

(1+1)[2 marks]

(g) Award 1 mark for the effect and 2 marks for the support.

- For the onlookers, the marital conflict has the effect of making them bewildered/confused and this is clearly stated in the stage directions. The onlookers enter the scene and according to the stage directions, they "shuffle around looking wide-eyed" indicating that the marital conflict has them confused and this confusion is intensified when Anowa sends them off to enquire of the oldest and wisest if they had ever heard of a man who sought to divorce his wife and would not tell her why.

- For the Boy (who seems to be a messenger and lives in the home of Anowa and Kofi Ako since he calls them "Mother" and "Father"), the marital conflict affects him differently; he is embarrassed by it. He runs towards either Anowa or Kofi Ako (whoever instructs him) but as the husband and wife quarrel openly before him, according to the stage direction he "*looks away in embarrassment*".

(1+2) [3 marks]

Total 20 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **2**—Poetry

(a) Award 1 mark each for any TWO aspects of character. (1+1)
Award 1 mark each for appropriate support. (1+1)

- **Aspect of character:** Impatient

  Support: If the father felt that the daughter was keeping him away from something important that he needed to attend to "he might bark/Leave me alone" and even "snap" at her.

- **Aspect of character:** Dutiful

  Support: The father did his duty for his daughter, even if it pained him or inconvenienced him. To support this the speaker says, "Your father's love for you, shadowed by pain, /clouded by duty, was never as free".

- **Aspect of character:** Sensitive

  Support: Even though the father would sometimes "bark" at his daughter in his impatience, he is very sensitive to the hurt and fear that he instilled in his daughter, for the speaker says "and he would feel his voice quiver your spine". However, towards the end of the poem the father's deep sensitivity still affects him for the speaker says, "but that he once frightened you still frightens him".

- **Aspect of character:** Artistic and Industrious

  Support: Although the father worked from home and was often the only friend the daughter had all day long, he is hardworking for "the drug of Work would pull him away/to a desk, piano, easel or stove."

(2+2) [4 marks]

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(b) Award 3 marks for a complete response which identifies the line as being ironic and an explanation of the irony, with evidence from the poem.
Award 1–2 marks for a response which leaves out some of the details, for example, that it is ironic.

The line "It was you who gave birth to a father" is ironical since it implies that in this case when the daughter is born, although she is biologically/birthed by a mother, the father–daughter relationship supersedes the mother–daughter relationship as she [the daughter] gave 'birth' or life to the man who learns to become a father to her. In this way, the daughter's birth begins the process of the man becoming a father, a process that is significantly more than biological. This is also ironic as the father did not plan or yearn for a child. He "never hoped for you".

The daughter's birth initiated a process of the man becoming a father — a process that is not yet complete, even though the daughter is now as "tall as a lantern post". The process of becoming a father was not easy for the man who struggled with his own negative emotions and his tendency to project his impatience onto his daughter and act contrary to what he yearns for in his relationship with his daughter. The daughter's birth began the father's journey to get in touch with his emotions.

[3 marks]

(c) Award 1 mark for identification of EITHER ONE metaphor OR ONE simile. Award 2 marks for fully explained comment.

TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE	EXPLANATION
Metaphor	the drug of Work would pull him away/to a desk, piano, easel or stove	This metaphor is effective in conveying an image of work as a drug to which the father is addicted, to the exclusion of everything else. Unable to resist its influence on him, work would pull the father away to a desk, piano, easel or stove and limit his interaction with his daughter.
	Your father's love for you, shadowed by pain/clouded by duty	Effective in conveying a father's love for his daughter but this love is overshadowed by the father's own human pain and the dark monotony of a duty to be performed. The father's love lacked the purity and innocence of his daughter's who loved him freely and unconditionally. His love is "shadowed by pain, clouded by duty" creating an image of a love that is dutiful but lacking the lightness and gaiety of his daughter's own love.
Simile	If he felt you were keeping him from other/life like salt running out	Salt is a key ingredient in seasoning food to make it taste better. It is an essential component for taste. Used in the poem, it creates an effective image not only in conveying the idea that the father may have sometimes felt that his daughter was keeping him from attending to other key/significant aspects of his life and this made him irritable but the idea of

TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE	EXPLANATION
		"salt running out" also evokes an image of time running out — for sand is likened to salt and in an hourglass both hint at the passing of time.
	tall as a lantern post	The simile tall as a lantern post compares the daughter with a lantern post indicating that the daughter has grown up and has become tall and slim and is probably a teenager/young adult by the time the poem ends. Although she has grown up in the course of the poem, she is still affectionate towards her father because she still sits on his knee and hugs his neck.

(1+2)[3 marks]

(d) Award 3 marks for a response which indicates any one instance when the mood changes and 2 marks for an explanation for the change in mood.

In this poem, changes in mood occur throughout the poem and almost each stanza presents a different mood.

Instances of change:

- There is a mood of indifference which opens the poem (stanza 1) as the speaker initially seems rather dismissive of the father-figure who neither hoped for a daughter nor did he not hope for one. However, this mood changes with the birth of his daughter and in the process of him becoming a father, the mood changes from indifference to light and almost playful as the baby wants to play all day and the father engages with his daughter in play. However, in the third stanza as work pulls the father away he might "bark" at her in his anger and the mood changes to one of tension and anxiety as duty and responsibilities calls the father away.

Nevertheless, the daughter never stops running to embrace her father and the mood changes again to one of forgiveness and simple joy and happiness. Then as the father's love becomes shadowed in pain, a mood of darkness descends that threatens the love between father and daughter. But the girl grows and still sits on her father's knee and hugs his neck introducing a mood of forgiveness and gentle love.

Explanation

Thus, while there are several changes in mood in the poem, the reasons for these changes in mood are life-changing experiences like the birth of his daughter or even low periods when life becomes shadowed in pain as well as the pressure of life's demanding routines like work and responsibility.

[3 marks]

(e) Award 1 mark for identification of the speaker's voice
Award 2 marks for reason

In this poem, the speaking voice is most likely that of the mother/Someone who knew the father well.

(1 mark)

Several pieces of evidence link the mother's voice/Someone who knew the father well as the speaking voice.

- The speaker knew the man before he became a father and even before the daughter was born. She knew that 'He never hoped for you' [the daughter] and at the same time, he never did not hope for a daughter.

- The speaker is one who saw the relationship between the daughter and the father develop for she tells the daughter quite early in the poem 'It was you who gave birth to a father" for she saw what changes the daughter's birth brought into the man's life.

- The speaker knew intimate details about the man and his daughter's daily lives, his work habits, the daughter's capacity for play and love even when her father shouted at her

indicating that the speaker is quite close to both the man and his daughter and she truly understands the man, his moods and his motivation.

- **Candidates may also indicate the father as the speaker. This must be accepted and given full marks. The evidence can be introspection, he knows everything about their relationship better than anyone else.**

(1+2) [3 marks]

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(f) Award 2 marks for description of poetic structure and 2 marks for explaining and supporting how this structure reinforces meaning in the poem.

The poem is structured like a dialogue. Each stanza is just two lines long and the poem is structured as if it were an ongoing emotional dialogue between its two main characters, the father and his daughter. In this ongoing emotional dialogue, growth and change are occurring to both father and daughter and so this two-line poetic structure in each stanza reinforces poetic meaning by:

- Reinforcing characters and highlighting their contrasting characterization
- Echoing an emotional dialogue between father and daughter
- Reinforcing a conversational tone that speaks to the father–daughter relationship
- Contrasting the generation gap between father and daughter
- Highlighting changes in mood between stanzas
- Demonstrating that while change and growth is taking place between both father and daughter, the poetic structure echoes/dictates the pace at which this change is occurring

(2+2)[4 marks]

Total 20 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 3—Prose Fiction

(a) Award 1 mark for EACH appropriate effect (1+1)

Award 1 mark for appropriate support for EACH effect (1+1)

- **Effect:** Miranda has a physical effect on the narrator, making him dizzy.
  Evidence: Miranda the maid "ravished" the narrator's senses, making "his eyes swim in his head" and "his head reel". He could even feel the presence of her "like red hot needles".

- **Effect:** Miranda also had an emotional effect on the narrator who is in awe of her.
  Evidence: He "couldn't take his eyes off her … For Miranda was city-bred, and house broke, and all the things that he wasn't. She had training. She had refinement, culture." The narrator sees Miranda as better than he is so when she later walks out with other young men he becomes jealous, envious, competitive and possessive.

(2+2)[4 marks]

(b) Award 1 mark each for identification of TWO differences between the characters. (1+1)

Award 1 mark for appropriate support for EACH difference. (1+1)

- **Difference:** Miranda and the narrator both belong to the lower class and they both work as servants for other people but the difference between them is in the type of work they perform and the places where they work.
  Support: Miranda is a maid who works inside the house while the narrator is a gardener and he works outside.
- **Difference:** Their place of origin.
  Support: The narrator is from the country/rural district while Miranda is "city bred".

- **Difference:** Gender difference. Miranda being a woman who is often pursued by suitors while the narrator, a man, like the other young men, does the pursuing of the woman and so they both experience and express love differently.
  Support: The narrator is nervous about approaching Miranda at first but eventually he gathers the courage to ask her out. However, she is not in love with him or perhaps even considers him below her status and bursts out laughing at his request to take her to the movies.
- **Difference:** Another difference between them occurs in the mind of the narrator who sees Miranda as refined, knowledgeable and sophisticated, somehow superior to him while he sees himself as clumsy, inferior, gross and lacking polish and refinement.
- **Support:** These differences are highlighted in their physical appearance, most notably, their clothes, for as a maid Miranda wore a chic, neat-fitting blue uniform while the narrator's gardening clothes are soiled and patched.

(2+2)[4 marks]

(c) Award 1 mark for identification of narrative viewpoint.

(i) A third person narrative point of view is used in the extract to present the events from the man's viewpoint.

[1 mark]

(ii) **Award 2 marks for explaining how the narrative viewpoint affects the narrative.**

Since a third person narrative point of view is used, readers experience the story through the eyes of the main character, the narrator, so this affects the way the story is told since readers are aware only of what the narrator is thinking (he envied the young men who walked out with Miranda) and feeling ("they had something he lacked").

Likewise, when the narrator discovers that Miranda "smelt like a lady", it "made him aware of his own grossness, his own inferiority, his own lack of polish and refinement" and since the narrative is told from the man's perspective, readers can only judge the woman's thoughts by what she does (her actions) or betrays in her attitude. Thus, when Miranda laughs out loudly when the man asks her out to the movies we can tell she is insensitive to his feelings for her.

[2 marks]

(d) Award 2 marks for identification of the source of envy, that is, the difference between the protagonist and the other young men.

The protagonist envied the young men who walked out with Miranda because they were more sophisticated than he. Those young men wore shoes, they walked with confidence and they wore their clothes with a classy refinement that matched Miranda. Those young men seemed superior to him. **[2 marks]**

(e) Award 1 mark for identification of the figurative device and 2 marks for the comment on its effectiveness.

- "She ravished his senses."

Device: Metaphor
Comment: It is particularly effective in making the comparison between the narrator's physical senses and his emotional response to this physical event making the narrator's description of the feelings Miranda evoked in him more vivid. The word "ravished" indicates how Miranda's presence so overwhelmed the narrator that it evoked in him such deep and pleasurable emotions which heightened his senses.

- "the delicious, maddening nearness of her go through him like sharp knives, like red hot needles"

Device: Simile
It is particularly effective both in comparing the narrator's emotions to a concrete, physical sensation and in foreshadowing the outcome of the love affair. This simile does not only make the narrator's description of the feelings Miranda evoked in him more vivid by reinforcing the idea that the narrator's experience of love is both "delicious" and 'maddening' but this abstract idea is converted into a physical description that seeks to highlight exactly what the feeling is like. The narrator experiences the maddening nearness of Miranda as something going "through him like sharp knives, like red hot needles". The simile "like sharp knives" is particularly apt in capturing the potential for hurt that any love affair could evoke while "like red hot needles" captures the heat associated with passion as well as the potential for both pleasure and pain. This simile foreshadows what is to come later in the extract.

[3 marks]

(f) Award 2 marks for a commentary that highlights how the dialogue indicates differences between the protagonist and Miranda.

Although the dialogue is minimal, it serves to indicate the social, educational and perhaps geographical differences between Miranda and the narrator. Miranda speaks Standard English but the narrator speaks dialect. He shortens his words, for example, saying "Sat'day night" instead of "Saturday"; he does not demonstrate correct articulation, thus he joins two separate words into one word, for example, "You'n" instead of "you and" and finally, he adds fillers to his language, for example, "eh".

Miranda is from the city and she works indoors so she hears Standard English spoken by her colonial employers but the narrator is from the country and since he is a gardener and works outside, he perhaps does not hear Standard English spoken as often as Miranda does.

[2 marks]

(g) Award 2 marks for a plausible effect.

Miranda's laughter humiliated and embarrassed the protagonist. It took courage for him to approach her to ask her out for he had earlier felt insecure and unsophisticated, when he compared himself to the other young men with whom she went out. However, while asking her out, the narrator grew "bold" as he also grew in confidence and he even dared to move closer to Miranda, feeling himself as on the level of the other young men. However, when she looked at him and looked away then laughed openly and loudly at his request for a date, his confidence fell and he perhaps felt embarrassed and humiliated by her loud laughter.

[2 marks]

Total 20 marks

TEST CODE **01219020**

SPEC 2015/01219020

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

Paper 02 – General Proficiency

2 hours 10 minutes

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper consists of EIGHT questions, arranged in THREE sections as follows:

   Section A: DRAMA
   Question 1: Shakespeare
   Question 2: Modern Drama

   Section B: POETRY
   Questions 3 and 4

   Section C: PROSE FICTION
   Questions 5 and 6: Novel
   Questions 7 and 8: Short Story

2. Answer THREE questions only, ONE question from EACH section.
3. You MUST write in essay format and develop ALL your responses fully.
4. Write your answers in the spaces provided in this answer booklet.
5. Do NOT write in the margins.
6. Use ONLY the books from the prescribed list for this examination to answer the questions.
7. You are advised to take some time to read through the paper and plan your answers.
8. If you need to rewrite any answer and there is not enough space to do so on the original page, you must use the extra lined page(s) provided at the back of this booklet. **Remember to draw a line through your original answer.**
9. **If you use the extra page(s) you MUST write the question number clearly in the box provided at the top of the extra page(s) and, where relevant, include the question part beside the answer.**

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

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For each question in Sections A, B, and C, in addition to the 25 marks indicated for content and argument, 10 marks is allocated for language, organization and competence in the mechanics of writing.

SECTION A — DRAMA

Answer ONE question in this section.

THE TEMPEST — William Shakespeare

EITHER

1. "*The Tempest* is an exploration of different types of relationships."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO different types of relationships in the play. In this essay, you must also discuss ONE theme that is portrayed in any ONE of the relationships described, and examine ONE dramatic technique Shakespeare uses to present relationships in the play as a whole.

Total 35 marks

OR

TI -JEAN AND HIS BROTHERS — Derek Walcott

2. "A dominant theme in *Ti Jean and His Brothers* is good versus evil."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO incidents in which the conflict between good and evil is presented. In this essay, you must also discuss how the MAIN characters are affected in ONE of the incidents, and examine ONE technique that Walcott uses to present the theme of good versus evil in the play.

Total 35 marks

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Your answer to the question you have chosen in Section A – Drama should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

Question No. ☐

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Your answer to the question you have chosen in Section A – Drama should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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Your answer to the question you have chosen in Section A – Drama should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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SECTION B — POETRY

Answer ONE question in this section.

A WORLD OF POETRY FOR CSEC —Mark McWatt and Hazel Simmons-McDonald

EITHER

3. "'My Parents' and 'Little Boy Crying' explore childhood experiences."

Write an essay in which you describe the experience of EACH child. In this essay, you must also discuss how the child in EACH poem feels about the other persons involved in the experience, and examine ONE device that is used to present the child's experience in EACH poem.

Total 35 marks

OR

4. Choose TWO poems that you have studied from the prescribed list which focuses on an individual's dreams OR desires.

Write an essay in which you outline EACH speaker's dream OR desire. In this essay, you must discuss the speaker's attitude to the obstacle that affects the achievement of the dream OR desire in EACH poem, and examine ONE device that is used to explore dreams OR desires in EACH poem.

Total 35 marks

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Your answer to the question you have chosen in Section B –Poetry should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

Question No. ☐

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Your answer to the question you have chosen in <u>Section B – Poetry</u> should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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SECTION C — PROSE FICTION

Answer ONE question in this section.

You must state the title of any books you refer to in your answer.

NOVELS

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD — Harper Lee

EITHER

5. "*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a coming-of-age novel in which Jem and Scout learn some important lessons about life."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO incidents that teach the children an important lesson. In this essay, you must also discuss how ONE of the incidents affects the children, and examine ONE narrative technique the writer uses to present important lessons about life.

Total 35 marks

BREATH, EYES, MEMORY—Edwidge Danticat

OR

6. "Mother-daughter relationships are built on a web of traditional practices."

Write an essay in which you describe ONE mother-daughter relationship in *Breath, Eyes Memory*. In this essay you must also discuss how a traditional practice affects that relationship, and examine how ONE technique is used by the writer to explore mother-daughter relationships.

Total 35 marks

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

SHORT STORIES

A WORLD OF PROSE FOR CSEC —David Williams and Hazel Simmons-McDonald

EITHER

7. "The stories 'The Day the World Almost Came to an End' and 'Blood Brothers' are both stories about fear."

Write an essay in which you describe the situation that gave rise to the fear in EACH story. In this essay, you must also discuss the impact of the fear experienced, and examine how point of view is used in EACH story to present the theme of fear.

Total 35 marks

OR

8. Choose TWO stories from the prescribed list that you have studied in which there is a rural setting.

Write an essay in which you describe the setting in EACH story. In this essay, you must also compare and contrast how the setting for EACH story contributes to mood and characterization.

Total 35 marks

END OF TEST

The Council has made every effort to trace copyright holders. However, if any have been inadvertently overlooked, or any material has been incorrectly acknowledged, CXC will be pleased to correct this at the earliest opportunity.

Your answer to the question you have chosen in <u>Section C – Prose Fiction</u> should be written here. Remember to write your question number in the box provided below.

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C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®

EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

Paper 02 – General Proficiency

SPECIMEN PAPER

KEY AND MARK SCHEME

01219020/SPECIMEN 2015

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Rubric for Language and Organization

N.B. Students who have fabricated information for the texts or written information that does not respond to the question asked can only achieve a maximum of 4 marks for language and organization.

Level of Performance	**Criteria**
Excellent to superior 8-10	Demonstrates excellent to superior organizing skills: essay format with coherent presentation of points, effective linkages, well executed introduction, paragraphs Demonstrates excellent grammar, sentence and syntactical structures, fluent or elegant style
Very Good 6-7	Demonstrates very good organizing skills: points clear; uses introduction and coherent paragraphs Demonstrates fluent use of English with minor errors in grammar and mechanics (punctuation spelling, capitalization)
Good 4-5	Essay not as cohesive, but organization Evident paragraphing used Several errors in grammar and mechanics (punctuation spelling, capitalization)
Moderate 3	Weak organizing skills: very flawed paragraphing, or sectionalizing of essay answers, or little understanding of paragraphing Several errors in grammar and mechanics (punctuation spelling, capitalization)which hinder meaning
Limited 2	Little demonstration of essay format, few or no organizing skills Many language errors which hinder meaning
Weak	Many language errors or too little information presented to make an assessment

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Level of Performance	**Criteria**
Excellent to superior 19-25	Demonstrates in depth and thorough knowledge of text/s Demonstrates excellent understanding of question; where appropriate, makes comparative statements about text/s Demonstrates excellent synthesis and analysis Demonstrates appropriate and effective use of illustrations/examples Demonstrates thorough awareness, application and evaluation of writer's craft Demonstrates sensitivity, personal response, and an understanding of the text/s as an integrated whole Makes appropriate value judgments, recognizes issues and thematic significance
Very Good 15-18	Demonstrates very good knowledge of text/s Demonstrates very good understanding of question Demonstrates very good synthesis and analysis of information, Illustrations/examples are appropriate and effective, Demonstrates very good awareness, application and evaluation of writer's craft and satisfies the requirements of the question Demonstrates sensitivity, personal response, and an understanding of the text/s as an integrated whole Makes appropriate value judgments, recognizes issues and thematic significance
Good 11-13	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of the text/s Demonstrates good understanding of questions Illustrations/examples are adequate but not as fully developed Demonstrates some analysis and synthesis of information Demonstrates some sensitivity, personal response, and an understanding of the text/s as an integrated whole Makes some appropriate value judgments, recognizes some issues and thematic significance
Moderate 8-10	Demonstrates limited knowledge of text/s. May also fabricate some information Shows a little understanding or the question
	Little or no analysis of information, may retell the story or describe the events Illustrations/examples flawed or inadequate.

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Limited 4-7	Very little or questionable knowledge of texts/may also fabricate much or all of the information presented Little attempt to meet the demands of the questions. may retell the story or describe the events Very little or no illustrations/examples given.
Weak 0-3	Effort not in essay format No understanding of texts. May also fabricate much or all of the information presented Demonstrates high levels of unpreparedness

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION A – DRAMA

Please note that these sectionionalizing of these essays are for convenience to ensure that the three main areas of the questions are covered and not intended to be replicated in writing an essay, which for our purposes should be written in continuous prose.

Question 1

The Tempest — William Shakespeare

"*The Tempest* is an exploration of different types of relationships."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO different types of relationships in the play. In this essay, you must discuss ONE theme that is portrayed in any ONE of the relationships described, and examine ONE dramatic technique Shakespeare uses to present relationships in the play as a whole.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited. There are three main areas to be covered in this essay.

Firstly, the candidate is expected to identify and describe two different relationships.

The play offers a range of relationships. Since the question asks for two different relationships, it is advised that the two selected should not be of the same type/category. Candidates may choose two relationships but not from the same category. Relationships fall in the following categories:

- **Master/servant**

Prospero/Caliban

In this master/slave relationship, Prospero verbally and physically abuses Caliban, who is reduced to performing manual work (fetching wood, making the fire). This uneven power relationship was not evident at the outset. When the shipwrecked Prospero landed on his island, Caliban offered him needed hospitality. Prospero who is now in control of the island, uses his magical powers to manipulate and control Caliban. Though fearful of his master, Caliban is resentful and curses him, and capitalizes on the first opportunity to be part of a plot to murder him.

Prospero/Ariel

This master/servant relationship is one in which Ariel too is manipulated by Prospero. He is his "right hand helper" in the world of the spirits. Ariel is beholden to Prospero for rescuing him from the torments Caliban's mother placed on him and obeys him primarily because he promises him his freedom if he works willingly.

Stephano, Trinculo/Caliban

This relationship mirrors the Prospero/Caliban one, except that all concerned are united in their effort to unseat Prospero and reclaim/claim the island. Caliban easily switches allegiance to his new masters/friends but the power relationship remains the same.

- **Father/daughter**

Prospero and Miranda

Prospero's over protectiveness of Miranda is displayed in the ways in which he shields her from her past; prescribes her education and selects the suitor for her. For twelve years he was her protector and teacher on the secluded island, and Miranda, the dutiful daughter.

- **Siblings**

Prospero and Antonio

Sibling rivalry results in Prospero losing his position as Duke of Milan and barely escaping death. After twelve years, the tables are turned. While Antonio and his entourage are coming from a wedding en route to Italy, Prospero orchestrates a tempest which causes them to be shipwrecked on 'his' island. Antonio appears to be still power hungry.

- **Love**

Ferdinand and Miranda

The only romantic love relationship in the play is between Ferdinand and Miranda. Although the relationship is arranged by Prospero, the young lovers appear to find each other attractive at first sight and enjoy each other's company (seen later when they are happily playing a game of chess). Ferdinand is obedient and willingly subjects himself to menial work (fetching wood as Caliban is cursed to do) in order to please Miranda's father.

The candidate is also expected to identify and discuss a theme which is portrayed in one of the relationships.

The following is not an exhaustive list but are some common themes:

Supernatural/magic — Prospero's power is anchored in his magic, his books and his intellect. He leverages this power in his relationships with Caliban, Ariel and to some degree, with his daughter Miranda.

Power/control/ownership — This theme is manifested in ways such as Prospero's relationship with his servants/slaves; Caliban being stripped of his land; sibling rivalry (Prospero and Antonio) as in the power struggle which resulted in the usurpation.

Revenge — The main characters have just cause for seeking revenge: Caliban's resentment at being exploited and wanting to reclaim his island and Prospero's plan to confront his brother.

Betrayal — At the heart of the relationship between Prospero and Caliban is betrayal. At first Prospero treats Caliban well ("When thou cam'st first,/Thou strok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me/Water with berries in 't"). Caliban reciprocates and shows him the 'qualities' of the island. Then this relationship shifts from visitor/host to master/slave.

The candidate is expected to examine one dramatic technique Shakespeare used to portray these relationships.

Dramatic irony — There are many instances in which the audience or one of the characters on stage knows something that the other (on stage) does not. This kind of 'ignorance' is what engenders irony, which creates humour, builds suspense and increases audience involvement. For example, after Prospero recounts how their escape and survival were due to Gonzalo's generosity, Miranda remarks that she would love to see him and thank him in person. Of course, the audience knows that he is now shipwrecked on the same island but she does not know this.

This device is used to strengthen the portrayal of the various relationships as the audience sees how differently characters act towards each other and some of the things that motivate them to act.

The use of the title — The title is significant in its meaning… storms/tempests. It is symbolic of conflicts and tensions in the relationships. The storm created/contrived by Prospero is one in which the various characters meet and mingle. Motives are exposed. Conflicts are resolved, eventually.

Symbols — The storm, the island, the figures of the masters and slaves are relevant in our appreciation of relationships in the play. For nations that have been enslaved and for island peoples, these symbols take on greater significance as they relate to the relationships of those who wield power and those who are without it.

Setting — The island and its associations with isolation can forge unlikely relationships in the name of survival. The uneasy relationship between Caliban and Prospero and to some degree, Ariel and Prospero, lends itself to the island setting of visitor and host and later when the power shifts, to master/owner and servant.

Motifs — Storm, water, books form part of the pattern (and backdrop) of relationships that are portrayed.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 2

Ti-Jean and His Brothers — Derek Walcott

"A dominant theme in *Ti -Jean and His Brothers* is good versus evil."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO incidents in which the conflict between good and evil is presented. In this essay, you must also discuss how the MAIN characters are affected in ONE of the incidents, and examine ONE technique that Walcott uses to present the theme of good versus evil in the play.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

There are three main areas to be covered in this essay. The candidate is expected to describe TWO incidents in which there is a conflict between good and evil.

There are many levels of the conflict between good and evil. In this play, the devil, the orchestrator of evil, is a master of disguises. Therefore, the conflict between good and evil is most obvious in the encounters between the three brothers and the devil (in his various manifestations). Any two of the three encounters are appropriate for discussion.

- The first encounter portrays Gros Jean, the oldest son. His mother warns him against evil and the various faces of evil: "The Devil can hide in several features…" But being overconfident in his physical strength, he misses the subtlety of the devil. Gros Jean is impatient and relies solely on his physical prowess. His impatience is his undoing as the devil/old man masquerading as the planter (his new boss) goads him into losing his temper and consequently, his life.

- Mi Jean is the next to meet the devil. His mother also warns him ('no one can know what the Devil wears'). Ironically, when he does meet the devil, he miscalculates, thinking that he (the devil) would not reveal himself so soon. Relying on his 'book' knowledge and his strategy of silence, Mi Jean pits himself against the devil. His many attempts to 'fix' the goat and keep his temper intact prove too much and he too, falls victim to the wiles of the devil.

- Accepting his mother's teaching that "our life is God's own" and asking for her prayer and assuming the mantra of David ("I go bring down, bring down Goliath"), Ti Jean enters the forest. Outwitting the devil (confirming his cloven

hoofs and tail) Ti Jean further demands his confession (the unmasking to reveal the devil's face). Eventually, it is the devil who loses his temper as Ti Jean outwits him (neutering the goat and burning down the cane fields and house).

The candidate is expected to discuss how the main characters are affected in one of the incidents.

Although they take different turns, the encounters between Gros Jean, Mi Jean and the devil have similar results, in that both brothers succumb to the wiles of the devil, who is the personification of evil. Both fail to 'see' evil even though they were warned by their mother about guises/disguises. In both instances, the brothers lose the verbal, intellectual and psychological battle with the devil. Whether their demise was in the form of physical death or not, both brothers fared badly because they did not appreciate the strength of their mother (symbol of spirituality) or the value of folk wisdom (embodied in the creatures in the forest).

Ti Jean enters the forest armed to meet and win the devil at his game. He asks for his mother's blessing and heeds her advice. He endears himself to the creatures of the forest and they reciprocate by assisting him in getting the better of the devil. He has no airs, sees himself as the underdog (the David facing Goliath) and puts his problem-solving skills to work. His victory is predicted in the prologue, "God put him in that height/to be the sun's right hand/And light the evil dark…" a tale of how an unassuming lad outwits the devil. Since evil cannot be 'killed', the devil is last seen warning Ti Jean that they will meet again.

The candidate is required to discuss one technique that Walcott uses to present the theme in the play.

This is not an exhaustive list. Candidates may choose one of the following.

The play can be seen as an <u>allegory</u> and to some degree, a <u>fable</u>. In many instances, the story is an 'old' one, in its presentation of good versus evil. What makes it nuanced is its 'Caribbeanness'— elements of folklore, history and language/diction. The three brothers and their fate speak to both extremes on the one hand, with the third brother having the 'right fit' (Ti Jean). There are resonances of a fairy tale, with the typical hero and ogre. What makes this tale different and real is that although evil is confronted and 'managed', it is not destroyed. Consequently, the 'happily ever after' idea is challenged.

<u>Verbal exchanges</u> underlie the presentation of good and evil. The language is such that much of the discourse between the devil and the brothers is one of repartee. Mi Jean's half-baked intellect gets the brunt of the devil's ridicule as well. <u>Humour</u> (from the subtlest word play to the more obvious) not only generates interest but reinforces the theme.

History is used to enhance the play and strengthen the theme of good versus evil. References to "white planter", "white house", "estate", "sugar-cane field", "tobacco", evoke the experiences of slavery and colonialism. It is not by chance that the devil easily transitions from his "planter" mask to his "devil" self.

Elements of folk wisdom and folk culture are important in the play in its presentation of good versus evil. Music (the drums, the flute, the onomatopoeic sounds of the creatures, chants) contributes to the setting and mood and helps in defining characters. The story-telling medium; the call and response and idiomatic expressions engage the audience in the thematic presentation.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION B — POETRY

Question 3

"'My Parents' and 'Little Boy Crying' explore childhood experiences."

Write an essay in which you describe the experience of EACH child. In this essay, you must discuss how the child in EACH poem feels about the other persons involved in the experience, and examine ONE device that is used to present the child's experience in EACH poem.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

There are three main areas to be covered in this essay. Firstly, the candidate is expected to describe the experience of the child in each poem; secondly, the candidate is expected to discuss the feelings of the child about the other persons involved and finally, the candidate must examine one device from each poem which is used to present the experience.

Experience of the child

In "My Parents" the child recounts his attempts at fitting in with a group of children who are different; apparently they are from a lower social class. They are pictured as wild and free-spirited--they climb cliffs and they played in the country stream. The child's parents try to prevent him from playing with these children.

"Little Boy Crying"

The child has been punished by the father because he was playing in the rain. The child seems to be offended by the father's actions because he feels hurt. Through his frustrated tears the child looks at his father hoping to make him feel guilty and sorry for hitting him but that does not happen.

Feelings of the child

The child has mixed feelings about the other boys in "My Parents". He fears their physical strength — they have "muscles like iron" and "jerking hands" as well as their "salt coarse pointing" and the way they mimicked his lisp. The children also startle and throw mud at him. All of these actions show why his parents might try to keep him away from these children. However, there is a degree of admiration for the children because

they seem tough and fearless. As a result, the child looks away from their cruelty and hopes to forgive them but the children do not appear to have similar feelings about him.

There is a sense too that the child does not approve of his parents' protective nature but he understands why they are that way.

In "Little Boy Crying" the child seems to hate the father because of the punishment and sees him as an ogre who towers over him and takes advantage of his three-year-old child. The child feels powerless but can do nothing in his defense.

Finally, the candidate is expected to identify and discuss a device used in each poem to present the child's experience.

Devices used to present the experience of the child

Any ONE of the following devices in "My Parents":

Irony — It is ironic that the child who is treated in such a cruel manner by the children wants to forgive the same children who torment and ridicule him. He longs to be a part of their world. Also, while he wants to forgive them, these children never smiled at him, thus maintaining the barriers between them.

Simile —The words shouted at the child are compared with stones that can inflict physical pain ("words like stones"). The impact of this simile suggests that the words cause deep damage as they inflict emotional pain on the child and this seems to have a more traumatic effect than the physical pain would.

"[M]uscles like iron" — The children's muscles are compared with iron, one of the strongest metals. This emphasizes the children's physical strength (compared to the child's) and their ability to inflict physical pain on the child. This physical comparison deepens the inequity between the children and the boy and furthers the distance separating the children and this child.

"They sprang like dogs to bark at my world" — The children are compared to dogs that bark at strangers/outsiders. The act of barking emphasizes their teasing and cruel behaviour as well as their attempt to keep the child from invading their world. Barking dogs also suggest protection of territory against invaders. The children perhaps know they will never be accepted in the boy's social class and their "bark" might be their strategy to keep him away, even as they ridicule his world/way of life.

Any ONE of the following devices in "Little Boy Crying":

Allusion — The events in the poem allude to the fairy tale, Jack and the Beanstalk. It compares the father (the ogre) with the giant in the story whom the little Jack (the victim)

has to kill in order to live. In the story, Jack chops down the beanstalk while in the poem the speaker points out that the little boy imagines chopping down the tree as a way of retaliating against his punishment.

Metaphor – "[L]aughter metamorphosed into howls" — This emphasizes the suddenness of the child's change from laughter to tears and compares his crying with an animal howling. The contrasting sounds of laughter and wailing and contrasting emotions of happiness and sadness/anger are significant as they cement the movement from one to another.

"[A]ngling for a moment's hint" — This metaphor compares the child's attempt to coerce sympathy from the father as fisherman would to dangling his bait to catch fish. It suggests the psychological tool the child uses on his father to achieve his desired effect and therefore hints that the boy may be trying to trick the father with his tears.

"[T]he ogre towers above you, that grim giant" — This shows the comparison of the father with an ogre/giant both in terms of physical size and in terms of his ability to inflict pain on his victim. It emphasizes that the child feels that he is at an unfair advantage and has been punished unnecessarily.

Irony — The child is very hurt as he has been punished but cannot understand the father's pain at having to hit him. While the child sees the father as an ogre, the father is hurt by the son's pain. He wavers and thinks about playing with his child but must not cave in or the important lesson will not be learnt. Essentially, both are hurting (even this ogre) in this lesson of life. The child though, is unable to understand or even appreciate this.

Any other reasonable technique, supported by evidence must be accepted.

Total 35 marks

ENGLISH B

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MARK SCHEME

Question 4

Choose TWO poems you have studied that deal with an individual's dreams or desires.

Write an essay in which you outline EACH speaker's dreams OR desires. In this essay, you must discuss the speaker's attitude to the obstacle that affects the achievement of the dreams OR desires in EACH poem, and examine ONE device that is used to explore dreams OR desires in EACH poem.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

The candidate must select from the prescribed list two suitable poems that can be used to respond to the question. Candidates must be careful in their selection and ensure that the poems chosen will provide them with sufficient content to respond adequately to the question.

TWO of the poems from the prescribed list that may be used to respond to the question are presented as samples here are "Once Upon a Time" and "Dreaming Black Boy."

Firstly, for each poem, the candidate is expected to outline the speaker's dreams or desires. Secondly, the candidate is expected to discuss the speaker's attitude to the obstacles that affects the achievement of this dream and finally, the candidate is expected to discuss a device that is used to explore dream or desires in each poem.

Speaker's dream OR desire

In the poem "Once Upon a Time" the speaker, a parent, laments about the stark reality of adulthood and reminisces on childhood innocence. He longs to return to a time when people were sincere in their actions and when a smile was genuine. Ironically, he admits to being a part of the hypocrisy shown by other adults but points out that changes in the political and social milieu have forced him to move away from the innocence of his youth.

In "Dreaming Black Boy" the black boy dreams of being accepted by his teacher, who is a representative of the dominant class (white people). This teacher is unable or unwilling to see him beyond the colour of his skin. Consequently, his ambitious dreams are overshadowed by a teacher who has a different view of what his future should be.

Speaker's attitude

The speaker in "Once Upon a Time" seems to be critical of the society that has caused him to become hypocritical. Now his smiles are not sincere and he parrots the expected responses that are deceptive. He longs to return to the time when such deception was unnecessary.

The speaker in "Dreaming Black Boy" seems to be disappointed in and resentful of his teacher. He despairs because his teacher is indifferent to him and does not see past his skin colour. This situation is also reflected in the wider society where oppression and prejudice reign in all aspects of life and seem to box him into subservient roles despite his hopes and dreams.

Devices used to explore dreams or desires in the selected poems:

"Once Upon a Time"

Allusion— "Once Upon a Time" — the poem alludes to the traditional fairy tale in which good always wins and the bad elements are removed. However, in this case the opposite obtains so the story he tells his son does not end with a sense of happiness or justice. Nevertheless, he still desires a return to innocence.

Simile — "conforming smiles like a fixed portrait smile" — The speaker's smiles are compared with smiles usually seen in portraits when the tendency may be to create a smile for effect. It may not be genuine. The "conforming smiles" are symbolic of the way the speaker has conformed to the norms of society and portrayed the lack of sincerity seen in adults.

Animal imagery/Simile — "my teeth like a snake's bare fangs" — The baring of teeth that can be endearing in a genuine smile is compared with a snake baring its fangs, thus signaling danger. The image emphasizes the hypocrisy of adults who bare their teeth pretending to smile when their thoughts may be the opposite of what they are attempting to portray.

Contrast — In the poem, there is a contrast of the sincerity of innocent laughter and the deception of the adult smile. This contrast emphasizes the adult's deceptive nature that can almost be considered unnatural since they started off like the children with innocent smiles.

Metaphor — "ice-block-cold eyes" — The coldness seen in the adult's eyes is compared with ice. It emphasizes just how cold and unfeeling adults are with their deceptive

gestures and words and also serves as a contrast to the genuine and sincere behaviour of children.

Irony — It is ironic that while the speaker is lamenting about the hypocrisy of adults he admits that he too practices the deceptive gestures and utters the deceptive words. However, in the story he recounts to his son he implies that he dreams of returning to that innocent period in his life.

"Dreaming Black Boy"

Allusion — to slavery, "I'm no woodchopper now like all ancestors" and to the Klu Klux Klan, "torch throwers of the night", "plotters in pajamas".

The persona alludes to historical symbols of oppression and implies that although those periods of oppression have passed, the impact remains for he is still denied the opportunity to be educated, to travel freely or achieve success like Paul Robeson, even though his success was hard won. These historical events still impact on his dream for a future that does not include subservient roles.

Repetition — "I wish". The repetition emphasizes the persona's longing to achieve his dream of a life free of oppression and discrimination. It also emphasizes his dream of a life that does not include subservience to any class of people or menial jobs.

Imagery — "[S]ink to lick boots". The image of licking boots evokes subservience that his ancestors endured and which he may have to experience since the oppression has not been removed with the passage of time. It goes totally against his dream to achieve more than his ancestors and to have a future that goes beyond menial jobs.

Contrast — In the poem the teacher's view of the boy contrasts with his ambition to have a future with unlimited possibilities instead of being boxed into a life of humiliating and demeaning jobs. Inherent in this contrast is the physical impact of the colour coding of black/white relationships.

Metaphor – "[M]y inside eye a sun". The speaker's intelligence and hopes are compared with the sun. It highlights the idea that the speaker can have a bright future and also serve as a light for others with similar ambitions to achieve more than the accustomed menial jobs that were historically reserved for his ancestors.

"Educated to the best of tune up" — The speaker's education/intelligence is compared with a car being serviced/tuned up for maximum performance. It emphasizes that his education has provided him with skills or abilities that can take him beyond menial jobs. Tuning will enable mobility and a readiness to move up when the occasion or opportunity arises.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION C — PROSE

To Kill a Mockingbird — Harper Lee

Question 5

"To Kill a Mockingbird is a coming-of-age novel in which Jem and Scout learn some important lessons about life."

Write an essay in which you describe TWO incidents that teach the children an important lesson. In this essay, you must also discuss how ONE of the incidents affects the children, and examine ONE narrative technique the writer uses to present important lessons about life.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

Firstly, the candidate is expected to describe TWO incidents that teach the children an important lesson and for each incident, discuss the impact on the children. The following is not exhaustive but is offered as a guide in considering significant incidents that can be used in answering the essay:

Incident: The killing of the mad dog

A mad dog had been terrorizing the neighbourhood and everyone was afraid. When the dog, walking down the street and foaming at the mouth had everyone inside for fear of being hurt, Atticus walks out into the middle of the street and with one shot kills the dog. Jem and Scout are shocked at their father's skill as previously he had seemed to be old, boring and useless. However, other members of the community are not surprised because they had been previously exposed to Atticus's prowess as a sharp shooter.

Impact: The incident teaches the children important lessons. They learn that even though a person is a great shot he should not be using his skill to hurt others. It also shows them that often outward appearances may not be a reflection of a person. As a result, they develop a different kind of respect for their father.

Incident: The filling of the knothole

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Boo Radley had a reputation of being an evil recluse who hurt children. He was feared by all children. However, Jem and Scout eventually learn that rumours about him may not be true. They begin communicating with him through the exchange of items in the knothole of a tree in the yard. This is stopped when Boo Radley's brother fills in the hole and effectively cuts off 'communication' between Boo and the children. Even though there was no physical contact between the children and Boo at this stage in the novel, Jem is very hurt by Nathan's actions.

Impact: This incident teaches the children that often adults and other persons in authority serve as obstacles to friendship and other positive relationships. It also teaches them that children are not necessarily the only ones who are vulnerable.

Incident: Jem reading to Mrs Dubose

Jem and Scout were annoyed by Mrs Dubose's mean-spirited nature and one day in a fit of anger Jem destroys her prized flowers. As a punishment for his actions, Atticus forces Jem to read to Mrs Dubose every day until her death. It is only after her passing that Atticus reveals that Mrs Dubose was addicted to the morphine she had been using to manage the pain from her illness. She wanted to overcome her addiction and die free of the drug so Jem's reading assisted her by distracting her from the temptation to take the drugs.

Impact: From the incident the children learn what true courage looks like. Mrs. Dubose could have easily continued using the morphine but she was brave enough to allow the pain so that she could die free from her addiction.

Incident: Scout's experience at school

When Scout goes to school for the first time she has to adjust to the routine and to deal with a teacher who is clueless about the reality in which some of her poorer students live. Scout, who is accustomed to being outspoken and is accustomed to a particular lifestyle, encounters Walter Cunningham, who comes from a poor family. She hits him and is punished. Jem invited him for lunch and when he pours molasses on his food Scout is shocked. Calpurnia punishes her for her outburst.

Impact: From this incident, Scout learns that she will not understand people unless she understands their perspective. This lesson stems from the incident with Walter as well as other experiences at school. Scout learns how the poor folk in the society lives. Walter does not have the social skills displayed at the Finch household but he can discuss

farming with Atticus as any man can. She is able to see him in a different light and possibly begins to respect him.

Incident: Tom Robinson's trial
Tom Robinson, a black man, was accused of raping Mayella Ewell, a poor white girl. Although the evidence clearly showed that Tom Robinson did not commit the crime, an all-white jury declared him guilty. Justice was not served but the mere fact that the jury spent some time deliberating on the case signals the chance for the society to move beyond racism and value people for their true worth.

Impact: The incident showed the children how racism affects the society. They see that colour blindness can negate a man's worth and that can be irrational. Tom Robinson is actually portrayed as a better man than Mr Ewell who probably beat his daughter; yet Tom is punished because as a black man he dared to help a white woman.

Another important lesson is that moral justice is often at odds with legal justice. Morally, it was wrong to convict Tom Robinson because he did not commit the crime he was accused of by the Ewells. On this basis, he should have been freed of the charges. However, because racism is so prevalent in Maycomb County, the laws institutionalize racism and affect how justice is served.

The essay also requires candidates to examine ONE narrative technique used to present important lessons about life.

Candidates may select any of the following narrative techniques:

Irony
Throughout the novel Harper Lee uses irony to highlight some of the major themes and issues in the society. The following are some examples of irony:

- **The children's school experiences**

When Scout begins school she is already able to read while most of her peers cannot. Instead of the teacher praising her, she criticizes her and says that her father should not teach her. This incident is one that makes Scout feel that school is a waste of time and she does not want to continue.

Another ironic incident occurs when Ms Gates tells her class, "There are no better people in the world than Jews, and why Hitler does not think so is a mystery to me." While she criticizes Hitler for discriminating against the Jews because of their race, ironically she is just as guilty of the same thing. Like many members of the society, she discriminates

against the blacks in society but never compares their actions with Hitler's. On the day of the trial Scout overhears her saying that the black community needs to be taught a lesson because they were getting above themselves and might soon think they could marry white people.

- **Justice**

Justice is served in the streets instead of the court. Ironically, although the court is supposed to bestow justice when it is required, Tom Robinson does not enjoy that privilege because of his race. Even though at the trial the jury is presented with facts that prove Tom's innocence, they are unable to give a fair verdict. Ironically, a few members of society admit and believe in Tom's innocence and this is the only 'justice' he really receives since the people cannot go against the justice system.

- **Bob Ewell**

Bob Ewell is abusive and violent towards Mayella and the Finch children. It is ironic that he has forced his daughter to falsely accuse Tom Robinson of abusing her when in fact he seems to be the abusive one. He is able to get away with his abuse because of the colour of his skin. However, later justice is served after his attack on the Finch children. A man of his own race, Boo Radley, kills him and saves the children from further harm.

- **Boo Radley**

It is ironic that the very man whom society views as a threat is the one seen as a hero. When Bob Ewell attacks the Finch children as they were heading home after the concert, Boo Radley comes to their assistance and kills him. This shows that society's view of Boo Radley has been wrong and this is possibly what prompts Heck Tate to refuse to arrest him.

<u>Contrast between characters</u>

In the novel, contrast between characters is used to highlight the important themes and lessons the children learn as they grow. One example of this is the contrast between Tom Robinson and Bob Ewell. The obvious contrast is their skin colour and contrasts with the stereotypes of black being evil and white being good. Tom, the black man, is a good person. He helps Mayella and yet is wrongly accused of raping her. In contrast, Bob Ewell, the white man, is abusive towards his daughter and he forces her to accuse Tom Robinson of rape. She is torn between being honest on the one hand and telling a lie to condemn an innocent man, on the other. This contrast teaches the children about racism and prejudice in their community and how unfair it can be.

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First person narration

The novel is narrated by an adult Scout Finch who recounts her childhood. In some parts of the novel there is an almost childlike recounting of incidents. The narration traces her growth and maturity as she recounts her view of people and society. Thus, the lessons both she and Jem learn show a gradual complexity as they experience the major issues that affect the Maycomb community such as racism, justice and social class.

Flashback is also used to portray these life lessons as through the naïve and youthful Scout, readers are made aware of the complexities of growing up in particular and life in general.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

Breath, Eyes, Memory — Edwidge Danticat

Question 6

"Mother-daughter relationships are built on a web of traditional practices."

Write an essay in which you describe ONE mother-daughter relationship in the novel. In this essay, you must also discuss how a traditional practice affects that relationship, and examine how ONE technique is used by the writer to explore mother-daughter relationships.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

Firstly, the candidate is expected to identify one mother-daughter relationship as in:

- Martine and her daughter Sophie
- Grandme Ife and one of her daughters Atie/ Martine
- Sophie and her daughter Brigette **(this relationship ought not to be discussed because the traditional practice of testing which is the focus of this question has not been performed on Brigette who is just a baby)**.

Candidates must identify the main features of the particular mother–daughter relationship selected (the inherent conflict, tension, mother's sense of responsibility regarding preserving her daughter's purity, daughter's actions/ re-actions to her mother's actions)

Next, the candidate must describe a traditional practice involving mother and daughter.

The traditional practice to be examined is the testing, a ritual practice performed by Haitian mothers who test their daughters to make sure they are virgins. Testing is seen as a mother's responsibility in her attempt to keep her daughter pure but it has several repercussions both on their relationship and on other intimate relationships. The following effects are evident:

Physical

- Physical violation — Testing makes Sophie feel violated as her mother examines her hymen. This violation of her sexuality is akin to the rape her mother endured and although its purpose was different, the outcome is the same — both are violations of the human person leaving lasting and deep effects on the mind of the daughter.
- Self-violence — In order to put an end to the testing, Sophie breaks her own hymen with an inanimate object. This is a painful and violent act but also a liberating one.

Psychosocial/psychological

- Body hatred — The continuous testing makes Sophie hate her own body and she feels no desire, hates her fatness after her daughter's birth and is never able to become naked in front of anyone or have a normal sexual relationship with her partner (Joseph).
- Creates sexual phobias — Sophie has an irrational response to the sex act which she endures because of her love for her partner, Joseph, but she does not know how to deal with her sexuality and engages in group therapy to assist her in this regard.
- Doubling — While Martine tests her teenaged daughter, Sophie practises a survival technique and escapes into a different world as she 'doubles', remembering pleasant memories of her life as she imagines beautiful things to keep her mind away from the pain she experiences with the testing. She develops the ability to separate her mind from her body.

Candidates must also discuss effects of this practice on the relationship.

Effects on the mother-daughter relationship

- Breaks communication — When Martine first meets her daughter, Sophie, at the airport she urges her to 'speak' but when she tests her for the first time, Sophie is silent throughout the ordeal and does not speak to her mother. Interestingly Sophie, the narrator, states "My mother rarely spoke to me since she began the tests."

- Creates distance — When the testing begins, Sophie is unable to communicate with her mother and she takes her own virginity, an act unknown to her mother but one which causes her to be put out of the house by her mother. This creates distance between mother and daughter.

- Imposes division and secrets — When Martine completes the test she tells Sophie that there are secrets one cannot keep yet after the first test Sophie deliberately engages in a secret life — she keeps the tests secret from Joseph, she keeps Joseph's marriage proposal from her mother just as she keeps secret her act of taking her own virginity.

- Imposes the burden of inheritance on women — Martine's mother (Grandme Ife) had tested her, Martine tests Sophie but it is clear that Sophie who understands the repercussions of the testing will break the cycle of inheritance of this tradition.

Finally, candidates must examine ONE technique used by the writer to explore the mother-daughter relationships, such as:

Symbolism – The novel opens with Sophie presenting a Mother's Day card to her Aunt Atie (her beloved guardian) with whom she lives in Haiti and Atie refusing to accept the card, insisting that it should be given to her biological mother, Martine (Atie's sister).

The card is covered in daffodils, Martine's favourite flower, a fact known to Sophie only because she had been told that by Atie for Sophie has only seen her mother in photographs. The symbol of the Mother's Day card, subtle and multi-layered in its significance suggests something of the displaced and mixed emotions Sophie harbours for her mother and the author uses this symbol to explore the complexity of the mother-daughter relationship.

Another symbol of the mother-daughter relationship is embodied in the story of the Marassas, told to Sophie by her mother during the first 'test'. The Marassas are two lovers who are so close they appear as one person but they are really two. The mother and daughter mirror each other and reflect each other and this symbolizes them as twins.

Although Martine and Sophie do not look like each other they are each other's double/ twin.

Parallelism, Contrast and Comparison – When the 12-year old Sophie meets her mother for the first time, Martine is described as 'scrawny' and years later, when Sophie returns to Haiti as a woman, having undergone testing and other experiences, she now suffers from bulimia. Repeatedly throughout the novel, Sopie and Martine are compared and contrasted and Aunt Atie tells Sophie how much she is like her own mother, Martine. Just as Sophie's testing is not unlike Martine's rape although their purpose is quite different, Martine's phobias, experiences, demons and dreams are shared by her daughter, Sophie.

Dream Imagery — Even before Sophie leaves Haiti to meet her mother in New York, she has a recurrent nightmare in which her mother chases her through a field of wildflowers. This recurrent dream imagery embodies the conflicting relationship between mother and daughter.

Use of language through Parables/ Storytelling – Although Sophie narrates the story and Atie is the first to tell a parable in the novel, during the first test which Martine performs on her daughter Sophie, Martine tells her the story about the Marassas, the mythical lovers who are so close they share one soul. The storytelling is used to distract Sophie and parables and stories are used to discuss any issue that is too difficult to express or confront directly. These parables embody the truth but do not explain it.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

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PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SHORT STORY

A WORLD OF PROSE FOR CSEC — David Williams and Hazel Simmons-McDonald

Question 7

"The stories 'The Day the World Almost Came to an End' and 'Blood Brothers' are both stories about fear."

Write an essay in which you describe the situation that gave rise to the fear in EACH story. In this essay, you must also discuss the impact of the fear experienced, and examine how point of view is used in EACH story to present the theme of fear.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

Firstly, candidates must describe the situation/source of the fear in each story.

The source of fear demonstrated in each of the stories is different. In "The Day the World Almost Came to an End" the source is external, the result of an apocalyptic prophecy which gave rise to the fear experienced by the narrator, a 12-year-old girl who lives on a plantation in Louisiana in 1936 where a fundamentalist religion dominates in a community that is "close to the earth and God, and all wrapped up in religion". The girl's parents are churchgoing Christians (her father is a deacon) but the girl claims that despite all this, she was still holding on to being a sinner.

Late one Friday afternoon, while playing at making mud cabins with her foot, the narrator's cousin Rena warns her in a panic that the world was going to end on Sunday when an eclipse was expected. The narrator quickly recalls all the hell-fire sermons she had heard and fearful that the world might really end and find her a sinner admits that her mind was 'loaded down'. She wants to ask her father about the possibility of the world ending but has to wait until he arrives from ploughing the fields that night. When he comes home, she runs out to meet him and tells him about the end of the world gossip but he simply laughs it off, assuring her that only God knows when the world would end.

Unappeased by her father's dismissive attitude and worried sick, the narrator goes to bed expecting a calamity and her imagination takes full control. Therefore, when she hears a distant rumbling, which she knows is not thunder but which grows louder and more terrible with each passing second, she truly believes at that moment that the world is ending and fear propels her to leap from her bed, yelling that the world is ending. She runs out of the house in her nightgown screaming and people come out of their cabins to find out what the problem is, but she keeps on running and screaming, unable and unwilling to hear what the people are saying to her.

Finally, the narrator's father who is returning from a church meeting sees her running down the road and catches hold of her, telling her that what she is hearing is an old airplane and not the ending of the world. His words finally got through the fear that "fogged" her mind. Her father wraps her in his coat, she cries and as they walk home she feels 'a new kind of happiness', an awareness of life and all its beauty.

In "Blood Brothers" the source of the fear is internal, the result of the inner conflict experienced by Paul, a 13-year-old boy whose love for his twin brother Benjy is intertwined with a powerful resentment that has turned into hate. Paul believes that Benjy sees him as a coward and he sees Benjy as having an "insufferable complex of superiority". Paul believes that Benjy was able to do everything better than he, he even learnt to whistle before him and whilst he thinks about these things "his heart filled with a full-blooded hate for his blood brother."

"Paul hated Benjy with a bitter, passionate venom and with all his heart's fierceness, he hated and despised himself for hating him." But as much as he claimed to hate Benjy, Paul also admired Benjy's daring, his acts of heroism, his lack of fear and his recklessness, his popularity, his smile. Paul's hate frightens Paul himself and when Benjy innocently asks him to go with him to visit the shoemaker's shop, they go there together and while Paul is pushing the awl through the leather and pulling it out again, Benjy asks Paul to join him in play. As Benjy touches Paul the accumulated jealousy and the pent-up hate and fear and envy makes him blind with anger. With one violent push he hurls Benjy into a corner and stands over him, "the awl poised in his right hand for a swift murderous blow". At that moment, he sees the incomprehension in Benjy's face and for the first time, he sees fear in Benjy's eyes. He drops the awl and turns away "confused and frightened by the violence of his action, but purged of hate, and happy in the discovery that his brother also knew fear."

Next, the candidate is expected to discuss the impact of fear.
Fear has both an internal and external impact on the protagonists in each story as well as the other characters with whom they interact.

Self-loathing – In "Blood Brothers", fear of himself which springs from his bitter venomous thoughts about his twin brother Benjy results in Paul's self-loathing since "he hated and despised himself for hating him".

Acute self-awareness and self-centeredness — Paul, who is acutely aware of his own inadequacies, when he compares himself to Benjy, sees himself in the way he believes Benjy sees him — as a coward — and possibly amplifies these inadequacies through his repetitive fear of failure. Like Paul, the girl narrator in "The Day the World Almost Came to an End" is self-absorbed, self-centred and so completely focused on her experience of the world that when she believes the world is ending she takes flight, ignoring everyone including her mother and the neighbours outside their cabins. She does not consider that the apocalyptic prophecy may have an impact on others as well, for she is completely focused on how it affects her.

Violence/ Irrational behaviour — Fear can provoke an intense violent reaction that is not a reasoned response to the given situation so when Benjy pleads with Paul to play a game, Paul's pent-up hatred makes him fly into a rage and he takes up the awl to kill his brother. His violent response surprises even him as he seeks to fight his brother. When the girl believes the world is ending she takes flight. She admits later that the fear "fogged up" her mind, making her thinking unclear and her behaviour irrational — sentiments that Paul can also relate to.

Growth, confusion and fright — Fear can wreak havoc with one's imagination. The girl imagines all sorts of scenarios (about judgement and hell) just as Paul probably imagines and projects emotions unto Benjy that Benjy probably does not feel. Fear of failure incites Paul who is afraid of himself and his thoughts, and fear can grow into hate over time or into pure terror over trivial details.

Awareness of others/environment/life's complexity – Paul initially saw Benjy as superior in many ways and although he claimed to hate him, he put him on a pedestal. However, when he sees the fear in Benjy's eye following the awl incident, he realises that Benjy too

knows fear and he is happy that Benjy has been reduced to his 'human' level. The girl narrator, after her flight and her experience of fear and terror the night she believes the world is ending, leads her to appreciate the gift of life and makes her resolve to enjoy it.

Finally, candidates must examine how point of view is used in each story to present the theme of fear.

While both stories delve into the theme of fear, both are narrated from different point of views. "The Day the World Almost Came to an End" is told from the first person point of view of an educated adult who recalls her childhood experience as a naive 12-year old girl, who is the central narrator and the protagonist in the story while "Blood Brothers" is narrated from the third person limited omniscient where the author has access only to the mind and feelings of one character (Paul).

The first person narrator opens the story by addressing readers directly in a conversational manner and an informal tone in "The Day the World Almost Came to an End." As the narrator relates the events of a particular experience of her childhood when she encounters real fear that turns into terror, her language shifts to the ideas of her 12 year old persona who shares her defiant adolescent thoughts regarding the religious influence around her. The reader experiences her fears and uncertainty about the doomsday prophecies and her great relief when the world did not end. This first person narrative is very effective in expressing the fear of the central narrator because it is very subjective and carries a natural ring of authenticity since the first person narrator has a unique voice, a peculiar manner of speaking/ distinctive way of voicing her world by the words used to describe what is seen and the fear that is felt and in this case, the first person narration lends itself to a colloquial style with which readers can easily identify.

The third person narration of "Blood Brothers" is also very subjective and is limited to Paul's point of view. The narrative seems subjective in much the same way as a first person point of view used in "The Day the World Almost Came to an End." We hear, see and reflect on what Paul as a character hears, sees and reflects on but we are able to distance the perspective enough to note things about the character himself such as his obsession with sibling rivalry where he alone seems to be the sole competitor since Benjy, his blood brother, seems oblivious to the intense competition that Paul imagines they are engaged. As readers we also note Paul's observation of the natural environment (the trees, sky, sun) but also how he projects his own moods and insecurities on this environment so it reflects his perspective. The casuarina trees at night make him shudder and he is fearful so his ability to project himself upon the natural environment leaves readers to assume he does the same with his social environment and much of what he imagines of Benjy is his

own emotional projection. In the third person subjective point of view we are intimately tied to Paul's perception throughout the story and to his own experience and interpretation of fear and are not privy to Benjy's experiences except those narrated to us through Paul, from his own biased perspective.

The theme of fear is echoed in both "Blood Brothers" and "The Day the World Almost Came to an End" and while there are significant similarities in the experience of fear, there are also notable differences which arise from the different sources of this fear, the different genders who harbor the experience, the different impact it has on the characters and the different narrative perspectives from which the stories are told.

Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.

Total 35 marks

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question 8

Choose TWO stories from the prescribed list that you have studied in which there is a rural setting.

Write an essay in which you describe the setting in EACH story. In this essay, you must also compare and contrast how the setting for EACH story contributes to mood and characterization.

Note

The following mark scheme provides some of the points that candidates may use in couching their responses. This mark scheme is not an exhaustive list or a full response to the questions asked. Candidates' responses will provide other relevant points not considered here which must be credited.

The candidate must select from the prescribed list two suitable short stories that can be used to respond to the question. Candidates must be careful in their selection and ensure that the short stories chosen will provide them with sufficient content to respond adequately to the question.

The essay encourages candidates to cover the following:

- **Select 2 appropriate stories set in rural/ country environments**
- **Provide a brief physical and social description of the rural setting (proof of rural environment), the story on which it is based, the time it took place and the characters involved in those stories**
- **Demonstrate the ability to identify how the setting in each story contributes to mood and characterization, identifying the similarities and differences of this in each story**

The candidates must include in the description of the rural setting:

- The context of the rural environments (through words and customs) and evidence/ proof of rural setting
- Nature of the Place: Physical and Social description of the sort of place it is (its peculiarities, its social environment, how comfortable/ uncomfortable characters are in this setting)
- Significance of Time: Identification of the time the story takes place

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Candidates must compare the TWO stories identifying similarities in how the writers in both stories use the rural setting to contribute to mood and characterization. The comparison must involve the following:

Identification of writer's purpose/ function of using setting in each story: One or two functions of setting must be clearly identified e.g.

- setting as atmosphere (to create mood and connect with the character's emotions)
- setting as motive (it may drive characters)
- setting as situation/ source of conflict (the origin of tension in a given situation)
- setting as metaphor (it goes beyond the literal meaning)

Identification of what the setting reveals about characters in each story: Students must identify major/ minor characters and use the setting to

- Identify their personality traits showing how these qualities might be reflected/ mirrored in the physical environment
- Comment on how the physical and social circumstances shape characters, their roles and if these circumstances dictate action and character

Identification of what mood the setting evokes in each story: Students must identify:

- The mood the writer establishes in describing the surroundings/ physical and social settings of the characters

- The changing moods in each story showing how this might be reflected/ contrasted in the physical environment (e.g. isolation, abandonment, wonder, awe, fear, curiosity etc.

Students must contrast the TWO stories identifying differences in how the writers in both stories use the rural settings differently in contributing to mood and characterization. The contrast must involve the following:

- Identification of purpose of contrasting rural settings: Contrasting rural settings may serve as a backdrop for contrasting characters or opposing experiences
- Identification of how differences in place and time affects character development: Students must identify how differences in time and place affects characters' action and personality

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

- Identification of how differences in setting affects mood: Students must identify the differences in the rural setting of both stories showing how each affects mood

- **Any other reasonable points/interpretations must be credited accordingly.**

Total 35 marks

TEST CODE **01219032**

SPEC 2015/01219032

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 032 – General Proficiency

2 hours

READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

1. This paper consists of **THREE** questions. Answer ALL questions.
2. Write your answers in the spaces provided in this booklet.
3. You are advised to take some time to read through the paper and plan your answers.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO

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Read the THREE texts carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Text 1 – Editorial from a Newspaper

DISCIPLINE IS AT THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE

It was triggered weeks ago when two female students wearing natural hair posted their pictures on Facebook complaining that their principal expressed disapproval of their hairstyles. In an interview with this newspaper, the principal said her only edict which she indicated clearly to students, was that they be neat and tidy in their school uniforms and that certain hairstyles were simply not appropriate for classes.

We endorse these comments by the principal, whose intention, it appears, is to set standards for the school she leads and the students in her charge. Students need to clearly understand there are rules that govern the regular operation of schools and those that speak to the deportment of those attending these institutions.

President of the National Council of Parent–Teacher Associations, put the issue into perspective when she said this was not about hair, but discipline and respect for rules.

We also agree with her on the point that schools are not just about the teaching of Mathematics and English. Schools help prepare students for life. From schools, students go on to the world of work and if they find it difficult to follow school rules, how will they fare on the job when there are regulations in place that must be obeyed?

While there are natural rights and freedoms which cannot be suppressed, children in school must conform to the standards set.

This issue came to the fore again just yesterday when this newspaper revealed that a new dress code was implemented for police officers banning them from wearing dreadlocks, make-up, extreme hair colour or having visible tattoos. Some police officers are reportedly upset by the new rules outlined in a section of the RBPF Policy on General Appearance of Police Officers dated January 15, 2015.

We do not believe the issue at hand is simply the wearing of natural hair. The larger point speaks to upholding discipline in society and the need for respect for rules and authority, whether it is in our schools or police force. Without these, we would be a lost society.

Adapted from "Discipline is at the crux of the issue", Editorial, Nation News, 22 January, 2015.

Text 2 – Song by India Arie

I am not my hair

Little girl with the press and curl
Age eight I got a Jheri curl
Thirteen I got a relaxer
I was a source of so much laughter
At fifteen when it all broke off
Eighteen and went all natural
February two thousand and two

I went and did
What I had to do
Because it was time to change my life
To become the women that I am inside
Ninety-seven dreadlock all gone
I looked in the mirror
For the first time and saw that HEY…

I am not my hair
I am not this skin
I am not your expectations no no
I am not my hair
I am not this skin
I am a soul that lives within

What'd she do to her hair?
I don't know it look crazy
I like it. I might do that.
Umm I wouldn't go that far.
I know.. ha ha ha ha

Good hair means curls and wave
Bad hair means you look like a slave
At the turn of the century
It's time for us to redefine who we be
You can shave it off
Like a South African beauty

Or get in on lock
Like Bob Marley
You can rock it straight
Like Oprah Winfrey
If it's not what's on your head
It's what's underneath and they say HEY…

"I am Not my Hair", India Arie, Songs of Windswept Pacific, Retrieved 09 March 2015

Text 3 – Poem by Sunkissed Gem

Resilience

Perfectly patterned particles
push perpetually,
emerging: emancipated, elated,
enthusiastic.
Pushing proudly
up through layers upon layers of denial.
Past denaturing chemicals
and excessive heat;
curls emerge: triumphant.
Blatant refusal
to be ignored.
Blatant defiance of standards.
Despite countless chemicals
and incessant heat curls return:
a complexly simple statement
and reminder
of identity and culture.
Our hair is
as our land is
as we are:
EVER BEAUTIFULLY
RESILIENT.

Sunkissed Gem, "Resilience", Retrieved 27 February 2015 from
http://www.naturallycurly.com/curltalk/newreply.php?do=newreply&p=945996

1. (a) Outline the **main** issue addressed in EACH of the THREE texts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**6 marks**)

(b) For any ONE of the texts given, assess the appropriateness of that medium for the purpose of communicating the specific issue.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**3 marks**)

(c) For any TWO of the texts given, choose ONE language technique used in EACH and explain its effectiveness.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**6 marks**)

Total 15 marks

2. (a) State THREE features that distinguish an oral presentation from a written presentation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**6 marks**)

(b) You have been asked to make an oral presentation on ONE of the issues identified in 1 (a) on page 5. List THREE points you would discuss in the oral presentation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**3 marks**)

(c) Identify THREE features of the group to which the presentation would be made and THREE techniques that you would use to hold the attention of the group.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**6 marks**)

Total 15 marks

3. Create a response based on ONE of the points listed in 2 (a) above. You can use drama, poetry, lyrics to a song or prose. Your response will be assessed for

- relevance of content
- organization of ideas
- effective use of language
- vivid word choice
- unique voice/style

Total 15 marks

END OF TEST

You MUST write your answer to Question 3 on this page.

You MUST write your answer to Question 3 on this page.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®

EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

PAPER 032 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SPECIMEN PAPER 2015

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **1**

(a) While the three stimulus pieces chosen deal with the topic of the wearing of natural hair it is dealt with from varying perspectives. The editor who penned the newspaper editorial used the topic to address the issue of the need to conform to standards and show respect for rules and authority if we want to maintain discipline in our society. The poet's main issue is that wearing natural hairstyles is an expression of the person you are and it cannot be denied while in the lyrics to the song the point is being made that who you are is much more important than how you choose to style your hair.

(6 marks)

(b) In the song, the issue is presented through the use of rhythm, repetition of the idea of you being more than your hair, as well as the references made to well known personalities. It is an entertaining way of dealing with a serious issue that would be appealing.

(3 marks)

(c) The writer in the article uses generalities, mentioning that students need to understand that there are rules that govern the regular operation of schools and officers are expected not to just uphold the law but to also uphold discipline. Since most people would tend to agree with these statements they are effective in persuading people to accept the argument.

In the poem, the first four lines make use of alliteration. This technique helps to add emphasis and causes the reader to pay attention to the message as it creates a pleasant rhythmic effect.

(6 marks)

Total 15 marks

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **2**

(a) Three features that distinguish an oral presentation from a written presentation are:

- The speaker can gauge audience reaction and adjust his message accordingly
- It allows for audience interaction and clarification of misunderstandings
- The voice can be used to create a desired effect and this can help to promote understanding of the message

[2 x 3 = 6 marks]

(b) In a presentation on the issue of persons wearing natural hairstyles as an expression of who they are, I would make these three points:

- This promotes an understanding of cultural diversity
- The texture of the hair allows for creativity in developing distinguished hairstyles
- It is a choice which supports a healthy approach to the treatment of your hair

[1 x 3 = 3 marks]

(c) The oral presentation is being made to a group made up of:

- Females
- 14-16 years
- Participants in a cosmetology course

The following techniques would be used to hold the attention of the group.

- Integrate relevant, supportive, attractive visual aids, props and samples to heighten the interest and stimulate the imagination of the audience to the possibilities for natural hairstyles.
- Allow for audience participation through the use of 'hands up' feedback to questions giving them an opportunity to feel connected to the issue.

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

- Make eye contact and display enthusiasm to help to transfer some of my energy and interest to the audience.

[2 x 3 = 6 marks]

Total 15 marks

ENGLISH A

PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

Question **3** – Personal Response (15 marks)

The following criteria will be used to assess the composition:

(a) Content and relevance of response (3 marks)

- The focus of the response must be clear and must be fully developed.
- Actions/events must be clearly motivated (for example, there must be some plausible reason(s) for the things that happen).
- Rich detail must create a clear and authentic picture and hold reader's attention.

(b) Organization (3 marks)

- Details/events must be logically and effectively sequenced.
- There must be a memorable introduction and conclusion (explicit or implicit).
- Transitions must tie the ideas together.

(c) Effective use of language (3 marks)

- Sentences must be clear.
- Sentences must be deliberately used to affect style.
- Sentence structure is varied and complex.

(d) Voice/Style (3 marks)

- The writing must be reflect a unique, consistent personal voice.
- Connection to audience and purpose must be clear.
- Individual commitment to the topic must be obvious.

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PAPER 032 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

(e) Word Choice (3 marks)

- Vivid natural language must create a clear picture of characters and atmosphere.
- Strong verbs, precise nouns and appropriate adjectives must be used to enhance meaning.
- Original phrases and words must allow for reflection and thoughtful insight.

Total 15 marks

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

JANUARY 2004

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination in January 2004 followed the format used in previous years. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested the Understanding profile of the syllabus, and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as the Understanding of literary and persuasive writing.

When performance in 2004 is compared with performance in 2003, an increase in the percentage of candidates achieving Grade III and above is evident. In 2003, 36 per cent of the candidates achieved Grade I to III, while in 2004, 54 per cent achieved Grade III or higher.

The overall mean in 2003 was 52.5 whereas in January 2004 it was 57.90. The overall improvement is attributable to improvement in Paper 01 and in all areas of Paper 02. Performance in the Comprehension section of Paper 02 showed the most dramatic change, and the overall quality of the responses in this section was impressive.

The improvement in performance this year, expecially, in comprehension, is welcome. Hopefully, this level of performance can be maintained.

DETAILED COMMENTS

GENERAL PROFICIENCY

Section One

Question 1 (Expression)

This question tested candidates' ability to summarise information given in an advertisement. Generally, candidates seemed to understand what was required of them, although far too many exceeded the maximum length specified in the instructions. Candidates should be made aware that the part of their answer that goes beyond the specified maximum length will NOT be marked by the Examiners.

The text this year contained several technical terms. Candidates were required to re-use a number of words from the test, rather than their own language, as is generally required of this answer. It was, however, still necessary for candidates to take all the itemised technical information and put it into prose, that is, in the form of well constructed, grammatically and semantically logical sentences.

Generally, candidates were able to identify the main points of the advertisement. There was still, however, the need to be selective and for candidates to be aware that all the pieces of information were not of equal value and significance in capturing the basic meaning of the text.

Teachers should remember that summarising is a specialised skill which requires special attention and emphasis, and should provide their students with abundant practice, on a variety of textual stimulus material.

Section Two

There was a general improvement when compared with January 2003, although a number of candidates failed to score any marks on each question in this section.

Question 2 (Understanding)

This question tested candidates' ability to read and understand a prose passage from a work of fiction written in Standard English. Candidates were required to show an appreciation of the writer's craft, the impressions which the work creates, and relationships between characters, rather than simply an understanding of the overtly stated facts. Some candidates were unable to deduce what the setting of the text was (it was the waiting room of an Embassy), and this affected their responses to some of the parts of this question.

It was gratifying to see the improvement in performance. In response to Part (f), many students answered correctly, with a variety of lexical choices, including 'professional'. Teachers are to be congratulated and are urged to make every effort to ensure that the improvement is sustained, by making clear to candidates the particular nature of the text for this question and the type of response required.

Question 3 (Understanding)

This question tested candidates' ability to read and understand a prose passage on the importance of investing in social services. The overall performance on this question was good, and there was, no substantial difference between the performances in

Question 2 and Question 3.

Many candidates failed to answer correctly one of the interpretive questions; they were unable to distiguish between “narrative, argumentative and descriptive” in a characterisation of the passage. Part (d) also went beyond the mere factual, and required candidates to perceive and appreciate the metaphorical expression of the author. This part was quite well answered.

Teachers should make sure that candidates are able to perceive the different kinds of responses required, for example, the difference between “What, according to the passage ...?” and “What effect ...?”, “What impression ..?”. Some candidates left these latter questions unanswered, which may suggest that they did not quite understand what was required.

There still seems to be some uncertainty among some candidates as to what is a “phase” (vis-à-vis “word”, “sentence”). Part (d) asked for `three phrases’. Some candidates gave entire sentences. Generally speaking, candidates should be made aware that their responses should be precise, not long-winded and explanatory, and should most particularly NOT reproduce lengthy portions of the passage, perhaps in the hope that somewhere in that volume lies the correct answer.

Section Three

Question 4, 5, 6 (Expression)

This section tested candidates’ ability to express themselves creatively in continuous prose. The most popular choice was Question 5, but Question 6 had the highest mean. These were only a relatively small range of difference among the three questions.

Some candidates had difficulty fitting the statement in Question 5 into their stories. Thus these stories seemed to come to an abrupt end without the final statement being well motivated.

There was some reduction in the incidence of candidates merely describing the picture stimulus (Question 4). Teachers should continue to stress to candidates that the picture stimulus requires the imaginative creation of a story. In giving freedom to their imagination, however, candidates should not simply write their own story unrelated (or only barely so) to the stimulus.

Question 6 was the most successfully done, and some candidates achieved the highest scores (up to 24/25) on this question. It will have been observed that in Question 5 the main protagonist is male, while in Questions 4 and 6, it is female. The examiners strive to make the question paper gender-equal, but these were no real reason why males should write only about their own gender and females likewise. A good short story writer should be able to write about both male and female protagonists and candidates should be encouraged to practise writing about a variety of themes.

While some candidates have more of a flair for short story writing than others, it is clear that those who like to read, whatever their subjects may be, become more familiar with words and experiences and thus give themselves an advantage over those who do not.

Section Four

Question 7 and 8 (Expression)

This section tested candidates' ability to write persuasively and present sound arguments in Standard English. These was a marked preference for Question 8 over Question 7, and in addition the mean for Question 8 was substantially higher than the Question 7 mean. A further dramatic difference was the much larger percentage of candidates receiving zero marks for Question 7 than for Question 8.

Question 7 was the more problematic of the two questions. A large number of candidates mis-interpreted the terms "independent" and "patriotic", both in general and as they relate to newspapers in particular. These concepts should not be unfamiliar to an educated Caribbean young person and schools may wish to consider whether sufficient attention is being paid to such basic concepts as media bias/independence/ partiality and loyalty to country/party/government, in Social Studies and Communication classes.

In one, particularly extreme case, "independent" was related to one's ability to cook and keep house. In other cases, there was no attempt to relate the concepts to the particular case of the Media.

Most candidates chose Question 8. It was clearly within the current experiences of the candidates and many were able to provide personal anecdotes to support their arguments.

It is very important that candidates notice and respond to all the parts of the propositions, and to the precise instructions ('write a letter', 'write an essay giving your views', and 'EITHER supporting OR opposing'). For example, in Question 7, some candidates ignored the specific allusion to 'a newspaper', and in Question 8 some candidates ignored 'punished as adults' and were content simply to argue that 16 year olds deserved to be punished for crimes committed.

The usual argumentation and writing/composition inadequacies were evident: mere assertions without any supportive arguments or examples; misuse of pronouns; incorrect subject-verb agreement especially where the noun subject is distant from the verb; punctuation including paragraphing; and spelling, especially 'there', 'their'. Students should be made aware that English spelling is not generally and consistently phonetic and the spelling of many words has to be learned individually, which is best achieved through careful reading, punctuation including paragraphing.

GENERAL ADVICE

For the third time in recent years, one candidate was found to reproduce a published story with amazing accuracy while another candidate reproduced a variant of a "CXC Best Story", retaining several chunks from the original. Teachers need to remind candidates who are preparing to write the examination that at the very best, short stories that demonstrate a lack of originality will not be awarded high scores. At worst, short stories that bear a very close similarity to previous short stories or to published work may raise suspecion of irregularity.

Teachers are again advised that, in the preparation of candidates, they should make sure that they are familiar with the syllabus. The specific tasks set will vary from year to year but they all fit the specifications set out in the syllabus. Further, it must be noted that a new revised syllabus will take effect for examination from May/June 2006. Candidates should be encouraged to write legibly, conform to the instructions (for example, maximum length of answers) and to complete the required number of questions set.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JUNE 2004

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JUNE 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

The examinations in 2004 followed the format used in previous years. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of literary and persuasive writing.

In 2004, 49.5 per cent of the candidates at **General Proficiency** achieved Grade III and above, while 19.1 per cent of the Basic Proficiency candidates achieved similar grades. The number of candidates taking the General Proficiency examination was 81 120, while 3 068 sat for the Basic Proficiency examination.

The decline in the number of candidates taking **Basic Proficiency** continued in 2004, the numbers over the past four years have been 4 502 (2001); 3 792 (2002); 3 777 (2003); 3 068 (2004).

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

Basic Proficiency

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2004 showed only a very marginal upward change over 2003. The mean score in 2003, out of a possible 60, was 25.08 and this moved to 25.58 in 2004.

General Proficiency

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2004 showed a slight decline when compared with 2003. The mean score in Paper 01 moved downward from 34.63 in 2003 to 33.03 in 2004, out of a possible 60.

PAPER 02 - FREE RESPONSE

Basic Proficiency

Candidates' performance in Paper 02 in 2004 was better than in 2003. The mean score increased from 22.10 in 2003 to 25.72 in 2004, out of a possible 80. Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 in 2004 was as follows:

Section 1 – Summary Skills	(out of 20 marks)	5.06
Section 2 – Comprehension	(out of 24 marks)	9.87
Section 3 _ Story Writing	(out of 16 marks)	5.17
Section 4 – Argument	(out of 20 marks)	5.62

General Proficiency

In Paper 02 performance, as indicated by a comparison of the section means in 2003 and 2004, is summarised as follows:

Section 1 (Summary skills): there was an improvement in performance compared with 2003: 8.20 (2003) and 9.23 (2004)
Section 2 (Understanding): there was an improvement in performance compared with 2003: 8.22 (2003) and 9.30 (2004)
Section 3 (Story telling): there was no substantial difference in performance between 2003 and 2004: 8.84 (2003) and 8.79 (2004)
Section 4 (Argument): there was a slight decline in performance compared with 2003: 9.29 (2003) and 8.66 (2004)

Candidates' performance in expression tasks on Paper 02 (that is, Sections 1, 3 and 4) was very similar in 2004 to what it was in 2003, with means of 26.68 and 26.33 in 2004 and 2003 respectively, out of a possible 75.

A comparison of the average mark in the four sections shows that there is little difference in performance across the sections. It could suggest that teachers are covering all four areas evenly.

General Advice

Teachers need to emphasise that CXC English A (both Basic and General) is an English language examination and that candidates must, above all, demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. The fundamental preparation for the examination is that candidates should develop high-level skills, both passive (comprehension) and productive (expression) in the English language. These skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (not only full stops and commas, but also the not so frequently used ones such as colons and semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case/lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers, whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing. The kind of writing that has become popular in e-mail messages and in advertisements is not acceptable in this examination.

In Section 1, when a straightforward summary is required, main points must be identified and organised logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale, the CXC markers are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates; it should not be treated as a deletion exercise or a copying exercise.

The questions in Section 2 are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked and to frame their answers appropriately. For example, instructions sometimes say 'give a word'; at other times they say 'give a phrase'; at other times still they say 'give a clause'. In each case candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Candidates need to read and re-read the questions themselves as well as the passages on which the questions are set. Answers should be to the point. These questions never require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer.

In Section 3 many candidates are exceeding the suggested length for the short story and though excess is not penalized in the marking, spending too much time on one question can affect performance in others. Every candidate doing this examination should have read the best stories from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These 'Best Stories' are available from CXC.) These stories, however, should <u>not</u> be memorised and reproduced with slight alterations.

In the case of Section 4, candidates should note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that support their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. For some inexplicable reason, some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously) or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will achieve higher scores than those they earn by merely agreeing with what they perceive to be the examiners' views.

General Proficiency

SECTION ONE

Question 1 (Expression)

In this question candidates were asked to read an extract from a report on migration and to write a summary of it in no more than 100 words. Candidates had to select the main information, organise it logically and present it in standard English. All three components are important, but perhaps logical organisation of the information is of the greatest importance in the teaching exercise. Candidates should be made aware that a summary is not simply a series of statements presented with no expressed links between them.

Candidates were expected to identify the classes of migrants; the direction of migration; the relationship between migration, population growth/decline and the labour market; and the consequences of migration on source country and destination.

Performance on this question was slightly better than it was last year. However, there are still too many candidates who pay absolutely no attention to the word limit given or dishonestly write an incorrect number of words at the end. This latter strategy does not work.

Teachers should:

(i) advise students against relying heavily on the original text and making just a few minor changes; and using a deletion strategy to try to reduce the number of words in the original text
(ii) give students more practice in distilling essential information and expressing it, as far as possible, in their own words
(iii) advise students not to repeat points or insert too many illustrative examples of points made
(iv) above all remind students to observe the stated length

Advice to Teachers

In the training of students in summary writing, teachers should use a variety of selections, including sources outside the textbooks, such as daily newspapers and current popular magazines. Teachers should remind students to work with what is given – real-life material has imperfections and part of the training in summary writing is to be able to determine what is important or critical and what is not in such material. Report and summary writing is as much about arranging relevant points as it is about picking out the main points in what someone else has said or written. In order to reflect the original accurately, attention should be paid to time sequence and cause and effect relationships, as they occur in the original. Practice in the effective use of words such as *because, although*, *as a result and in spite of the fact that,* which link clauses (containing relevant points), will help immensely the task of summary and report writing.

SECTION TWO

Question 2 (Understanding)

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of ideas expressed in a narrative passage, a selection from Eugenia O'neal's "The Parillon Sisters". For the most part, candidates responded correctly to the items (a), (b), (c), (d) and (g). Item (e) was answered correctly (= to indicate that it was not English) by only a small percentage of candidates. Item (f) did not ask for words from the passage, which meant that those candidates who interpreted it in that way restricted themselves unnecessarily. Item (h) was not answered correctly by most candidates; the answer (the attitude) required was 'pity' or some equivalent. As usual, as soon as the questions go beyond "who" and "what", a great number of candidates find it difficult to cope with inferences and implications.

Question 3 (Understanding)

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a view put forward by the editor of the Weekend Nation newspaper about the relationship between freedom and the law. Item (a) was answered incorrectly by a great number of candidates because they did not pay attention to the instruction that only *a phrase* should be given, not the whole of the first sentence. Items (b) and (c) were correctly answered by most candidates. The answer to (c) hinged on the understanding of the word 'ironically', which involves an opposite relationship (that is, contrary to expectation) between one thing and another. Item (d) required candidates to link the word *latter* to a preceding idea but only a minority of candidates managed to do this successfully. Item (e), which was intended as a straightforward question requiring an understanding of punctuation *(Our supreme law, our Constitution = Our supreme law* is *our Constitution)*, was answered correctly by only a small percentage of candidates. Item (f) required candidates to solve a simple verbal logical problem. This was not correctly done by most candidates. The two-part answer to (g) did not present any major problems.

Advice to Teachers

Reading of material from outside the Caribbean should help to expand the passive vocabulary and general knowledge of students. Teachers still have to do more work on the literary devices used by writers in order to get students to move beyond literal interpretations. In the explanation of literary devices and specific phrases/ sentences used by writers, candidates have to be accurate and precise in their answers. Teachers should dissuade students from giving long-winded answers which really conceal ignorance.

SECTION THREE

Questions 4, 5 and 6 (Expression)

Candidates did not seem to have any difficulty understanding the topics set, but there were still too many who did not know what elements are required in short stories or who could not demonstrate those elements in their writing. There were some candidates who wrote brilliant stories and generally candidates seemed to be reasonably well prepared for this section of the examination. On the other hand, this section, as it usually does, exposed the weaknesses of candidates who had not mastered the fundamentals of writing in English.

The picture stimulus in Question 4 seemed to appeal to many candidates and encouraged a variety of stories, but this year there were more stories of a better standard. Happily, there was a smaller number of candidates this year who just described the picture. This question elicited several excellent responses, including the one deemed to be the 'best story'. On the other hand, some stories had no more than a tenuous connection with the stimulus. Teachers should remind candidates that when a story has no connection whatsoever to any of the three stimuli given, it automatically is given zero marks.

Question 5 was a fairly popular choice and it produced a number of action stories. Some of these were very good and imaginative in some cases and realistic in others. Some of these stories were awarded marks in the top ranges. On the other hand, some candidates did not convincingly link the two parts of the stimulus together in their stories or did not convincingly suggest that 'life would be different' from then on.

Question 6 was not a very popular choice. Candidates seemed to have difficulty tying the two parts of the stimulus together. This question did not produce any outstanding stories.

Advice to Teachers

Teachers should not encourage students to over-indulge in the expression of literary devices. There has to be a match between the setting and the action. Students whose stories are impressive are those who use details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Teachers need to give all students practice in action-oriented stories and not restrict choices to emotional stories. Boys seem to prefer the former and not the latter, and teachers, if they want all their students to succeed, should be aware of this. Students should be encouraged, as often as possible, to interpret topics in a positive and wholesome way and not to restrict themselves to situations of poverty, degradation and stress. Training in short story writing should include a lot of oral work and the telling of funny stories and anecdotes where there is a concentration on the characters and what they say. Training in short story writing must stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading. Although there is no penalty for writing stories that are longer than is suggested in the rubric, a perusal of the scripts reveals that longer stories tend to be weaker as they often get out of control.

SECTION FOUR

Question 7 and 8 (Expression)

On the whole, responses in this section were satisfactory. Candidates seemed to find the topics interesting and manageable.

In responding to the statement in Question 7 many candidates did not address all of the points and so automatically weakened their argument. It is necessary in a question such as this for candidates to be methodical in their answers and not to contradict earlier points made.

In the case of Question 8 most candidates agreed with the topic statement, sometimes passionately, but did little to show any further insightfulness. Some good responses from among those who disagreed pointed out the problems and difficulties involved in such a proposal (for example, why 15 years of age, why only young men, who would pay for the training, where would the trainees be housed). There were many spirited and well written responses from candidates supporting the proposal as well as those opposing it.

Advice to Teachers

More attention should be paid to the organisation of arguments, that is, paragraphing of different points with the relevant supporting evidence. The language should be clear and the reader should have no doubt about the writer's position on the issues. Candidates should not contradict their stated position. Poor sentence structure, punctuation and spelling are sources of distraction and cause the reader to lose the focus of an argument. Careful re-reading should help to remove such distractions.

Basic Proficiency

SECTION ONE

Question 1 tested the candidates' ability to summarise a passage from a daily newspaper – a commissioner of police's report on offences and crimes during the year 2002. The majority of candidates showed a reasonable level of understanding of the passage, though numbers and simple statistics proved difficult for many. Most, however, in their summary, did not mention the point about the challenges faced by the police. The stronger candidates were able to identify the main ideas in the passage and present a response largely using their own words. The weaker candidates often exceeded the word limit and presented responses in the exact words of the passage. Many of these simply reproduced sections of the passage joining them together incoherently. The majority of these failed to master the mechanics of the language.

Advice to Teachers

Teachers need to ensure that their students receive more practice in summary writing since Question 1 is compulsory. Special attention should be paid to concord, tense and sentence structure.

SECTION TWO

Question 2 (Understanding)

This question tested candidates' understanding of ideas expressed in a narrative passage. The chosen extract was from Ama Ata Aidoo's 'Changes'. In general, the items were answered fairly well, though items (b) and (c) proved to be much more challenging than the others. Very few candidates answered (b) correctly. In the case of Item (d) (what kind of person), some candidates incorrectly interpreted this to mean occupation rather than personality.

Advice to Teachers

Students need more practice in answering the kinds of questions set on the paper, questions requiring precise answers. In preparing for these questions teachers should make sure that students read questions a number of times before they attempt to write their answers. After reading the whole passage, candidates should also re-read the section of the passage relevant to each specific question to make sure that what they are thinking of writing is what the passage says. Students should be advised to re-read what they have written to make sure that it makes sense to someone reading it. As is the case generally, candidates would be helped tremendously if they read more, which would make them more accustomed to written material.

Question 3 (Understanding)

This question tested candidates' ability to read and understand a persuasive passage. In the one chosen, the writer argued for a lengthening of the school year for American students. Items (a), (e) and (f) proved difficult for most candidates. In many cases the candidates' responses to Item (a) were not clear as to whether summer was getting shorter in terms of days or whether it was coming to an end. In the case of Item (e), candidates seemed to know what the word 'attitude' meant, but were confused with the word 'sobering'. For Item (f) many candidates incorrectly identified the American students as the correct response instead of students of other industrialised nations.

Advice to Teachers

In preparation for Section Two teachers should give students more practice in comprehending extracts of writing other than narrations. In fact, teachers should use various types of material from varying sources. Students should get constant practice in responding directly and concisely to questions asked, using their own words instead of lifting large pieces from the passage given. Students need to expand their vocabulary and one effective way of doing this is by reading more.

SECTION THREE

Questions 4, 5 and 6 (Expression)

This section tested candidates' ability to express themselves creatively by writing a story based on a given stimulus. Question 5 was the most popular choice and the least popular was Question 4, which was poorly interpreted. In Questions 5 and 6 many candidates simply added the statement to the end of their story without proper linkage. The majority of those who attempted Question 4 did not produce stories, but rather presented descriptions of the boy or expositions on child care and abuse. Most of those who attempted Question 5 gave depictions of a classroom scene so that the statement with 'the pen' would be relevant. However, there were a few who depicted a farm scene because for them 'the pen' was an animal pen. A few of those who attempted Question 6 based their stories on mysterious happenings, like ghosts and unidentified flying objects, but the majority wrote stories about lies, theft and rape. The better candidates were able to develop a strong and credible story line, presenting their work in acceptable standard English. The weaker candidates had difficulty presenting a good story line and this was compounded by problems in the mechanics of grammar and sentence construction. Many merely presented reports of events without conflict.

Advice to Teachers

Students should be encouraged to read more widely and practise writing more often. Students should get more practice in writing stories based on pictures. Teachers should spend more time with students on the basic elements of story writing. For example, students need more practice in incorporating dialogue into story writing. They should also be given more exposure to figurative expressions.

SECTION FOUR

Questions 7 and 8 (Expression)

This section tested candidates' ability to write persuasively in Standard English and to present sound arguments. Many more candidates did Question 8 than Question 7. In Question 7 very few candidates were able to distinguish between a reason and an excuse. Question 8 elicited many responses that vaguely addressed the various qualities needed for success (for example, determination, manners, respect, hard work) rather than focus on skills and knowledge. The stronger candidates gave evidence of persuasive techniques such as rhetorical questions, proper use of statistics and appeal to authority. Many of these used what seemed like real life experiences to support their positions. The weaker candidates were often very repetitive in presenting their argument. Errors in the mechanics of writing were prevalent and many had difficulty writing continuous prose in standard English. Often the structures used gave evidence of interference from the vernacular.

Advice to Teachers

More time needs to be spent on oral English to give the students familiarity and experience with the patterns and rhythms of standard English. Teachers need to allot some time to teaching students to write clear opinion statements which are supported by relevant examples.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JUNE 2005

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS
JUNE 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

The examination in 2005 followed the format used in previous years. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of literary and persuasive writing. The table below shows the marks assigned to the different papers by profiles.

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02 Essay**	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60*/35+	25*/15+	85*/50+
Expression	–	75	75
TOTAL	**35**	**90**	**125**

* raw score + computed score

The statistics this year have to be interpreted differently because there were two examinations at General Proficiency – one for the Caribbean generally and one for Guyana specifically. Overall comparison with previous years may be somewhat misleading because Guyana statistics are usually below the average and consequently removing Guyana from the general statistics causes the average to rise.

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above this year and previous years is as follows:

2003	2004	2005 (Caribbean minus Guyana)	2005 (Guyana)
49.53	49.60	52.70	47.02

The performance mean (out of a total of 125) for the examination this year and previous years is as follows:

(2003) 50.62 (2004) 50.74 (2005) 52.76 (Carib) (2005) 52.94 (Guy)

Average performance on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2003	2004	2005 (Caribbean)	2005 (Guyana)
34.63	33.09	33.67	28.78

Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 (all out of 25 marks) is as follows:

	2003	2004	2005 (Carib)	2005 (Guyana)
Section 1 Summary skills	8.20	9.23	8.80	11.02
Section 2 Comprehension	8.22	9.30	9.16	11.53
Section 3 Story Writing	8.84	8.79	9.70	8.29
Section 4 Argument	9.29	8.66	10.54	10.26

A comparison of the average mark in the four sections for 2005 (Caribbean minus Guyana) shows that there was a decline in performance in Section 1 (Summary skills). There are still too many candidates who come to the examination with no knowledge of what a summary entails. The rise in the average mark for Argument is attributable to the accessibility of the topics given.

General advice

Teachers need to emphasise that CXC English A (both Basic and General) is an English language examination and that candidates must, above all, demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. The fundamental preparation for the examination is that candidates should develop high-level skills, both passive (comprehension) and productive (expression) in the English language. These skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (not only full stops and commas, but also the not so frequently used ones such as colons, semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case and lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing. The kind of writing that has become popular in e-mail messages and in advertisements is not acceptable in this examination.

In Section 1, when a summary is required, main points must be identified and organised logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale by the candidate, CXC markers are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates.

The questions in Section 2 are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. For example, instructions sometimes say ‘give a word’; at other times they say ‘give a phrase’; at other times still they say ‘give a clause’. In each case candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Candidates need to read and re-read the questions themselves as well as the passages on which the questions are set. Answers should be to the point. These questions never require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer.

In Section 3 many candidates are exceeding the suggested length for the short story and though excess is not penalized in the marking, spending too much time on one question can affect performance in others. Every candidate doing this examination should have read the best story from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These ‘Best Stories’ are available from CXC). These stories, however, should not be memorised and reproduced with slight alterations. Although the question paper states word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better candidates tend to write stories that fall within or not too far out of the word limit. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak. Often too, the candidates have insufficient time left to complete the paper properly. Teachers are encouraged to help their candidates to plan their stories, focusing on building plots, intensifying conflict, and creating a good sense of characters, instead of merely relating one or a string of events.

In the case of Section 4, note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that support their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. Some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think are the examiners' views.

General Proficiency (All territories except Guyana)

SECTION ONE (Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read a passage taken from a supermarket magazine, identify the problem (about the processing of chicken) as stated in the passage and to give Somerfield's response to it in no more than 120 words. Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose as in the model below:

> *In response to concerns that some chickens that are imported have a higher water content and possibly other animal proteins, Somerfield has issued a statement assuring the public that its mission is to provide quality chicken.*
>
> *Somerfield further states that although it is legal to add water and proteins to chicken, if the labelling does not adequately specify the contents, this may deceive the consumer. Somerfield assures the public that its chickens, chilled, frozen, local or imported, undergo a process that uses water in a controlled way for rinsing at different stages of the operation. No protein is added. Furthermore, Somerfield has outside analysis done by an independently certified and sophisticated laboratory to ensure quality chickens.* (117 words/or below)

Performance on Question 1 this year was worse than last year. There are still too many candidates who pay absolutely no attention to the word limit given. Some candidates did not put the reading material in proper perspective/context and did not recognize or did not understand the statement "Adapted from Somerfield magazine". As usual, many candidates lifted relative portions of the passage verbatim or paraphrased them indiscriminately. Superior scripts clearly demonstrated satisfactory reading and writing skills, assisted by a fine vocabulary and the ability to write with purpose and a sense of audience.

Advice

To facilitate preparation for this section of the paper teachers should:

i) remind candidates to observe the stated length.
ii) drill candidates in the skill of reading questions for theme and specific tasks to be done; insist that candidates read the instruction given and not assume that every year it is identical.
iii) help candidates to recognize the fact that summary writing comprises reading and writing skills (comprehension and composition skills)
iv) help candidates to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

   a) using one's own words as far as possible
   b) using straightforward English with clarity and conciseness

c) responding to the rubric of the question with its implications for audience, purpose and situation or context
d) using connectives to achieve fluency of writing and reading
e) correct mechanics of the language

v) stimulate candidates to read widely so that there can be an easier connection with the stimulus material.

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

This section requires candidates to respond to levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. It is expected that candidates have learnt to use their judgment in answering questions. For example, some questions require paraphrases and some ask for evidence. So, candidates should know how to select words or phrases (as required) and use quotation marks to so indicate. Also candidates need to do as the question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often wrong – it is an indication that the candidate does not know exactly what the answer is. This is a recurrent problem which is likely to be the kind that would respond to more oral and written practice in class with immediate feedback and discussion.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of ideas expressed in a narrative passage, a selection from Anthony Winkler's *Going Home to Teach*. The following were deemed to be the correct answers. In the case of (a) and (d) suitable alternatives were accepted.

(a) officious/pompous
(b) three members of staff
(c) moored; ocean
(d) He disliked it
(e) Her ill-fitting dentures made her appear bad tempered, but she really had a pleasant personality
(f) School administrator/principal/headmaster
(g) She used to scold the labourers for their swearing

(a) Weaker candidates simply felt that the author thought of or was representing Dr Levy as a king. Many of them did not pay attention to the wording of the question – "What opinion does he want you to have?", NOT "what does he say".
(b) This question required candidates to make a simple mathematical deduction. Many could not. It appears that several included Dr Levy and therefore gave 'four' as the answer.
(c) Most candidates got one or the other of the two words ("moored", "ocean"), but only a few got both and many got neither. This suggests that candidates either do not know the term "metaphor" or do not fully appreciate how it works. A few candidates ignored the stipulation that said "two words" and wrote phrases. They received no marks as there was no indication that they knew what the words were.
(d) The question required candidates to summarize the author's feelings about Dr Levy's office. Most candidates gave weak answers, answers that simply described the office.
(e) This question required evidence. Some candidates paraphrased; others simply quoted.
(f) Many candidates deduced that Dr Levy must be the principal of an institution or some kind of school administrator. However, several candidates simply assumed that "Dr" meant medical doctor or dentist.
(g) This question also asked for evidence. Candidates needed to select the words that answered the question ("boisterous labourers below whose profanity occasionally drifted in and buzzed her ears" did not answer the question).

The responses suggest that many candidates understood the passage at the literal level. A large number also seem to have understood some of the inner meaning, but did not understand what the questions required of them. This seems to result from insufficient practice in, not simply how to answer questions, but also in how to be confident about their own thoughts, how to express those thoughts in relation to specific questions and how to make those thoughts clear to other people reading them.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a view put forward in an article titled "Capturing the Power of Classroom Assessment". The following were deemed to be the correct answers.

(a) To remove the barriers to learning/to help candidates to overcome difficulty and learn.
(b) Teachers still pass on information to candidates/Candidates are still expected to learn it/Teachers still employ a familiar variety of classroom assessments/Candidates still ask the critical question.
(c) Poking fun at candidates' focus on the test above all else/trivialising their concern with the test.
(d) It seeks to involve the reader, get the reader to share his point of view/It seeks to establish solidarity/direct appeal.
(e) He is careful in making his statements/not dogmatic/moderate/guarded; he is seeking to convince the reader that he is reasonable, unbiased.
(f) It will allow teachers to assess candidates' growth and development and identify their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Candidates did well on questions that required no more than quoting directly from the passage. Thus, candidates seemed to have little difficulty in answering (a), (b), and (f). In contrast, understanding the 'writer's intent' posed a challenge for many candidates – implicit meanings were not fully understood. Thus, (c) and (e) proved difficult for many candidates. In attempts to answer questions, candidates wrote long sentences and paragraphs hoping that the answer would emerge somehow.

Advice

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get candidates to move beyond literal interpretations. In the explanation of literary devices and specific phrases and sentences used by writers, candidates have to be accurate and precise in their answers. Teachers should dissuade candidates from giving long-winded answers which seek to conceal ignorance.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterization, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood and good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. There were several candidates who attempted to use words and structures with which they were not familiar. The result was that what they wrote was often verbose, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help candidates feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral, spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate some interesting class productions – for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Two problems appearing on scripts in recent years and evident again this year were:

a) an element of what appears to be plagiarism or the writing of rehearsed stories with the question stimulus merely tacked on;
b) essays that are not stories.

In the case of (a) teachers are advised to encourage candidates to learn from others but not represent other people's work as their own. On (b) candidates should be told and reminded that total failure to answer the question results in zero marks being given to the response.

Some candidates also seem unable to differentiate description from story, especially when the stimulus is a picture (as was the case with Question 4). Teachers should spend time helping candidates to appreciate the power of description in storytelling but should stress the need for a story to do more than describe. This is likely to become even more important in relation to next year's paper which is expected to have topics for story as well as description.

Often candidates' ignorance of basic mechanics and spelling interferes with the examiner's appreciation of the story; sometimes the problem is not so great but is noticeable and affects the candidates' marks.

Advice

Teachers should not encourage candidates to over-indulge in the expression of literary devices. There has to be a match between the setting and the action. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Teachers need to give all candidates practice in action-oriented stories and not restrict choices to emotional stories. Candidates should be encouraged, as often as possible, to interpret topics in a positive and wholesome way and not to restrict themselves to situations of poverty, degradation and stress. Training in short story writing must always stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

Candidates displayed similar strengths and weaknesses in writing argumentatively as in previous years, although there were signs that candidates are being engaged more in how to structure their arguments. Nevertheless, too many candidates lack an awareness of topical issues. There is clear indication that they are uninformed about social and environmental factors within the region and globally and therefore experience great difficulty in responding adequately to the topics. Candidates at this stage of their education need to read more about what is happening around them; get information that can inform their opinion; and see how opinions are expressed in various media. Despite the apparent 'closeness' of the topics to the candidates' experiences, too many candidates were unable to take their arguments to the level expected. Some who have an opinion express their position in somewhat parochial and pedestrian ways. Others who had one idea kept repeating that idea throughout the essay.

It is noticeable where candidates have been 'taught' how to organize their points in paragraphs. In a few cases candidates had very similar beginning and closing statements. For example, several responses from the same centre had essays that began: "*It is fundamentally correct ...*" and ended: "*I conclude by restating...*" This kind of slavish reproduction should not be encouraged.

In summary the following were identified in candidates' responses:

> Candidates who displayed superiority understood the demands of the topic; identified their audience; cogently presented their points and argued effectively using appropriate devices. Competent candidates demonstrated some ability to raise points, but faltered on argumentation. Weak responses came from candidates who had some knowledge of the topics, but lacked the skills of argumentation and displayed very weak language skills.

General Proficiency (Guyana)

SECTION ONE (Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to write a letter to their school principal pointing out the most important information about an advertised youth symposium. Candidates were expected to identify the time and place of the symposium, the topics to be covered, the contacts and deadlines. Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose in not more than 100 words, as in the model below:

> *I am inviting you to the National Youth Symposium sponsored by the government and NGOs on the Challenges of Adolescent Health to be held at the Obana Conference Centre, January 8, 2006. Sessions are designed for youth and other persons. The sessions will be conducted by experts in the field of nutrition, human sexuality and diseases, drugs and other social issues. Bukawela Tudor will deliver the feature address. There will be testimonials from other influential young people and live entertainment. For information on registration and other details contact Yvonne Dalton at 111 2615 by December 15, 2005.*

The format of the presentation lent itself to better summarising and there was consequently a much higher average achieved on this question than in previous years.

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

Question 2

Candidates were given a passage from O.R. Dathorne's *Dele's child* and were asked to answer eight questions on the passage.
(c) was the simplest of the questions requiring only a restatement of the last part of sentence 2 in paragraph 2. Most candidates had no trouble with this question, even though some thought it necessary to write lengthy paraphrases.
(a) was also a simple question which could be answered after a first reading of the passage. Only a minority of candidates had difficulty with this question.
(b) presented most candidates with little difficulty because it involved a straightforward contrast between sentence 2 and sentence 3.
(d) required candidates to read paragraph 2 and to come up with a word or phrase summarising the narrator's state of mind as evidenced in words such as 'spit at', 'hate', 'I checked myself suddenly', 'viciously', 'Damn them'. Any equivalent of 'unstable', 'resentful' or 'bitter' was acceptable. Many candidates did not understand the phrase 'state of mind'.
(e) may initially have seemed difficult, but the repetition of the idea of stillness/quietness no less than five times in lines 4-7 made the answer relatively simple.

(f) sought to find out whether candidates understood a sentence final comment by the narrator showing the difference between what was officially announced and the narrator's view of the matter (that he did not agree with it). This question proved difficult for most candidates.
(g) required the candidates to identify the narrator's reaction of hostility or anger to not being remembered. This partially overlapped with (d). Performance on this question was moderate.
(h) required candidates to identify 'kind/kindness' as a word being used sarcastically by the narrator. Most candidates did not seem to understand what sarcasm meant.

Question 3

Candidates were presented with an argumentative letter written to the editor of the Gleaner newspaper and asked to answer six questions on it.
(b) and (c) proved straightforward for most candidates. The most superficial reading of the passage would have allowed candidates to identify the 'major event' as a hurricane or more specifically Hurricane Ivan. Question (c) was based on paragraph 2 which identified 'laws of physical health', 'moral laws' and 'environmental laws'. Candidates variously gave one, two or all three parts in their responses
(a) and (d) were answered by most candidates by directly citing parts of the passage – (a) 'mankind's interventions'; (d) 'The Creator has equipped us with intelligence ... inform ourselves'. While (a) was answered correctly by most candidates, the reverse was true of (d).
(e) proved to be difficult for many candidates because it required a careful reading of paragraph 3 to work out the answer rather than just a quotation from the paragraph or a reliance on religious beliefs.
(f) was basically straightforward, but candidates had to identify the 'object' precisely ('hot stove'). Answers such as 'hot stove principle' or 'stove' did not get full marks.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

There were several stories of a much higher quality than usual, but the usual weaknesses surfaced in responses in this section. In the case of Question 4, the picture stimulus, there was the usual problem of concentration on description of the picture. Yet, there were several good stories given in response. In the case of 5 and 6, there were too many stories with tenuous connections to the stimulus; and, more generally, there was an inability to write a short story.

Recommendations for improvement in story writing given elsewhere in this report apply here.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

Performance in this section was much better than in previous years. Candidates seemed to find the topics familiar and to their liking and therefore produced better arguments. In the case of Question 7, which referred to "the government", some candidates took this as an opportunity to attack or defend a political party, according to their own political persuasion. In many cases bias prevented candidates from presenting reasoned arguments. In the case of Question 8 consistency in argument usually provided the critical division between good and weak answers.

The same recommendations for improvement in argument given elsewhere in this report apply here.

Basic Proficiency

General Comments

The examination in 2005 followed the format used in previous years. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of literary and persuasive writing. The table below shows the marks assigned to the different papers by profiles.

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02 Essay**	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60	24	84
Expression	–	56	56
TOTAL	**60**	**80**	**140**

There was a slight increase in the number of candidates taking the examination in 2005:
4,502 (2001) ∅ 3,792 (2002) ∅ 3777 (2003) ∅ 3,063 (2004) ∅ 3,504 (2005).

The statistics show a significant increase in the percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in 2005:– 16.20 % (2003) ∅ 16.78% (2004) ∅ 29.42% (2005).

The performance mean over the last eight years has been up and down, but in 2005 it was better than the three previous years:-

(1998) 53.13 – (1999) 51.32 – (2000) 56.57 – (2001) 55.08 – (2002) 49.57 – (2003) 47.17 ∅ (2004) 49.62 ∅ (2005) 52.28.

Detailed Comments

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2005 showed an upward change over 2004. The mean score in 2004, out of a possible 60, was 25.58 and this moved to 27.84 in 2005.

Paper 02 - Free Response

Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 was as follows:

			2004	2005
Section 1	Summary skills	(20 marks)	5.06	5.56
Section 2	Comprehension	(24 marks)	9.87	9.93
Section 3	Story Writing	(16 marks)	5.17	5.14
Section 4	Argument	(20 marks)	5.62	6.90

SECTION ONE (Expression)

Question 1 tested the candidates' ability to summarise a passage written in continuous prose. The level of interpretation of the candidates who attempted this question was poor. Many of them used their personal experiences to give meaning to the responses. This was probably because they found the passage too difficult. Indeed very few candidates gave evidence of a clear understanding of the passage. The weaker candidates showed complete misunderstanding of the passage and wrote responses which demonstrated incompetence. In addition most candidates presented responses with just sentence fragments and lack of overall cohesiveness. They displayed lack of organization of material and their sequencing was poor. Many candidates simply reproduced the passage while others in their effort to use their own words exceeded the word limit without including the main points. The relatively few candidates who were able to identify the relevant points were to some extent able to give reasonable responses to the question. A few demonstrated ability which was seemingly above the level of Basic Proficiency. Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose as in the model below:

Model Answer

When industrialisation started it was marked by terrible working conditions which would be unacceptable today. Working hours were based on those of peasants and handicraftsmen, the only workers at the time, and varied between 12 to 14 hours each day. Many of the workers were children who were among the persons who could most easily leave agriculture.

Inexperienced workers using machinery exposed themselves to the risk of injury. Protective measures were introduced and improved, recognising the advances in technologies and the importance placed on human life and safety.

Advice

It is recommended to teachers that they pay particular attention to concord, tense and sentence structure and reinforce the skills needed in summary writing. Teachers must be aware that in some cases English needs to be taught as a second language and so second language approaches need to be adopted if there is to be an improvement in the level of results of these candidates.

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

Question 2

This question tested the candidates' ability to read and understand a prose passage in Standard English. It assessed their ability to use interpretative and analytical skills. (b) posed the greatest difficulty. Most of the candidates based their answers on the increase on size of the family instead of stating that there was difficulty in identifying who was related to whom. Candidates also encountered great difficulty in responding to (e). As was the case in (b), many failed to score in (e). However, (f) proved to be the easiest and most candidates were able to give the correct response.

Advice

It is recommended that teachers concentrate on teaching comprehension skills, especially inference, with particular reference to reading material. Candidates need more practice in answering the kinds of questions set on the paper, questions requiring precise answers. In preparing for these questions teachers should make sure that candidates read questions a number of times before they attempt to write their answers. After reading the whole passage, candidates should also re-read the section of the passage relevant to each specific question to make sure that what they are thinking of writing is what the passage says. Candidates should be advised to re-read what they have written to make sure that it makes sense to someone reading it.

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' ability to read and understand a persuasive passage written in Standard English. Most candidates interpreted (c), (e) and (f) satisfactorily but had difficulty with (a), (b) and (d). The majority of candidates performed best on question (e). Many were also able to answer (c) and (f) correctly. In question 'a' however many candidates thought that 'Menu Dining and Entertainment Curacao' was a restaurant and focussed on getting food. For (b) the majority of candidates did not focus on the word 'precisely' and gave responses like 'the Caribbean', 'locals', 'international people'. The overall performance of the candidates showed an improvement over former years. Most candidates attempted this question and many of them earned six marks and more. It was encouraging to see so many candidates recognizing the passage as persuasive writing.

Advice

It is recommended that teachers reinforce the recognition of the different types of writing. More attention needs to be paid to identifying relevant information relating to particular questions set on chosen passages. Candidates also need to do much more reading. More attention should be paid to spelling and punctuation.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

This section tested the candidates' ability to express themselves creatively in continuous prose. The most popular question in this section was question 5, but questions 6 and 4 were done by an appreciable number of candidates. In response to question 4, many candidates wrote descriptively and ignored several elements of the story. In question 5, generally the sequence of events resulting in the disappearance of the character was credible. However, there were several stories which had a tenuous link with the stimulus. In question 6 the interpretation of 'surprise' was limited; the majority created 'birthday surprises' or the 'surprise' of meeting their father for the first time. In addition to this, there were many stories in which the link with the stimulus was weak. There were also a few candidates who fused the three topics into one story. There were a few candidates who demonstrated superiority and many scripts demonstrated competence. The majority of scripts were of the level of Range 3 (5-8 marks). There were a few in Range 1 where the candidates showed total inability to write Standard English. Much work needs to be done in developing candidates' narrative skills. Similarly, structures of Standard English need to be taught in a systematic way. In very many cases the lack of competence in Standard English interfered with the story line.

Advice

It is recommended that candidates be encouraged to read more widely in order to develop a richer vocabulary and so avoid mundane expressions. They need more practice in writing short stories and in incorporating dialogue in story writing. They should be given more exposure to figurative interpretations. This can be done by using model short stories and musical ballads. Candidates should be encouraged to edit their work before they write the final draft.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

This section tested the candidates' ability to write persuasively and present sound arguments in continuous Standard English. In question 7 a few candidates took the word 'argument' to mean a confrontation between two persons and so they wrote a dramatic sketch. Many had difficulty dealing with all parts of the stimulus. Most of these wrote about 'getting tough' and ignored the expulsion component. A few wrote about how candidates should 'deal with violence' when other candidates provoked them. Expulsion was often confused with suspension. Candidates who performed creditably showed an understanding of a good essay format with an introduction, a body with well-developed paragraphs and a conclusion. These candidates also made use of various persuasive techniques such as the rhetorical question, repetition, statistical data, authoritative statements, personal appeal and suitable quotations. Weaker candidates were generally unable to clarify a position in response to the stimulus beyond stating agreement and disagreement. While most of these candidates were able to make a few relevant statements there was very little evidence of ability to link and develop these ideas. Very few used paragraphs. Much of the language used was closer to the vernacular than to Standard English. Poor spelling made words almost impossible to be recognized: 'schped behavyer' for stupid behaviour, 'armynetions' for ammunition. Most of these candidates were unable to write clear introductions or relevant conclusions.

Advice

It is recommended that teachers pay greater attention to subject/verb agreement. Candidates must be encouraged to use their dictionaries to improve their spelling and vocabulary. They need more practice in logical development of argument, use of rhetorical questions and appropriate use of figurative language. It is felt too that candidates should be encouraged to do research on popular topics based on issues on the radio and the news-papers. Candidates need to be given many opportunities to write. Debates and discussions provide opportunity for candidates to practice expressing opinion. Reading West Indian literature that uses the vernacular and discussing the difference between this and Standard English can develop the candidates' ability to distinguish between the two. Candidates need more practice in the use of topic sentences and paragraphs.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2006

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

The examination in 2006 was the first year the revised syllabus was assessed. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of summary, literary and persuasive writing. In Paper 02 candidates were allowed a choice in Section 3 between story writing and description. The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is as follows:-

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02 Essay**	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60*46+	40*30+	76+ = 40%
Expression	–	90*114+	114+ = 60%

* raw score

\+ weighted mark

The statistics this year have to be read more carefully because of the changes in the marks allotted and the changes in the weighting in Paper 02.

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above this year and previous years is as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006
49.53	49.60	52.70	48.54

The performance mean for the examination (out of a total of 125) for 2003-2005 and (out of a total of 190*) for 2006 is as follows:

(2003)50.62 (2004) 50.74 (2005) 52.76 (2006) 41.51

Average performance over the last four years on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006
34.63	33.09	33.67	32.36

Average performance (2003-2005) in the component sections of Paper 02 (all out of 25 marks) is given below. Average performance in 2006 is given out of 25 for comparison with previous years and also out of the relevant 2006 totals.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Section 1 Summary skills	8.20	9.23	8.80	8.66/10.40 (30)
Section 2 Comprehension	8.22	9.30	9.16	10.85/12.15 (28)
Section 3 Story Writing/Description	8.84	8.79	9.70	10.22/14.31 (35)
Section 4 Argument	9.29	8.66	10.54	9.75/13.65 (35)

There was improvement in performance in Section 2 (Comprehension) and Section 3 (Story Writing/ Description).

General advice

Teachers need to emphasise that CXC English A (both Basic and General) is an English language examination and that candidates must, above all, demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. The fundamental preparation for the examination is that candidates should develop high-level skills, both passive (comprehension) and productive (expression) in the English language. These skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (not only full stops and commas, but also the not so frequently used ones such as colons, semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case/lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing. The kind of writing that has become popular in e-mail messages and in advertisements is not acceptable in this examination.

Students should come to the exam with a well rehearsed procedure for tackling each question, that is, identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy, producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. Teachers should advise each student, based on the student's ability and speed, about the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under CXC examination conditions. Teachers should give students specific instructions about deleting and editing in order that markers can read and understand what the candidate intended without undue difficulty.

In Section 1, when a summary is required, main points must be identified and organised logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced verbatim by the candidate, CXC markers are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates.

Some of the better candidates, in attempting to put the summary in their own words, sometimes change meanings or insert extraneous material. This is penalised. Therefore, those candidates who are seeking to achieve full marks or high marks should make sure that they preserve the meaning of the original.

The questions in Section 2 are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. For example, instructions sometimes say 'give a word'; at other times they say 'give a phrase'; at other times still they say 'give a clause'. In each case candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Candidates need to read and re-read the questions themselves as well as the passages on which the questions are set. Answers should be to the point. These questions never require paragraph-long answers. Responding to

a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer.

In Section 3 many candidates are exceeding the suggested length for the short story and though excess is not penalized in the marking in this case, spending too much time on one question can affect performance in others. Every candidate doing this examination should have read the best story from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These 'Best Stories' are available from CXC). These stories, however, should not be memorised and reproduced with slight alterations. Although the question paper states word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better students tend to write stories that fall within or not too far out of the word limit. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak. Often too, students who write excessively long stories have insufficient time left to complete the paper properly. Teachers are encouraged to help their students to plan their stories, focus on building plots, intensifying conflict, creating a good sense of character, instead of merely relating one or a string of events. Candidates should not memorise published stories and hope that this kind of cheating escapes the attention of the examiners.

In the case of Section 4, note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, supported by suitable examples. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that corroborate their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. For some inexplicable reason, some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think is the examiners' views.

General Proficiency

SECTION ONE (Understanding & Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read a passage taken from a newsletter and to summarise in no more than 120 words the major factors which contribute to the disadvantages encountered by women in the labour market . Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose.

According to the passage, the major factors contributing to disadvantages are:

- limited access to stable and well paid employment
- inability to pay for public education/training
- inability to qualify for entry to training
- choice of 'feminine' and non-technical fields in training
- socio-cultural factors in the attitudes of key people
- private sector training that possibly reinforces gender roles and biases.

Following are three excellent summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

(1) Many factors contribute to the disadvantages encountered by wom*en in the labour market. Women have limited access to stable, well-paid employment and are confined to 'feminine' work. In vocational courses women opt for less technical fields which narrow their opportunities. Women are also faced with the attitudes of employers and society itself when they seek employment. This is due to socio-cultural factors. In poor countries, women are disadvantaged in secondary or tertiary education because of entrance requirements or the cost of courses. Although numerous programmes are put in place by non-governmental organizations, they do not look at the impact of this training due to lack of monitoring and reporting. Such programmes may reinforce existing gender roles and biases. [118 words]*

(2) Though women have increasing opportunity to earn income, they are still disadvantaged economically, being mostly restricted to low-level, low-paying jobs. Contributing factors include low female enrolment in the technical-vocational areas that pay well. Females make some poor choices in areas of study because of their own values. They are influenced by other negative social attitudes towards various areas of employment. Another factor is that the school system does not help already disadvantaged girls to reach the entry requirements for technical training nor can they pay the high costs. Informal training is provided by private companies, but the quality of this training is not monitored, and it may only serve to maintain a negative situation. [114 words]

(3) The main factors that contribute to the disadvantages found by women in the world of work are educational and social. In relation to formal education and training, many women in most parts of the world cannot afford or do not qualify for entry to post-primary institutions. Those who do often restrict themselves to non-technical "feminine" subjects. This practice is reinforced by society and helps to limit the women in their job choices. Non-formal training is available in private institutions, but the courses in these situations are inadequately monitored and might reinforce the negative attitudes and gender issues that are already contributing to the disadvantages faced by these women in the arena of work. [113 words]

Performance on Question 1 this year was just marginally below last year's. There are still too many presumably genuine attempts which pay absolutely no attention to the word limit given. Some candidates operate with the casual assumption that excess will be overlooked in all answers. **This absolutely does not apply to Question 1.** As usual, many candidates lifted portions of the passage of varying lengths verbatim, or paraphrased them indiscriminately. Superior scripts clearly demonstrated satisfactory comprehension and writing skills, without any injection of extraneous material, that is, material not found in the passage.

Advice

In preparing students for this section of the paper, teachers should:

(i) remind students to observe the stated length.

(ii) drill students in the skill of reading questions for theme and specific tasks to be done; insist that students read the instruction given and not assume that every year it is identical.

(iii) help students to recognise the fact that summary writing comprises reading and writing skills (comprehension and composition skills)

(iv) help students to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

a) using one's own words as far as possible

b) using plain English with clarity and conciseness

c) responding to the rubric of the question with its implications for audience, purpose and situation/ context

d) using connectives to achieve fluency of writing/reading

e) observing correct mechanics of the language

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

This section requires students to respond to levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. It is expected that students have learnt to use their judgment in answering questions. For example, some questions require paraphrases and some ask for evidence. So, students should know how to select word or phrases (as required) and use quotation marks to so indicate. Also students need to do as the question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often wrong – it is an indication that the student does not know exactly what the answer is. This is a recurrent problem which is likely to be the kind that would respond to more oral and written practice in class with immediate feedback and discussion.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of ideas expressed in a narrative passage, a selection from Michael Anthony's "Pita of the Deep Blue Sea". The following were deemed to be the correct answers:

(a) Pita/the fish

(b) fast moving action; suspense; tension

(c) panic; anxiety; frustration; desperation

(d) to show the tremendous effort being made to escape

(e) the net

(f) because that is where the fate of the fish was decided, where death took place

(g) he was now free

(h) it was the sound of the place where he would have died

(a) This question was answered correctly by most candidates. The initial difficulty which candidates had to overcome was that the fish was given a name. Where candidates did not come to terms with this, the passage as a whole was not well understood.

(b) This question was not answered correctly by most candidates. It is the type of question which reflects the level of instruction candidates received, since it deals with a writer's craft.

(c) This question did not present great difficulty to most candidates. However, some candidates answered the question with words that were extreme or too vague.

(d) It was not satisfactory to make a general statement, that is, that 'repeat' means 'emphasis'. Candidates needed to explain this specific situation. Candidates had to demonstrate that they understood the passage.

(e) As in (a), candidates had to interpret the element of personification/animation correctly. Many candidates were unable to do this.

(f) Some candidates interpreted 'fateful' as "faithful'.

(g) This question did not present great difficulty to most candidates.

(h) This proved a difficult question for most candidates. Candidates needed to formulate their answers based on an understanding of the whole passage.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a view put forward in an article extracted from Time magazine. The following were deemed to be the correct answers:

(a) The debate is 'Can people be overweight but still healthy?'

(b) The phrase suggests that most people are involved in the debate or that the debate is worldwide. Alternatively, the phrase gives weight to the issue or shows the importance of it.

(c) The impression that the writer wants to convey is that people take sides or that people hold strongly to particular views or that there are conflicting views.

(d) The writer uses the word 'however' to point out that other persons hold a contrasting view.

(e) The most important point in the last paragraph is that fitness and size are equally important.

(f) Two factors are people should eat well and people should exercise regularly.

(g) [As a result of confusion about the numbering of paragraphs, this question was removed from the examination and not marked]

(h) The writer is referring to fitness proponents.

(a) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(b) As usual, the word 'effect' was beyond the competence of the majority of candidates.

(c) In this case, the word 'impression' did not constitute any major difficulty. Most candidates were able to formulate satisfactory answers to this question.

(d) Most candidates understood that 'however' introduced a contrast and were able to formulate a correct answer.

(e) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(f) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(h) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

Advice

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get students to move beyond literal interpretations. In the explanation of literary devices and specific phrases/sentences used by writers, candidates have to be accurate and precise in their answers. Teachers should dissuade students from giving long-winded answers which rarely conceal ignorance.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterisation, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood, good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. There were several students who attempted to use words and structures with which they were not familiar. The result was that what they wrote was often verbose, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help students feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral, spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate some interesting class productions – for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Description must be clearly constructed and developed (e.g. the different components must be linked appropriately). Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different focuses and facets must be linked appropriately (e.g. background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail). The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the purely descriptive elements. Choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself. Any change in perspective (e.g. visual, mood, tone, etc.) must be clearly established. If characters are being described, they must be sufficiently developed. Dialogue, when used, should be functional (e.g. to develop character, atmosphere, mood, etc.) There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words to create characters, moods, tones, atmosphere and setting.

A specific problem which arose this year is that a vast number of candidates did not seem to be aware of the change made to Section 3, which now asked for a description in Question 6. Since this may not have been the fault of the candidates themselves and it is possible that in spite of the long lead time given they were not informed and prepared by their teachers, it was decided not to penalise candidates who wrote a story in answer to Question 6. **This concession will not be repeated next year.**

There were not many problems with Question 4. It produced a range of responses with several that were mainly descriptions. However, most candidates were able to integrate the picture into a story. Most candidates wrote stories with a theme of a lost son or daughter. Several stories described the old woman, her condition and circumstances and then developed the plot.

Question 5 was a popular choice, but it produced a preponderance of mediocre stories with hardly any superior writing. It encouraged candidates to create humour which sometimes was not more than simplistic. Many responses to Question 5 merely had the stimulus quotation tacked on and not satisfactorily integrated into the plot.

In the case of Question 6, a great number of candidates proceeded to write a response without reading the instructions carefully. In the relevant responses to this question, various situations were created – a person returning home from abroad, a person returning after many years, a person coming to the scene after a disaster and many others. The good responses to this question used details to create pictures of the environment, made comparisons or reflections that justified the comment "... she felt like she was in another country" and expressed

thoughts and feelings suited to the situation. Although the question itself assisted with what should be described – "what she saw and her thoughts and feelings", many students did not follow the instructions of the question.

Advice

Use more and varied pictures to help stimulate and guide writing. This would help to stimulate classroom writing e.g. help students focus on use of details to create character, emotion, atmosphere, etc. The creation of humour in writing is something that students might enjoy doing in their writing classes – how to tell a joke, how to write a joke, how to hold back the punch line are part of story-writing that might interest even reluctant writers. How to use language effectively to do all this e.g. use of short sentences and exclamation marks for effect could be a natural way of calling attention to form.

In relation to integrating the given quotation into the story, teachers are advised to work more on logical development of plot, integration of story elements, along with the other story writing elements. A lot more story reading in preference to talking about story-writing elements. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Training in short story writing must always stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

A majority of the candidates chose Question 8, while Question 7 was challenging for many who did it. In relation to the former, some candidates lambasted the Minister of Education instead of taking a stance, giving solid and strong arguments, expanding the arguments, sustaining a position and employing argumentative techniques. In relation to Question 7, too many responses lacked substance and information from which candidates could argue. Those who performed well on this topic most likely had the advantage of knowledge from Social Studies and were current with topical issues such as C(aribbean) S(ingle) M(arket) and E(conomy). Unfortunately, many candidates had no knowledge of Caricom as a regional institution and thus could not argue about what the 'movement of skilled professionals' could mean for the region.

In general, candidates who displayed superiority understood the demands of the topic, identified their audience, cogently presented their points and argued effectively using appropriate devices. Competent candidates demonstrated some ability to raise points, but faltered on argumentation. Weak responses came from candidates who had little or only vague knowledge of the topic and lacked the skills of argumentation.

Advice

Students need to be guided about the difference between 'arguing' and 'quarrelling'. Students should be warned against making unsubstantiated, partisan political statements in an essay that requires logical arguments illustrated with relevant examples.

Basic Proficiency

GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination in 2005 followed the format used in previous years. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of literary and persuasive writing. The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Understanding and Expression) across the two papers is as follows:-

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	PAPER 02 Essay	TOTAL
Understanding	60	37	97 = 60%
Expression	–	65	65 = 40%

There was a decrease in the number of candidates taking the examination in 2006:

4,502(2001) 3,792(2002) 3,777 (2003) 3,063 (2004) 3,063 (2005) 3,089 (2006).

There was a decrease in the percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in 2006:

16.20%(2003) 16.78%(2004) 29.42%(2005) 26.51%(2006).

The performance mean over the last nine years has been up and down, but in 2006 it was better than most of the previous years:

(1998) 53.13 – (1999) 51.32 – (2000) 56.57 – (2001) 55.08 – (2002) 49.57 – (2003) 47.17 (2004) 49.62 (2005) 52.28 (2006) 56.13 [actually 60.14 out of 150].

Not enough students are demonstrating competence in Profile II (expression). Students seem oblivious to spelling rules and their spelling is particularly weak and increasingly phonetic. The concept of paragraphing is ignored and, generally, punctuation is limited to full stops and commas.

There is increasing evidence that some candidates are short of ideas or material. For instance, some candidates used the passage in Question 1 as a response to Question 7 or in support of the moot in Question 8 and some candidates used Question 2 as material to answer Section III.

Detailed Comments

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2006 showed an upward change over 2005. The mean score in 2005, out of a possible 60, was 27.84 and this moved to 28.14 in 2006.

Paper 02 - Free Response

Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 was as follows:

	2004	2005	2006
Section 1 Summary skills (20 marks)	5.06	5.56	4.78/7.17 (30)
Section 2 Comprehension (24 marks)	9.87	9.93	10.99/12.36 (27)
Section 3 Story Writing/Description (16 marks)	5.17	5.14	5.32/6.65 (20)
Section 4 Argument (20 marks)	5.62	6.9	6.90/8.62 (25)

* Under 2006 the mark given first is for purposes of comparison with previous years and the second mark given is the actual average of out the 2006 totals for each section.

SECTION ONE (Understanding & Expression)

Question 1 tested the candidates' ability to summarise a passage written in continuous prose taken from the San Juan Star newspaper. The passage examined the link between media violence and children's behaviour. Following are three excellent summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

1. *Studies show that violence in the electronic media is linked to violence in society. Children exposed to such violence may imitate the acts and the actors who commit them. Consequently, their minds are becoming seriously affected as they begin to see life as an exciting game, not as reality. Parents do not always fully understand how damaging these violent acts are. Parents, therefore, should be more attentive to these shows and discuss them with their children. [76 words]*

2. *Studies show a link between children's behaviours and the violence and aggression they are exposed to via television, movies and video games. These studies are important because, to deal effectively with the problem, we have to understand it thoroughly. Constant exposure to violence and aggression causes children to imitate these behaviours and view them as normal – even exciting! Parents don't realize how awful some video games are. They need to be more vigilant and talk to their children, many of whom see life as a game. Some don't even know what is real and what is not. [97 words]*

3. *Studies show a link between children's behaviours and the violence and aggression they are exposed to via audio-visual and interactive media. This exposure causes children to admire and imitate acts of aggression and violence. In fact, it makes them see life as a game and some cannot tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Parents and adults do not realise how awful video games are. They need to be more aware and discuss the negative content with their children. We need to understand the problem thoroughly so that we can deal with it effectively. [94 words]*

Too many students exceeded the word limit. Too many students were unable to use their own words in their attempt to summarise the passage. Many merely lifted parts of the passage and combined these to form a summary. A few candidates responded to the topic at an emotional level and were very forthright in expressing their views. The result was more an argument than a summary and therefore provided no basis for assessment of summary skills.

Advice

Exercises in summary writing should include passages that are contentious in their subject matter. In such cases, students should be taught to remain calm in the face of arguments they do not agree with and to summarise the argument given rather than to respond to it.

In order to help students express themselves logically and concisely, teachers should provide students with ample exercises in making construction shifts and in recognising and writing equivalent sentences. Students should be encouraged to constantly review the collective nouns they have learnt from primary school and to enrich their vocabulary by regular reading of good literature. One way of doing this would be to have a classroom book club.

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

Question 2

This question tested the candidates' ability to read and understand a prose passage written in Standard English taken from Nailah Folami Imoja's *Pick of the Crop*. It assessed their ability to use interpretative and analytical skills. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions asked:

(a) Leroi had to stay humble because his mother reprimanded him if he wasn't.

(b) Ma regarded him as his own man; she stopped sitting by the door; she stopped waiting up for him when he went out.

(c) Her reward was that he could stay at home for as long as he chose.

(d) Ma lay in bed awake at night because she was waiting for Leroi to come home.

(e) The phrase tells us that he was respectful towards his mother and didn't want to offend her.

(f) Her opinion was that he was a good boy – he wouldn't curse for her to hear.

The overall performance on this question was encouraging. Students performed well on questions which required a grasp of explicit statements made in the passage (a, b, c, d), but showed some difficulty with questions which required them to draw conclusions or make inferences (e, f) about opinions and attitudes.

(a) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(b) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(c) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(d) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(e) Many candidates had difficulty understanding and explaining 'attitude'.

(f) Many candidates had difficulty formulating a response to the question of 'opinion of'.

Advice

It is recommended that teachers concentrate on teaching comprehension skills, especially inference, with particular reference to reading material. Students need more practice in answering the kinds of questions set on the paper, questions requiring precise answers. In preparing for these questions teachers should make sure that students read questions a number of times before they attempt to write their answers. After reading the whole passage, students should also re-read the section of the passage relevant to each specific question to make sure that what they are thinking of writing is what the passage says. Students should be advised to re-read what they have written to make sure that it makes sense to someone reading it.

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' ability to read and understand an argumentative passage written in Standard English published in The *Barbados Advocate* newspaper. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions asked:

(a) The writer makes the comment because of the variety and quantity of cell phones available and abused in public.

(b) The writer's view of such people is that they are inconsiderate.

(c) The writer's opinion is that people use cell phones in public to show off.

(d) The writer makes the comment because nowadays everybody has a cell phone.

(e) He refers to them as culprits because their cell phones rang at inappropriate moments and they answered them.

(f) Two developments the writer is predicting are that new annoying traits will emerge and that the situation will get even worse.

(g) The effect that the writer expects it to have is to cause the person not to use the cell phone inappropriately in public.

(a) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(b) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(c) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(d) Candidates had little difficulty here because they could quote the answer from the text.

(e) The word 'culprit' was not generally understood. Many answers failed to mention the idea of 'inappropriate moments'.

(f) This proved a little more difficult than the first four because the answer was not restricted to one sentence.

(g) Many answers did not deal with the writer's expectation or intention.

Advice

In order to master this section, students should be given practice in being specific when answering questions. There is no need to write an answer of half a page for a question that is worth two marks. Various strategies should be employed to develop analytical skills in order to answer question which require more than just quoting from the passage. Teachers need to get students to understand what is meant by the writer's expectation, intention, opinion and attitude and to realise that responses of this type require more than quoting from the passage, they require summarising and explanation.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

This section tested the candidates' ability to express themselves creatively in continuous prose. Instead of all of the questions requiring a story, this year this section included a question (Question 5) which tested candidates' ability to write a descriptive essay.

Question 6 was the most popular choice. In Question 4 many candidates simply described the picture while others wrote stories which had a tenuous link with the picture. Question 5 posed the greatest challenge with respect to interpretation. In several 'descriptions' 'Al' appeared only at the end, while in others he was nowhere in the scene.

An appreciable number of students demonstrated competence in employing all the elements of story writing: strong plots, good use of imagination, well-rounded characterization, appropriate resolution of conflict, satisfactory conclusion of action, skilful selection of details and effective use of dialogue. There were a few superior scripts. However, the majority of students continue to find this section a major challenge and some do not even attempt any of the three questions. Weak responses included unimaginative 'stories' which were a mere relation of loosely connected incidents. Other weaknesses included the following:

- Shift in perspective from first to third person and vice versa.
- Lack of or inadequate characterization
- Sudden appearance of characters; change of main character
- Underdeveloped stories
- Restricted vocabulary, faulty syntax and weak mechanics
- Stories far in excess of or below the suggested word limit.

Advice

Students should be provided with copious models of good short stories and should be taught the elements of story writing in a systematic way. After this they should be given regular practice in writing short stories using various stimuli. Students should be encouraged to read more widely in order to develop a more varied vocabulary. They should be given more exposure to figurative expressions. They need more practice in incorporating dialogue in story writing. Students should be encouraged to edit their work before they write the final draft.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

This section tested the candidates' ability to express their views persuasively using various techniques of argument. Question 7 required students to state their views on a given topic while Question 8 required them to defend a position.

Candidates seemed to have no particular difficulty relating to the topics given. Generally the supporting details were pertinent to the topics. For example, candidates showed a clear understanding of the academic underachievement of Caribbean male youth (Question 7) as well as an awareness of the sometimes harsh realities of parenting (Question 8). Responses to Question 8, which was the more frequently answered question, focussed on either the negative socio-economic challenges of having more than two children or the sanction from God to "be fruitful and multiply". Because both Question 7 and Question 8 were in two parts, in responding, some candidates lost sight of the full argument and addressed only one part of the issue.

Weak responses ignored the use of punctuation and/or paragraphing, listed points rather than explain, expand or illustrate them, did not adhere to logical sequencing and used transitional words and phrases inappropriately. Some otherwise competent responses included slang words and expressions and MSN (computer) spellings.

Advice

Teachers are encouraged to continue to provide classroom activities for students to practice persuasive skills orally. They should encourage students to 'translate' popular slang expressions and should use 'teachable moments' to underscore the concept of appropriate use of language. They should also reinforce the conventions of writing Standard English. Interesting newspaper editorials could be used for class discussions. This would also help to develop students' analytical thinking and ability to respond concisely to higher order questions posed in Section 2. Students need more practice in logical development of argument, use of rhetorical questions and appropriate use of figurative language. Students need to be given many opportunities to write. Students need more practice in the use of topic sentences and paragraphs. Students would benefit from timed practice exercises in preparation for the examination.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2007

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2007

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

The examination in 2007 was the second year for the revised syllabus. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of summary, literary and persuasive writing. In Paper 02 candidates were allowed a choice in Section 3 between story writing and description. The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is as follows:-

	Paper 01 Multiple Choice	**Paper 02 Essay**	**Total**
Understanding	60* = 46 +	40* = 30 +	76 + = 40%
Expression	-	90* = 114+	114 + = 60%
Total	**46 +**	**144 +**	**190 + = 100%**
* raw score + computed score			

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above this year and previous years is as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
49.53	49.60	52.70	50.96	49.01

The performance mean for the examination (out of a total of 125) for 2003-2005 and (out of a total of 190*) for 2006 and 2007 is as follows:

(2003) 50.62 (2004) 50.74 (2005) 52.76 (2006) 79.14 (2007) 77.94

Average performance over the last five years on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
34.63	33.09	33.67	32.36	30.55

Average performance (2003-2005) in the component sections of Paper 02 (all out of 25 marks) is given below. Average performance in 2006 and 2007 is given out of the relevant totals.

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Section 1	Summary skills	8.20	9.23	8.80	10.40 (30)	10.04 (30)
Section 2	Comprehension	8.22	9.30	9.16	12.58 (28)	15.45 (29)
Section 3	Story Writing Description	8.84	8.79	9.70	14.31 (35)	13.62 (35) 10.63 (35)
Section 4	Argument	9.29	8.66	10.54	13.65 (35)	13.74 (35)

General advice

Teachers need to emphasise that CXC English A (both Basic and General) is an English language examination and that candidates are required, above all, to demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. Preparation for the examination is a gradual process of acquiring and developing skills, both passive (comprehension) and productive (expression), in the English language. In the examination, these skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (not only full stops and commas, but also the not so frequently used ones such as colons and semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case/lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing. **The kind of writing that has become popular in e-mail messages and text messaging is not acceptable in this examination.**

Students should come to the examination with a well rehearsed procedure for tackling each question. In accordance with the concept of writing as a process (abbreviated under examination conditions), candidates should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure of identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. Teachers should advise each student, based on the student's ability and speed, about the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under CXC examination conditions.

Teachers should give students specific instructions about deleting and editing so that the appearance of their work is not off-putting to examiners. Though examiners have to make a great effort to decipher every word that some candidates have written, candidates should never forget that it is their own responsibility to write legibly.

The tasks in the examination are directly related, in most cases, to real-life skills. Employers and indeed the public at large generally regard performance in English language examinations as a measure of one's ability to perform in the world of work. Consequently, it is not advantageous to treat English language as merely an academic subject or as a subject for "nerds".

Specific advice on the sections of Paper 02

In **Section 1**, when a summary is required, main points must be identified and organised logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale by the candidate, CXC markers are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill (used, for example, by news reporters, policemen and CEOs reporting to their board of directors) and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates.

Some candidates, in attempting to put the summary in their own words, sometimes change meanings or

insert extraneous material. This is penalised. In real life such distortion would be seen either as an attempt to mislead or deceive or, in the case of a policeman presenting evidence to a court, it could lead to wrong,

unfair and disastrous decisions. So, those candidates seeking to achieve full marks or high marks should make sure that they preserve the meaning of the original.

In assessing Question 1, the examiners (keeping in mind the specified word limit) pay specific attention to the candidate's ability to use his/her own language, the accuracy and coverage of the major points and the ability to connect the main points to make the answer read smoothly.

The questions in **Section 2** are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. In response to each question candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Answers should be to the point. These questions never require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer. It is the candidates' responsibility to indicate clearly what the answer is; it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidate.

This section requires candidates to respond to levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. It is expected that they have learnt to use their judgment in answering questions. For example, some questions require paraphrases and some ask for evidence. So, candidates should know how to select word or phrases (as required) and use quotation marks to so indicate. Also candidates need to do as the question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often wrong - it is an indication that the candidates does not know exactly what the answer is.

In the preparation for **Section 3** every candidate should have read the best story from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These 'Best Stories' are available from CXC.) These stories should not be memorised and reproduced with slight alterations. More generally, candidates should not memorise published stories and hope that this kind of cheating escapes the attention of the examiners.

Although the question paper states word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better candidates tend to write stories that fall within or not too far outside the word limit. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak.

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterization, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood, good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. Candidates should try to improve their own techniques of story writing, including the effective use of dialogue and the contrast between characters, by studying good stories written by Caribbean authors.

Candidates should use language that they can control. At times candidates use words and structures with which they are not really familiar. The result is that what they write is often verbose, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help students feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral, spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate some interesting class productions - for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Since the descriptive essay is a new option in this section, greater attention should be paid to it. Description must be clearly constructed and developed (e.g. the different components must be linked appropriately). Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different focuses and facets must be linked appropriately (e.g. background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail). The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the purely descriptive elements. Choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself. Any change in perspective (e.g. visual, mood, tone, etc.) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create

picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words to create moods, tones, atmosphere and setting.

In the case of **Section 4**, note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Providing information without using good argumentative techniques is a weakness; so is the reverse. Candidates should pay attention to 'tone' and 'audience' and not indiscriminately use the language of debating in every argument they present. Candidates can learn different styles of argument by studying letters to the editor and editorials in newspapers as well as short, interesting articles in popular magazines or in the magazine section of newspapers.

Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that support their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. For some unfounded reason, some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think is the examiners' view.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General Proficiency

SECTION ONE (Understanding & Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read and then summarise a passage taken from a popular magazine dealing with the history and significance of tattoos and other forms of body markings over the centuries. Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose in no more than 120 words.

The examiners identified the major points in the passage to be the following:-

- Tattoos are permanent markings which have been around from the beginning of civilization.
- They were brought to the Caribbean from Africa, China and India, but the Amerindians wore them even before.
- They were used by people in the Caribbean for religious, ethnic and cultural purposes.
- Over the years they came to be personal expressions identified with rebellion and deviance.
- Attitudes have changed towards tattoos and today they have become acceptable as marks of uniqueness and difference.

Following are three excellent summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

(1) *From the beginning of civilization tattoos and other body markings have been marks of identification, spiritual protection and decoration. Tattoos are permanent markings which vary greatly and can be personally very revealing. A tattoo is an instant of your life etched forever on you for the world to see.*

Tattoos and other body markings were characteristic of the Amerindians of the Caribbean as well as of the Africans, Chinese and Indians who came here. For all these people, they had cultural, spiritual and ethnic significance. Over the centuries, tattoos and other body markings have changed back and forth from group significance to individual significance, presenting a daily image of difference and uniqueness. (112 words)

(2) *Tattoos have been around from the beginning of time and were used originally as identification marks, spiritual protection and decoration, but now they are a popular form of self expression. Tattoos are permanent markings on the body which were brought to the Caribbean by slaves from Africa and indentured labourers from China and India, but were also used earlier by Amerindians.*

Over the years tattoos have changed from being positive to negative, often being confused with rebellion and deviance (non-conformity). Today, tattoos are once again seen as something positive: they are worn by people from all walks of life, on all parts of their body, saying to the world it's all right to be different. (115 words)

(3) *Tattoos have been around from the earliest of times for identification as well as for spiritual and decorative purposes. They are more unique and permanent than other symbols and ornaments and can be seen by everyone.*

Tattoos and other body markings came to the Caribbean from Africa, China and India with slaves and indentured workers. Indigenous people also used tattoos for spiritual, cultural and personal reasons and to indicate social status.

Over time, tattoos displayed more personal expressions and were perceived by some to display anti-social or deviant behaviour. Today, however, tattoos have re-emerged as signs of personal expression, have gained respectability and are linked with cultural and social identity and individuality and not merely with style. (116 words)

Performance on Question 1 this year was about the same as last year, revealing the same strengths and weaknesses in candidates' answers. There were too many candidates who did not observe the word limit given. Among these, some seemed to operate with the casual assumption that excess would be overlooked in all answers, while a few attempted to deceive the examiners by putting an incorrect number of words at the end of their answer.

As usual, many candidates lifted portions of the passage, of varying lengths, verbatim or paraphrased them indiscriminately. Candidates who approached summary writing as a deletion exercise often ended up having sentences or pieces of sentences which were improperly connected to what preceded, were inaccurate or incoherent. This was especially so in relation to paragraph three, which dealt with the different ethnic groups.

Superior scripts clearly demonstrated satisfactory comprehension and writing skills, without any injection of extraneous material. They were able to bring different sentences and paragraphs together by the use of appropriate connectives and to cover all the main points.

Suggestions for teachers and students

In preparing students for this section of the paper, teachers should:

(i) remind students to observe the stated length.

(ii) drill students in the skill of reading questions for theme and specific tasks to be done; insist that students read the instruction given and not assume that every year it is identical.

(iii) help students to recognize the fact that summary writing comprises reading and writing skills (comprehension and composition skills)

(iv) help students to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

a) using one's own words as far as possible

b) using straightforward English with clarity and conciseness

c) responding to the rubric of the question with its implications for audience, purpose and situation/context

d) using connectives to achieve fluency of writing/reading

e) observing correct mechanics of the language

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

Performance in this section improved over last year with many candidates getting full or nearly full marks. There were no specific questions that candidates found particularly difficult, except for 2 (f). There were still a number of candidates who found it difficult to answer the question and stop, but felt the need to go on to write paragraph-long answers.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage taken from Noel Woodroffe's *Wing's Way* . The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions set:

(a) *Dawn*; *Midday*; *Evening*

(b) *fish*/ *nets*; *cooking*; *oil*

(c) *the flares of the oil refinery*

a *huge red ball* (1 mark)

(d) (the kind of death) *found in the eyes of broken, old men*

(the kind of death) *found on abandoned coasts ...*

the hopelessness of this backwater village

(e) *climbed*

(f) An answer which suggested struggle and difficulty

(g) The weight of the cars on the sun-softened pitch

(h) *backwater village*; *missed and ignored*; *hopelessness of this backwater*; *swept clean of talent and vitality*; *dependent upon a stony earth and dwindling oil*; *vision of a hopeless future*.

Since 2 (f) required candidates to go beyond quoting from the passage and to construct the answer based on an understanding of the passage, this question was generally not well done. In many cases, it was clear that candidates were unable to follow the thread of meaning (as in the second paragraph of the passage) when sentences were beyond a certain length.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a view put forward about the 'generation gap' in an article extracted from *Time* magazine. The following were deemed to be the correct answers:

(a) a large amount

(b) the child has adult concerns; the child wants a lot of privacy; the child no longer trusts the goodwill of parents

(c) not fixed; not forever; can be reversed; variable

(d) the child's brain has matured; the child is capable of more independent judgement

(e) parents

(f) (i) their powerful feelings/their social lives/social power

(ii) power/opinion of other boys/anxiety about masculinity

(g) they still need their mothers; even though bigger than her, they have to obey her

(h) *but*

In response to a question as uncomplicated as 3 (a) for which candidates had to construct an answer using their own words, what several candidates wrote was either vague, misleading or inaccurate. This was also the case with answers to 3 (c).

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get students to move beyond the literal, to make logical judgements and to express these accurately.

Teachers should dissuade students from giving long-winded answers which rarely conceal ignorance.

Teachers should bear in mind that, in any one year, more questions like 2 (f) may occur on the examination paper and fewer which require direct citation from the passage. The incidence of particular question types will vary according to the selections the examiners make to ensure that the full syllabus is covered. Teachers should therefore familiarise themselves with this section of the syllabus or peruse papers over the years to make sure that they provide practice for students in all the question types specified in the syllabus.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 and 6

Question 4 required that candidates write a story based on a picture in which a man showed some measure of distress. Question 5 asked candidates to write a story which included the dramatic line *The phone rang once and stopped. It rang again. This was it now*. Question 6 required that candidates write a descriptive essay asking candidates to describe what some astronauts saw as they landed.

Question 6 was the least popular of the questions in this section (attempted by 10% of the candidates) and also the one least well done on average. Question 5 was the most popular (attempted by 52%) with Question 4 in between (attempted by 34%). Question 5 produced the best story for 2007. The overall performance on this section was not as good as last year.

Question 4 produced many responses dealing with the Iraq war or with disasters of Muslims/Arabs in various parts of the world. Most candidates were able to integrate the picture quite well into the story and many candidates were able to produce interesting stories.

Question 5 produced a variety of stories, some very well done and others which paid little attention to the significance of *This was it now* in the rubric. Even though most responses did not capture the idea of a pre-arranged signal, there was some element of panic or dreaming that allowed for a reasonable interpretation of the stimulus. As usual, many responses to this question had the stimulus quotation inserted without satisfactory integration into the plot.

In the case of Question 6, a great number of candidates, as was the case last year, wrote responses without reading the instructions carefully. Some of the responses suggest that candidates were unfamiliar with description and had had no practice dealing with it. In the relevant responses to this question, some candidates wrote about what the astronauts saw while landing on another planet, while others wrote on what they saw on returning to Earth. Weaker candidates found difficulty limiting themselves to describing what the astronauts saw as they landed and included in their responses a narration of the previous and subsequent travels of the astronauts.

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers should treat Section Three as having two sections - two questions requiring short stories and one question requiring a descriptive essay.

Teachers should continue to use pictures from varied sources, especially those dealing with current topics and themes in newspapers, to help stimulate and guide writing. This helps to make classroom writing interesting and should help students to focus on the use of details to create character, emotion and atmosphere. The creation of humour in writing is something that students might enjoy doing in their writing classes - how to tell a joke, how to write a joke, how to hold back the punch line are part of story-writing that might interest even reluctant writers. How to use language effectively to do all this, for example, use of short sentences and exclamation marks for effect could be a natural way of calling attention to form.

In relation to integrating the given quotation into the story, teachers are advised to work more on logical development of plot, integration of story elements, along with the other story writing elements. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Training in short story writing must always stress the process of thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading.

Students should be explicitly made familiar with the difference between narrative and descriptive writing. Students should imagine themselves using a camera and describing what they see through the lens as they move the camera gradually from left to right to take in the whole scene. While it is necessary for teachers to get students accustomed to description by practising descriptive phrases and sentences with striking adjectives and adverbs, students should be wary about memorising flowery phrases and sticking them willy-nilly into descriptive essays. In order to prepare students for this question, teachers have to focus specifically on vocabulary enrichment by providing students with a list of adjectives, one of nouns and another of adverbs and get students to combine them in a relevant way as they describe specific scenes. Teachers need to make these lists cover all the senses - sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 and 8

Question 7 asked candidates to present an argument for or against the use of cellular phones in school. Question 8 asked candidates to express their views on the topic *Popular music and dance on display in the Caribbean today are corrupting the youth and making them irresponsible* . Both these questions were within the immediate interest and current knowledge of candidates and candidates did not demonstrate any significant difference in preference for the one or the other. Even so, performance in this section this year was not significantly higher than last year.

Question 7 seemed to have been predicted and was practised in many schools throughout the region. This resulted in well-rehearsed answers in terms of points given for or against the proposition. The better responses to this question displayed good argumentative techniques/rhetorical devices. In addition, they anticipated the arguments on the other side and countered them satisfactorily.

Responses to Question 8 too often failed to examine and demonstrate the cause/effect relationship between music/dance and corrupt, indisciplined youth. They merely asserted that music and dance are a corrupting force and that the youth of today are corrupt.

Suggestions for teachers and students

While it is necessary to keep abreast of topics of local interest, students also need to read and discuss in class wider or international topics because it is not always that topics close to their immediate and current experience will be given in this section.

Students need constant practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Basic Proficiency

The examination in 2007 was the second year for the revised syllabus. However, this examination is due to be discontinued after next year. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, tested most of the Understanding component of the syllabus and Paper 02, the free response paper, tested the Expression component of the syllabus as well as part of the Understanding of summary, literary and persuasive writing. The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is as follows:-

	Paper 01 Multiple Choice	**Paper 02 Essay**	**Total**
Understanding	60	37	97 = 60%
Expression	-	65	65 = 40%
Total	**60**	102	**162 = 100%**

The number of candidates taking the examination in 2007 declined significantly when compared with previous years:

3,473 (2005) → 3,504 (2006) → 2755 (2007).

There was a decrease in the percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in 2007:

29.42% (2005) → 26.51% (2006) → 25.01% (2007).

The performance mean in 2007 was lower than in 2005 and 2006:

(2005) 52.28 (=37%) → (2006) 60.14 (= 37%) → (2007) 57.65 (=36%).

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2007 showed a decline when compared with 2005 and 2006. The mean score in 2005, out of a possible 60, was 27.84; this moved to 28.14 in 2006 and 27.43 in 2007.

Paper 02 - Free Response

Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 was as follows (The numbers in brackets are the maximum totals for the respective questions):

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Section 1 Summary skills	5.06 (20)	5.56 (20)	7.17 (30)	7.35 (30)
Section 2 Comprehension	9.87 (24)	9.93 (24)	12.36 (27)	12.93 (27)
Section 3 Story Writing/ Description	5.17 (16)	5.14 (16)	6.65 (20)	6.29 (20)/5.20 (20)
Section 4 Argument	5.62 (20)	6.9 (20)	8.62 (25)	6.41 (25)

SECTION ONE (Understanding & Expression)

The passage to be summarized, adapted from Lester Brown's *The interdependence of nations*, dealt with the unemployment crisis in Third World Countries. It appeared to be not only unfamiliar reading material for many candidates but also beyond their grasp. For example, many candidates seemed unable to fully understand the meaning of expressions such as *to bring under the plough, unique situation in historical terms, profound implications, political and economic well-being of countries*.

The candidates who demonstrated competence or superiority were able to summarize the passage in 80 words, as required, without losing either the focus or the content of the original passage. The weaker candidates simply lifted sections from the original passage to form a summary. As regards economy of expression, in several of the incompetent responses, the original passage was reproduced in a telegraphic style through omission of function words and transitional words and phrases, thus producing a string of disjointed sentences. Weaker responses also showed evidence of a lack of fundamental skills in summary writing. For instance, the listing of countries was quite notably preserved: *" … the densely populated countries of Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Central America and the Andean Region."*

Advice to teachers

Students need to be exposed to a variety of reading material including basic magazines produced by international organisations on the health and economic conditions of people across the world. Students would thus expand and enrich their vocabulary by regular reading of relevant literature. This could be done within a classroom book club.

In order to help students express themselves logically, precisely and concisely, teachers should provide students with ample exercises in making construction shifts and writing/recognizing equivalent sentences. Routine oral practice in the use of transitional words and phrases would also be useful.

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

The general performance on this section was commendable to some extent. The fact that students could easily relate to the content of both passages resulted in a few of them integrating the content into their short stories.

Question 2 sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage taken from Juliana Magloire's *The Sea Hawk.*

Overall, those questions which posed the greatest difficulty were 2 (c) and 2 (g), with 2 (e) proving to be the easiest. The stronger candidates had no problem with the questions and offered appropriate and correct responses to the majority of them. The weaker candidates had difficulty in interpreting the passage and the evidence of this was given in the nature of their responses. For example, in response to 2 (a) (*What did Bo do for a living?*) candidates gave responses such 'doctor', 'smuggler', 'engineer', 'lifeguard' as well as other incorrect answers.

Question 3 sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage on beauty and the beauty industry taken from a newspaper magazine.

The last three questions (e-g) were better handled than the first four. Weaker candidates were unable to interpret expressions such as *going under the knife* and *beauty can no longer be considered skin deep* in 3 (a) and 3 (b) respectively. Many of the weaker candidates quoted large portions of the passage with the hope that these would provide the correct answer.

Advice to teachers

Students need more practice in answering the kinds of questions set on the paper, questions requiring precise answers. In preparing for these questions teachers should make sure that students read the questions a number of times before they attempt to write their answers. After reading the whole passage, students should also re-read the section of the passage relevant to each specific question to make sure that what they are thinking of writing is what the passage says. Students should be advised to re-read what they have written to make sure that it makes sense to someone reading it. A specific area that needs greater focus is getting students to recognise inference.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Question 4 required candidates to write a story based on a picture featuring an old man sitting playing a guitar. Question 5 asked candidates to write a story which ended with the words *I should have known better than to rely on someone like that*. Question 6 required candidates to describe the experience of someone named Chris who was seeing the city for the first time at Christmas.

The most popular of these questions was Question 4. The least popular was Question 5 and the weakest and most inappropriate responses came from those who attempted Question 6.

In relation to Question 4 and Question 5, the stronger candidates were able to use lively vocabulary and imaginative settings to give better than a pedestrian recounting of incidents. They were able to develop a plot adequately, set up interesting conflict situations and have a satisfactory resolution. They made use of well-selected details, had good characterization and effective use of dialogue. Their stories were credible.

The weaker candidates demonstrated various degrees of inability to use the elements of short story writing. They were unable to organize events and had great difficulty in using language effectively and managing the mechanics of grammar. There was usually a tenuous link between stimulus and story; the ending was most often forced, with the result that the whole strained one's credibility.
In relation to Question 6, most candidates wrote responses with long introductions and focussed very little on the description of Chris' experience.

Advice to teachers

Some of the weaknesses in this section that need special attention are:

- Grammatical problems (tense, use of pronouns, sentence structure)
- Mere recounting of events with little or no attempt to make the story come alive through development of plot, characterization, appeal to the senses, effective selection of details.
- Poor paragraphing and ineffective use of dialogue.

It is recommended therefore that teachers employ all available resources to:

- teach the elements of story writing systematically;
- provide students with models of good short stories;
- analyse good short stories as a classroom activity;
- clarify for students on an ongoing basis the difference between report writing and story writing;

- provide students with copious practice in writing stories;
- stimulate a desire among students to read;
- not to give up on the teaching of the mechanics of writing;
- monitor more carefully bad handwriting and careless errors such as the pervasive 'the' for 'they'.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

This section tested the candidates' ability to express their views persuasively using various techniques of argument. Question 7 required students to state their views on the topic *Too much feteing and partying in the Caribbean today is encouraging idleness and indiscipline* . Question 8 required candidates to write an argument either supporting or opposing the statement *As soon as children reach the age of 18, they should leave home, find a job and live independently*.

Question 8 was the preferred one of the two. Although most students who attempted the question clearly had views on it, some had difficulty in effectively developing points to support their arguments. There was, however, evidence of attempts to expand, show cause and effect and employ persuasive techniques in the presentation of the essay.

The better candidates selected relevant information and developed points clearly in support of the position taken. There were instances of logical development and appropriate reinforcement of the argument. Some candidates were able to clinch their arguments with an effective conclusion.

There was a general weakness in expression and mechanics of writing. In weaker scripts there was a mere listing of points, under-developed thoughts and limited views. There was also evidence of misuse of prepositions, awkward syntax, sentence fragments, run-on sentences and neglect of appropriate punctuation, especially question marks.

Advice to teachers

Classroom teachers need to emphasize language expression, especially sentence structure, appropriate vocabulary, mechanics and organisation of argument. There is also need for more concerted teaching of literary devices and techniques of persuasion. This will greatly assist in the coherence of responses, sequencing and logical development of argument. In addition, interpretative and organisational skills need to be mastered by students. For this to be possible, classroom teachers, especially those whose major was English literature rather than language, first need to be actively aware of these skills, master them and use effective strategies to get students to acquire the same.

Teachers are encouraged to continue to provide classroom activities for students to practise persuasive skills orally. They should encourage students to 'translate' popular slang expressions and should use 'teachable moments' to underscore the concept of appropriate use of language. Interesting newspaper editorials could be used for class discussions. This would also help to develop students' analytical thinking and ability to respond concisely to higher order questions posed in Section 2. Students need more practice in logical development of argument, use of rhetorical questions and appropriate use of figurative language. Students need to be given many opportunities to write. Students need more practice in the use of topic sentences and paragraphs. Students would benefit from timed practice exercises in preparation for the examination.

Too few students are demonstrating competence in Profile 2 (Expression) simply because they are having problems with the mechanics of writing. Students seem oblivious of spelling rules and the need to spell correctly. For example, in Section 3 which provided a picture stimulus of an old man playing a guitar, there were at least a dozen different spellings of the word 'guitar'. One noticeable element this year was that many students demonstrated competence in the use of quotation marks. Apart from this, punctuation was limited to full stops and commas. Paragraphing was ignored this year so often, as it has been in previous years, that one begins to wonder whether students ever get enough practice in this aspect of writing. There is therefore a constant need to monitor and address these elements of writing.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK I THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2008

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, accounted for 24 per cent of the Understanding component of the examination overall and Paper 02, the free response paper, accounted for all of the Expression component as well as 16 per cent Understanding (all of Section 2 and part of Question 1). In Paper 02 candidates were allowed a choice in Section III between story writing and description.

The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is a follows:-

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02** Essay	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60* = 46^{+}	40* = 30^{+}	76^{+} = 40%
Expression	–	90* = 114^{+}	144^{+} = 60%
TOTAL	**46^{+}**	**144^{+}**	**190^{+} == 100%**

*raw score $^{+}$computed score

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above this year and previous years is as follows:

	2006	**2007**	**2008**
(ROR*)	46.41	46.25	41.86
(T&T*)	55.81	52.54	49.56

The performance mean for the examination (out if a total of 190*) for 2006, 2007 and 2008 is as follows:

	2006	**2007**	**2008**
(ROR)	77.87	77.31	74.74
(T&T)	83.44	80.12	78.58

Average performance over the last three years on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

	2006	**2007**	**2008**
(ROR)	24.34	23.26	26.24
(T&T)	26.10	24.01	26.98

***ROR** – Rest of the Region excluding Trinidad and Tobago
T&T – Trinidad and Tobago

Average performance (for 2008) in the component section of Paper 02 is given below.

	2008
Section 1 Summary skills	10.42 (30) (ROR) 8.78 (30) (T&T)
Section 2 Comprehension	8.84 (30) (ROR) 12.98 (30) (ROR)
Section 3 Story Writing Description	13.29 (35) (ROR) 14.25 (35) (T&T) 11.23 (35) (ROR) 13.82 (35) (T&T)
Section 4 Argument	12.78 (35) (ROR) 13.13 (35) (T&T)

General advice

Teachers need to emphasise that CXC English A (both Basic and General) is an English language examination and that candidates are required, above all, to demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. Preparation for the examination is a gradual process of acquiring and developing skills, both passive (comprehension) and production (expression), in the English language. In the examination, these skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (not only full stops and commas, but also the not so frequently used ones such as colons and semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case/lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing. Teachers should try to build on young people's love of text messaging and have them convert this kind of writing into kind that is acceptable in this examination.

Students should come to the examination with a well rehearsed procedure for tackling each question. In accordance with the concept of writing as a process (abbreviated under examination conditions), candidates should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure of identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. Teachers should advise each individual student, based on the student's ability and speed, about the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under CXC examination conditions.

Teachers should give students specific instructions about deleting and editing so that the appearance of their work is not off-putting to examiners. Even though examiners have to make a great effort to decipher every word that some candidates have written, candidates should never forget that it is their own responsibility to write legibly.

The tasks in the examination are directly related, in most cases, to real-life skills. Employers and indeed that public at large generally regard performance in English language examinations as a measure of one's ability to perform in the world of work. Consequently, it is not advantageous to treat English language as merely an academic subject or as a subject for 'dorks/nerds'.

Specific advice on the section of Papers 02

In **Section 1**, when a summary is required, main points must be identified and organized logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale by the candidate, CXC markers are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill (used, for example, by news reporters and policemen) and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates. In the case of business students who

may be told that an executive summary preserves the words of the full document, this is not the case here – candidates must be able to show that they can use words that condense the ideas of the original and words that can link sentences together smoothly so that the summary reads like a document in itself and not like a chopped-up version of another one.

Some candidates, in attempting to put the summary in their own words, sometimes changes meanings or insert extraneous material. This is penalized. In real life such distortion would be seen either as an attempt to mislead or deceived or, in the case of a policeman presenting evidence to a court, it could lead to wrong, unfair and disastrous decisions. So, those candidates seeking to achieve full marks or high marks should make sure that they preserve the meaning of the original.

In assessing Question 1, the examiners pay specific attention to the specified word limit, the candidates ability to use his/her own language, the accuracy and coverage of the major points and the ability to organize and connect the main points to make the answer read smoothly. There is evidence to suggest that some candidates form Belize did not have a clear idea of what was required to achieve a satisfactory mark in Section 1.

The questions in **Section 2** are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. In response to each question candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Answers should be to the point. These questions **never** require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer. It is the candidates' responsibility to indicate clearly what the answer is; it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidates.

This section requires students to respond to levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. It is expected that students have learnt to use their judgment in answering questions. For example, some questions require paraphrases and some ask for evidence. So, students should know how to select word or phrases (as required) and use quotation marks to so indicate. Also students need to do as the question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often wrong – it is an indication that the student does not know exactly what the answer is.

In the preparation for **Section 3** every candidates should have read the best story form preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These 'Best Stories' are available from CXC). These stories should not be memorized and reproduced with slight alterations. More generally, candidates should not memorise published stories and hope that this kind of cheating escapes the attention of the examiners.

Although the question paper states word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better students tend to write stories that fall within or not to far outside the word limits. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak.

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterization, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood, good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. Students should try to improve their own techniques of story writing, including the effective use of dialogue and the contrast between characters, by studying good stories written by Caribbean authors.

Candidates should use language that they can control. At times candidates use words and structures with which they are not really familiar. The result is that what they write is often verbose, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help students feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate some interesting class productions – for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Description must be clearly constructed and developed (for example, the different components must be linked appropriately). Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different focuses and facets

must be linked appropriately (for example, background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail). The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the purely descriptive elements. Choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself. Any change in perspective (for example, visual, mood, tone, etc.) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words to create moods, tones, atmosphere and setting. Although responses to this question have improved over the last three years, there are still too many candidates who are writing a story and not paying attention to the instruction given.

In the case of **section 4**, note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Providing information without using good argumentative techniques is a weakness; so is the reverse. Students should pay attention to 'tone' and 'audience' and not indiscriminately use the language of debating in every argument they present. Students can learn different styles of argument by studying letters to the editor and editorials in newspaper as well as short, interesting articles in popular magazines or in the magazine section of newspapers.

Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that support their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. For some unfounded reason, some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think is the examiner's view.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Rest of the Region excluding Trinidad and Tobago

SECTION ONE (Profiles – Understanding and Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read and then summarise a passage taken from an article in a magazine dealing with the sea turtles, their habits, threats to them and attempts to conserve them. Candidates were expected to organize the information and present it in continuous prose in no more than 120 words.

The examiners identified the major points in the passage to be the following:-

- Turtles have been around for a very long time
- Turtles are capable of living very long lives
- Their number has been drastically reduced recently
- They are endangered now because of :
  - man-made treats
  - natural features
    - beach erosion causing loss of eggs
    - loss of eggs and hatchlings to predators
    - their own low rate of reproduction
- Conservation is difficult because of the turtles' migratory habits
- There is now a more hopeful future since conservation attempts are being made
- Visiting sanctuaries to observe turtles can be a rich experience.

Following are two excellent summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

(1) *There are seven species of turtles, ancient creatures capable of living very long lives. Yet, these animals are now endangered. The threats to them are both man-made and natural. Man-made threats include pollution, bad fishing practices and coastal development. Natural threats include predators, the fact that the animal lays its eggs on beaches and therefore the eggs are vulnerable, beach erosion and the turtle's own low rate of reproduction. In addition, since the turtles migrate vast distances and spend most of their time at sea, conservationists have difficulty in helping with their situation. Some attempts are being made, however, including having sanctuaries here in the Caribbean. These regional organisation provide the additional service of educating and entertaining visitors. (118 words)*

(2) *Sea turtles, which have been around for a very long time, are now under threat of extinction. Their number has decreased drastically over the last ten years because of several threats, man-made and natural. Man-made threats include pollution, fishing and coastal development. Natural threats include predators and beach erosion. Not only do eggs take a long time to hatch, but they have only a slim chance of coming to maturity. There are current attempts being made to conserve turtles, but conservation is difficult because turtles migrate long distances, do not reproduce often and nest at night. Organisations in the Caribbean have been working in various ways towards increasing their survival. Their efforts provide visitors with enriching experiences. (117 words)*

Performance on Question 1 this year was about the same as last year, revealing the same strengths and weaknesses in candidates' answers. There were still too many candidates who did not observe the word limit given. Among these, some seemed to operate with the casual assumption that excess would be overlooked in all answers, while a few attempted to deceive the examiners by putting an incorrect number of words at the end of their answer.

As usual, many candidates lifted portions of the passage, of varying lengths, verbatim. Candidates who approached summary writing as a deletion exercise often ended up having sentences or pieces of sentences which were improperly connected to what preceded, were inaccurate or incoherent. In most cases, such candidates reached the word limit when they were about two thirds in the passage and then they added a sentence from the last paragraph or simply disregarded the rest. As in this passage, important points may occur at the end and if you do not recognise them, you will lose the writer's main intention.

Superior scripts clearly demonstrated satisfactory comprehension and writing skills, without any injection of extraneous material. They were able to cover all the main points, omitting unnecessary details and repetitions and using language which demonstrated appropriate word choice.

Suggestions for teachers and students

In preparing students for this section of the paper, teachers should:

i) remind students to observe the stated length.

ii) drill students in the skill of reading questions for theme and specific tasks to be done; insist that students read the instruction given and not assume that every year it is identical.

iii) help students to recognize the fact that summary writing comprises reading and writing skills(comprehension and composition skills).

iv) help students to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

a) using one's own words as far as possible

b) using straightforward English with clarity and conciseness

c) responding to the rubric of the question with its implications for audience, purpose and situation/context

d) using connectives to achieve fluency of writing/reading

e) observing correct mechanics of the language.

SECTION TWO (Profile – Understanding)

Performance in this section was significantly below last year's and this was principally because of candidates' response to the poem.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of part of the poem "The way we were" by Maureen Roberts. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions set:

(a) *West Indians*

(b) *dollars and cents*

(c) *It is reaction of surprise/amusement/disbelief/ sarcasm*

(d) *She is confident; she thinks highly of herself; she has a sense of humour*

(e) *line 23*

(f) *'fingers stiff with fear'; 'vocal cords contracted with the curse of shyness'*

(g) *Her attitude is (positive) appreciative, thankful.*

In the case of (a), any reasonable and appropriate alternative was accepted. Most candidates answered (b) incorrectly, giving *shillings* and *pence* as the answer. Since 2(c) and (d) especially required candidates to go beyond quoting from the passage and to make an assessment of the narrator, this question was generally not well done. In the case of 2(e), candidates were expected to see the difference between the harsher first part of the poem and the more pleasant second part and to identify where the change occurred. Only a small number were able to identify the point of change accurately. On the whole, therefore, Question 2 was not well done. This may partly be attributable to the fact that the passage was in verse.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a letter to the editor of *The Saturday Voice* newspaper about Carnival. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions asked:

(a) *She does not like it.*

(b) *You/We cannot; none (because it is a rhetorical question).*

(c) *Move/barely/swaying to.*
(d) *To create the impression that beads are overused.*

(e) *Carnival/the participants in Carnival/the costumes of Carnival*

(f) *Sand/Sandy colour/ the desert*

(g) *She uses alliteration, that is , a number of words beginning with 's'.*

(h) *July*

Performance on Question 3 was better than on Question 2. However, a significant percentage of candidates lost marks because their answers were not precise enough, as in the case of (g) which required 'alliteration' or some accurate paraphrase. Even though most candidates answered 3(h) correctly, there were some who could not get beyond the time of Carnival in their own country.

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get students to grasp implied meanings and not just obvious ones, to make summary assessments of characters and to express these accurately.

Teachers should dissuade students from giving long-winded answers which really conceal ignorance – any answer which provides two or more alternatives in the hope that the examiner will select the correct one will automatically be awarded zero marks.

The incidence of particular question types will vary according to the selections the examiners make to ensure that the full syllabus is covered. Teachers should therefore familiarize themselves with all sections of the syllabus or peruse papers over the years to make sure that they provide practice for students in all the question types specified in the syllabus, including prose and verse.

SECTION THREE (Profile – Expression)

Question 4, 5 and 6

Question 4 required that candidates write a story based on a picture in which a woman appeared to be screaming. Question 5 asked candidates to write a story which included the sentences *The amusing thing is that I didn't plan it this way. It was just a series of unexpected turns.* Question 6 (the descriptive easy) required candidates to describe the scene before a match between two high school teams.

Question 6 was the least popular of the questions in this section (attempted by 26% of the candidates) and also the one least well done on average. Question 4 was the most popular (attempted by 39% with Question 5 in between in terms of the number of candidates who attempted it (35%), but the best done on average. Question 4 produced the best story for 2008. The overall performance on this section was about the same as last year.

Question 4 produced a variety of responses. Most candidates were able to integrate the picture quite well into the story and many candidates were able to produce interesting stories.

Question 5 proved to be challenging for many candidates who seemed unable to illustrate *a series of unexpected turns* in their story. As usual, many responses to this question had the stimulus quotation inserted without satisfactory integration into the plot.

In the cases of Question 6, there was marked improvement over last year, indicating that candidates were better prepared to write a descriptive essay. However, too many candidates seemed unable to resist the temptation to write about the match itself instead of limiting themselves to *the scene just before the match*.

Suggestions for teachers and students
Teachers should treat Section Three as having two sections – two question requiring short stories and one question requiring a descriptive essay.

Teachers should continue to use pictures from varied sources, especially those dealing with current topics and themes in newspapers, to help stimulate and guide writing. This helps to make classroom writing interesting and should help students to focus on the use of details to create character, emotion and atmosphere. The creation of humour in writing is something that students might enjoy doing in their writing classes – how to tell a joke, how to write a joke, how to hold back the punch line are part of the story-writing that might interest even reluctant writers.

Over the years, candidates have used the story lines in films they have seen as the basis for their short stories. However, even though originality in story line is not an absolute requirement, candidates should not get into the habit of slavishly copying other people's material. It is not only illegal but it will also result in the copied parts of stories being discredited.

In relation to integrating the given quotation into the story, teachers are advised to work more on logical development of plot, integration of story elements, along with the other story writing elements. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Training in short writing must always stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading.

Students should be explicitly made familiar with the difference between narrative and descriptive. Students should imagine themselves using a camera and describing what they see through the lens as they move the camera gradually form left to right to take in the whole scene. While it is necessary for teachers to get students accustomed to description by practising descriptive phrases and sentences with striking adjectives and adverbs, students should be wary about memorizing flowery phrases and sticking them willy-nilly into descriptive essays. In order to prepare students for this question, teachers have to focus specifically on vocabulary enrichment by providing students with a list of adjectives, one of nouns and another of adverbs and get students to combine them in a relevant way as they describe specific scenes. Teachers need to make these lists cover all the senses – sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste.

SECTION FOUR (Profile – Expression)

Question 7 and 8

Question 7 asked candidates to present an argument for or against the idea that Caribbean countries would be better served if they had women as prime ministers. Question 8 asked candidates to express their views on the topic *Planning for the future is a waste of time. Too much of our future is beyond our control.* Candidates did not demonstrate any significant difference in performance for the one or the other question. Performance in this section this year was slightly lower than last year. On average, Question 8 produced better answers than Question 7. Most of the good responses to Question 8 outlined the benefits to be derived from planning and give illustrative examples. Responses to Question 7 overwhelmingly concentrated on traditional concepts of women arguing that such characteristics would make them either good or bad prime ministers respectively. Added to this, there was a fairly general assumption (except in the case of Guyanese candidates) that prime ministers were all-powerful.

Suggestions for teachers and students

While this section of the paper often gives topics which are immediate to teenagers, students also need to keep abreast of topics of regional as well as wider or international interest. It is not always that topics close to the immediate and current experience of teenagers will be given in this section.

Students need constant practise in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Trinidad and Tobago

SECTION ONE (Profile – Understanding and Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read and then summarise a passage taken from an article in a magazine dealing with ethanol production in America. The topic was chosen because it was seen to be topical, even if not local. Candidates were expected to organize the information and present it in continuous prose in no more than 120 words.

The examiners identified the major points in the passage to be the following:-

- Ethanol production has increased tremendously and is still increasing
- Ethanol seems to offer the USA a chance to become less dependent on imported oil
- That would free the USA from concerns about oil prices and uncertainty of supply
- However, a sufficient increase in ethanol production is unlikely because:

    - the land space to produce the corn is unavailable
    - Americans are addicted to cheaper oil
    - ethanol is less cost effective
    - ethanol production and distribution depend on oil
    - expensive basic elements need to be put in place to facilitate ethanol distribution

Following are two excellent summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

(1) *Ethanol production in the USA has increased tremendously and is still increasing. There are significant benefits should the USA manage to reduce dependence on foreign oil through the production of ethanol. The price of oil would fall significantly; oil producing countries would have less power; and the USA would be less worried about fluctuating oil prices and supply. However, reduction of dependence on oil is unlikely. One reason is that there is insufficient land to grow the volume of corn needed. In addition, America has become addicted to oil which is more cost effective than ethanol. Also, ethanol brings problems as its production and distribution depend on the use of oil and require infrastructural change.* (115 words)

(2) Ethanol production in the USA has increased dramatically to the point where it exceeds the farmers' ability to produce the necessary amount of corn. Ethanol could reduce the dependence on foreign oil so that the USA would not be subject to fluctuating prices or the threat of interrupted oil supply. The price of oil would fall and the power of OPEC reduced. The biggest hindrance is that the USA does not have enough land to produce the required amount of corn. Furthermore, production costs are high and ethanol itself requires the use of oil in all stages of its production and distribution. In addition, since the traditional forms of distribution are unsuitable for ethanol, costly modifications need to be made. (120 words)

Performance on Question 1 was below standard, probably because the subject matter was not within the immediate interest of many candidates. Since candidates had to read the passage carefully instead of depending on their general knowledge of the subject, the exercise proved difficult for many of them. Many candidates, probably more so than usual, lifted portions of the passage, of varying lengths, verbatim, without understanding them and without properly connecting them. There were still too many candidates who did not observe the word limit given.

Suggestion for teachers and students

In preparing students for this section of the paper, teachers should:

i) remind students to observe the stated length

ii) drill students in the skill of reading paragraphs and identifying the topic

iii) help students to recognize the fact that summary writing comprises both comprehension and composition skills

iv) help students to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

a) using their own words as far as possible

b) using straightforward English with clarity and conciseness

c) using connectives to achieve fluency

d) observing correct mechanics of the language.

SECTION TWO (Profile – Understanding)

Performance in this section was below last year's but about the same as that of 2006. On average Question 3 was done better than Question 2.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage taken from Mark McWatt's *Suspended Sentences: Fictions of Atonement*. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions set:

(a) *rain/mud*

(b) *He laughed because the idea of reaching Annandale was ridiculous/He laughed because the writer did not realize that it was impossible to get to Annandale in the rainy season*

(c) *unpleasant/dreary/gloomy*

(d) *because he could not get down the river/because he could not get to where he wanted to go*

(e) *because it was isolated/because it 'seemed to lie … between reality and dream'*

(f) *meandered*

(g) *the almost opaque curtain of rain*

(h) *disgust/frustration*

Since 2(c) and (d) especially required candidates to go beyond quoting from the passage and to make an assessment of the narrator, this question was generally not well done. In the case of 2(e), candidates were expected to see the difference between the negative first part of the poem and the more pleasant second part and to identify where the change occurred. Only a small number were able to identify the point of change.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of an article in the *Sunday Sun* newspaper about 'boys on the block'. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the question asked:

(a) *It gives you the topic of the passage/It tells you what the passage is about*

(b) *Intelligent*

(c) *by using a quotation from a magazine/by citing an authority/by giving evidence that it is widespread throughout the Caribbean*

(d) *underachievers/ the unqualified/slower children*

(e) *the failure of education to provide adequate, serious compensatory schooling*

(f) *It will become a social cost to all of us/There boys will become liabilities*

(g) *The problems must be tackled root and branch systematically and in a sustained manner*

(h) *education*

As is usually the case, candidates found those questions which required identification of words from the passage easier than those which required a judgement or assessment. In the case of 3(a), instead of stating the relevance of the quotation, many candidates simply explained what it meant. A significant number of candidates gave the answer 'Yes' to 3(h) and/or repeated the three alternatives in the question, showing clearly that they did not understand a straightforward question structure.

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get students to move beyond the literal, to make logical judgements and to express these accurately. Teachers should ensure that students understand the structure and wording of questions and not assume that they do. Teachers should dissuade students from giving answers with several alternatives. Such answers are generally awarded zero marks.

Teachers should bear in mind that questions which require judgements and assessments will always occur on the examination paper, in Question 2 and Question 3, the balance across the two questions differing from year to year. The incidence of particular question types varies to make sure that the full syllabus is covered.

SECTION THREE (Profile – Expression)

Question 4, 5 and 6

Question 4 required that candidates write a story based on a picture in which a woman appeared to be dancing or performing a ritual or reaching for something. Question 5 asked candidates to write a story which included the words *As my parents sat there discussing me, I could not believe what they were saying. This was my life, not theirs.* Question 6 (the descriptive essay) required candidates to describe the scene from a building as people *stared out at the city.* Performance on this section was generally better than last year and candidates are coming to terms with the requirements of Question 6.

Question 5 was by far the most popular of the questions in this section (attempted by 75%) and the best done on average. Question 6 was the least popular (attempted by 6% of the candidates) and Question 4 did not fare much better in terms of the number of candidates who attempted it (14%). The performance on Question 4 and 6 was about the same and it was not significantly lower than that on Question 5.

Question 4 produced a variety of interpretations. Most candidates were able to integrate the picture into the story and many candidates were able to produce interesting stories.

Question 5 proved to be attractive to many candidates who seemed to be familiar with the situation. As a results, the stories were generally interesting and satisfactorily written.

In the case of Question 6, there was variety in the responses with many candidates choosing a science-fiction type of story.

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers should continue to use pictures from varied sources, especially those dealing with current topics and themes in newspapers, to help stimulate and guide writing. This helps to make classroom writing interesting and should help students to focus on the use of details to create character, emotion and atmosphere. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Training in short story writing must always stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading.

Students should continue to stress the difference between narrative and descriptive. In the case of the descriptive, a good approach is to imagine oneself using a camera and describing what one sees through the lens as one moves the camera gradually from left to right to take in the whole scene. While it is necessary for teachers to get students accustomed to description by practising descriptive phrase and sentences with striking adjectives and adverbs, students should be wary about memorizing flowery phrases and sticking them willy-nilly into descriptive assays. In order to prepare students for this question, teachers have to focus specifically on vocabulary enrichment by providing students with a list of adjectives, one of nouns and another of adverbs and get students to combine them in a relevant way as they describe specific scenes. Teachers need to make these lists cover all the senses – sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste.

SECTION FOUR (Profile – Expression)

Question 7 and 8

Question 7 asked candidates to support one of two opinions given about who should determine employees' dress at work. Question 8 asked candidates to express their views on the topic *Governments should make it compulsory for all householders to take precautions against natural disasters.* Candidates demonstrated a decided preference for Question 7 over Question 8 but, on average, performance on Question 8 was marginally better than Question 7.

Suggestion for teachers and students

While it is necessary to keep abreast of topics of local interest, students also need to read and discuss in class wider or international topics because it is not always that topic close to their immediate and current experience will be given in this section.

Students need constant practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

The examination in 2008 was the last year for this examination. Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, accounted for most of the Understanding component of the examination overall and Paper 02, the free response paper, accounted for all of the Expression component as well as part of the Understanding (all of section 2 and part of Question 1). In Paper 02 candidates were allowed a choice in Section 3 between story writing and description.

The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is a follows:-

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02** Essay	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60	37	97 = 60%
Expression	–	65	65 = 40%
TOTAL	**60**	**102**	**165 == 100%**

*raw score $^{+}$computed score

The number of candidates taking the examination in 2008 declined significantly when compared with previous years:

Year	**Candidate entry**
2006	3 089
2007	2 147
2008	1 597

There was a decrease in the percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in 2008:

Year	**% candidates acquiring Grade III and above**
2006	26.51
2007	25.01
2008	17.62

Detailed Comments
Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 in 2008 was slightly better than in 2007. The mean score in 2006 was 49 per cent, this moved to 46 per cent in 2007 and 48.35 per cent in 2008.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Candidates' performance in Paper 02 in 2008 was lower than in the preceding years. The mean score in 2006 was 31 per cent; this declined to 29 per cent in 2007 and further declined to 26.07 per cent in 2008. Average performance in the component sections of Paper 02 was as follows (The numbers in brackets are the maximum totals for the respective questions):

	2006	2007	2008
Section 1 Summary skills	7.17 (30)	7.35 (30)	7.23 (30)
Section 2 Comprehension	12.36 (27)	12.93 (27)	11.27 (27)
Section 3 Story Writing/Description	6.65 (20)	6.29 (20) 5.20 (20)	6.76 (20) 7.14 (20)
Section 4 Argument	8.62 (25)	6.41 (25)	5.56 (25)

SECTION ONE (Profiles – Understanding and Expression)

The passage to be summarized was adapted from an advertisement in a newspaper for 'The Caribbean Awards for Excellence'. It was organized in three sub-sections under the following headings: 'Mission', 'the Magnitude of our appreciation', 'Award categories'. The layout presented a stout challenge to some candidates, many of whom began their summaries with a sentence fragment that was simply a re-statement of the Mission Statement, but with no clear linkages. The few candidates who demonstrated competence were able to identify the main ideas and write the summary comprehensively. They were able to use standard English, organize their ideas sequentially and summarise the passage in 80 words, as required, without losing either the focus or the content of the original passage.

The weaker candidates presented summaries that retained the organization and language of the original passage. In such cases it was difficult to assess whether the candidate had meaningfully selected relevant details or whether these were stumbled upon by chance. As regards economy of expression, in several of the incompetent responses, the original passage was reproduced in a telegraphic style, omitting function words and transitional words and phrases and thus producing a string of disjointed sentences. Weaker responses also showed evidence of a lack of fundamental skills in summary writing. For example, the three award categories were mentioned and subsequently elaborated: "…This includes those who…"

Apart from its layout, the language of the passage also presented difficulties to candidates, who seemed unfamiliar with such phrases as 'increased visibility', 'financial component', 'scale and scope', 'give impetus to'. Some candidates interpreted the word 'candidates' as synonymous with 'students' and therefore wrote summaries not about citizens being rewarded for community work, but about students being rewarded for excellent performance on exams. A number of students also exceeded the word limit by rewriting the passage, while others took ideas from different sections and mixed them to form a summary.

Students' responses suggested that they needed more practice in summary writing: it is quite evident that they were unable to identify main ideas and paraphrase these ideas.

SECTION TWO (Profile – Understanding)

Question 2 and 3

The general performance on this section was below that of previous years.

Question 2 tested the candidates' ability to respond to a passage taken from Earl Lovelace's *Salt*, featuring the experiences of a boy. Most students performed well in contextual questions, but produced weaker responses in questions which required synthesis and evaluation. For example, in 2(d) "To what does 'it' refer in line 9 of paragraph 1?" Students gave erroneous responses (the sun; the cemetery) and were unable

to correctly identify 'the town'. Question 2(f) and 2(g), particularly the former "(What does the father think of the son in paragraph 3?") also presented difficulties to students.

Question 3 tested the candidates' ability to respond to an argumentative passage from a newspaper article ('Carnival Survives') written by Caspar London. Again, questions which required assessments proved difficult. For instance, in 3(e) "What does the author imply by the words 'whatever than means' in lines 14 and 15?", many students missed the sarcasm and responses quite literally that the author did not understand the expression. In this question, as in Question 2, many of the weaker candidates quoted large portions of the passage with the hope that these would provide the examiners with the correct answer. However, this strategy does not work.

SECTION THREE (Profile – Expression)

Question 4, 5 and 6

As usual, this section posed a major challenge to the majority of candidates.

Question 4 required candidates to write a story based on a picture featuring a man apparently jumping through the air or running. Question 5 asked candidate to write a story based on the sentence *It was then that I remembered my mother's words "What you sow is what you reap".* Question 6 provided the words *The spacecraft blasted off. Mars here we come!* and asked candidates to describe the astronaut's journey and their landing on Mars. The most popular of these questions was Question 5 and the least popular was Question 6. Question 5 was satisfactorily interpreted, as was Question 4. In Question 6, students generally did not pay attention to key words: describe; journey; landing.

Some of the weaknesses in this section that need special attention are:

> Grammatical problems (tense, use of pronouns, sentence structure)
> Mere recounting of events with little or no attempt to make the story come alive through development of plot, characterization, appeal to the senses, effective selection of details. Poor paragraphing and ineffective use of dialogue.

SECTION FOUR (Profile – Expression)

This section tested the candidates' ability to express their views persuasively using various techniques of argument. Question 7 required students to state their views on the topic *There is nothing wrong with children being subjected to hardships and being denied privileges in life; it will build character.* Question 8 required candidates to write an argument either supporting or opposing the statement *Victims of violent crimes should be compensated by the relatives of the criminals.*

A significant percentage of the candidates did not attempt this section. Among those who did, virtually the same number did each of the questions, but Question 7 was not as poorly done as Question 8. Candidates had problems interpreting some important words and expressions in the topics for example, 'privilege' and 'hardship' (Q7); 'compensate' and 'victims' (Q8). These misinterpretations sometimes rendered their arguments invalid. Although most students who attempted the questions clearly had views on the topics, some had difficulty in effectively developing points to support their arguments. There was, however, evidence of attempts to expand, show cause and effect and employ persuasive techniques in the presentation of the essay.

The better candidates selected relevant information and developed points clearly in support of the position taken. There were instances of logical development and appropriate reinforcement of the argument. Some candidates were able to clinch their arguments with an effective conclusion.

There was a general weakness in expression and mechanics of writing. In weaker scripts there was a mere listing of points, under-developed thoughts and limited views. There was also evidence of misuse of prepositions, awkward syntax, sentence fragment, run-on sentences and neglect of appropriate punctuation, especially question marks.

General comments

Not enough students demonstrated competence in Area II (Expression). Poor expression was most obvious in Section 3 where students wrote phrases such as:

> *It was graduation day and we receive medels for our achievements;*
> *The senter of my hair was balled*
> *They need freedom to associate with people to know their upstands and their downfalls*
> *When you are in your cells you are very board*
> *I laided on my bed and I decided to fall asleep*

One encouraging fact is that many students demonstrated competence in the use of quotation marks. Apart from this, punctuation was limited to full stops and commas. The concepts of paragraphing is ignored so often that it prompts the question as to whether this aspect of writing is overlooked by teachers.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2009

ENGLISH A

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ENGLISH A

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2009

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, accounted for most of the UNDERSTANDING COMPONENT of the examination overall and Paper 02, the free response paper, accounted for all of the EXPRESSION COMPONENT as well as part of the Understanding (all of Section 2 and part of Question 1).

The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is as follows:-

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02** Essay	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60* = 46^{+}	40* = 30^{+}	76^{+} = 40%
Expression	–	90* = 114^{+}	114^{+} = 60%
TOTAL ***raw score**	**46^{+}** **+ weighted score**	**144^{+}**	**190^{+} = 100%**

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in the two papers this year, and the three previous years is as follows:

2006	2007	2008	2009
48.54	49.01	(RoR*) 41.86 (T&T*) 49.56	56.44

*Rest of Region
*Trinidad and Tobago

The performance mean for the examination (out of a total of 190*) for 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 is as follows:

2006	2007	2008	2009
79.14	77.94	(RoR*) 74.74 (T&T*) 78.58	81.82

Average performance over the last three years on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2006	2007	2008	2009
32.36	23.44	(RoR*) 26.24 (T&T*) 26.98	27.92

Average performance (2007-2009) in the component sections of Paper 02 is given below.

	2007	2008	2009
Section 1	10.04 (30)	10.42 (30) (RoR)	10.69 (30)
Summary skills		8.78 (30) (T&T)	
Section 2 Comprehension	15.45 (29)	8.84 (30) (RoR)	11.13 (30)
		12.98 (30) (T&T)	
Section 3		13.29 (35) (RoR)	13.27 (35)
Story Writing	13.62 (35)	14.25 (35) (T&T)	
Description	10.63 (35)	11.23 (35) (RoR)	13.30 (35)
		13.82 (35) (T&T)	
Section 4	13.74 (35)	12.78 (35) (RoR)	14.44 (35)
Argument		13.13 (35) (T&T)	

General advice

Teachers need to emphasise that candidates are required to demonstrate competence in and control of the English language. Preparation for the examination is a gradual process of acquiring and developing skills, both passive (comprehension) and productive (expression). In the examination, these skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks (full stops, commas, colons and semi-colons), as well as other conventions in writing, such as inverted commas, upper case/lower case, abbreviations, the writing of numbers whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure and paragraphing.

Teachers should try to build on young people's love of text messaging and other interactive types of communication on the computer (e.g. e-mail, Facebook) to enhance their understanding of skills that are required in non-face-to-face communication, and have them adapt these skills to fit the kind of writing that is acceptable in this examination.

No matter how frustrating it may be, teachers must continue to use all their resources to encourage students to read because it is only by reading consistently that students will become comfortable with the written word. Furthermore, it is only by writing consistently that students will learn to write well. Reading (on its own) will not make a child acquire the skills of writing – passive skills (e.g. reading) cannot automatically transform themselves into active skills (e.g. writing).

Candidates should come to the examination with a well practised procedure for tackling each question. Candidates should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure of identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. It is only through repeated practice beforehand that each student will come to some understanding of the best way to process a rough copy into a fair copy under examination conditions.

Teachers should give students specific instructions about deleting, making insertions and making additions to their work so that what they write is intelligible to the examiners. Candidates must also acquire the habit of numbering answers correctly and setting out their answers on the page in a way that the examiners can recognise them. Even though examiners are required to make a great effort to decipher every word that some candidates have written and to find all the pieces of an answer, candidates should never forget that it is their own responsibility to write their answers legibly and clearly. Unlike the situation in school where in most cases one teacher corrects a whole test paper, in the CXC examination each answer is corrected by a different examiner.

The tasks in the examination are directly related, in most cases, to real-life skills. Employers and indeed the public at large generally regard performance in English language examinations as a measure of one's ability to perform in the world of work. It is almost a sure way to fail the English 'A' examination by starting off believing that you already know English and all that you need is a little practice on one or two questions. This becomes even more critical for those who have to repeat the examination after failing to perform satisfactorily in it.

Specific advice on the sections of Paper 02

In **Section 1**, when a summary is required, main points must be identified and organised logically within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale by the candidate, CXC examiners are instructed to interpret this as incompetence. In other words, some attempt must be made by candidates to use their own words. Summarising is a real-life skill (used, for example, by news reporters and policemen) and should be treated as such by teachers and students. In the case of business students who may be told that an executive summary preserves the words of the full document, this is not the case here – candidates must be able to show that they can use words that condense the ideas of the original and words that can link sentences together smoothly so that the summary reads like a document in itself and not like a chopped-up version of another one.

The passage to be summarised is usually taken from a newspaper or magazine which caters to the general public. In order to understand the passage, candidates must be familiar with English words and structures that educated people use in their general writing. In some cases a few words may not be familiar to a reader, but in those cases the reader will very likely be able to work out the meaning from the context. Candidates should therefore get into the habit of reading at least the editorial page in their local newspaper as well as letters to the editor. In addition, candidates should read one or two articles from magazines that cater to their age group: Caribbean magazines and even international magazines for the general public. In this way they will become better able to work out, among other things, unfamiliar words in context.

The examiners look first of all to see whether the word limit has been exceeded. They stop their reading at that point, disregarding all else. The examiners then look to see whether the candidate has understood and can clearly identify the main points in the passage and award marks accordingly. The examiners then assess whether the candidate has put those points together in an intelligible and logical manner using his/her own words and award marks accordingly.

- When candidates exceed the word limit, the marks may be reduced by as much as 20%.

- When candidates use only the words in the original passage, the marks are automatically reduced by 33%.

Some candidates, in attempting to put the summary in their own words, sometimes change meanings or insert extraneous material. This is penalised. In real life such distortion would be seen either as an attempt to mislead or deceive or, in the case of a policeman presenting evidence to a court, it could lead to wrong, unfair and disastrous decisions. Those candidates seeking to achieve full marks or high marks should make sure that they preserve the meaning of the original.

The questions in **Section 2** are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should be trained to pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. In response to each question, candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Answers should be to the point. These questions **never** require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer. It is the candidates' responsibility to indicate clearly what the answer is; it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidate.

This section requires students to respond to levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. It is expected that candidates have learnt to use their judgment in answering questions. For example, some questions require paraphrases and some ask for evidence. Students should know how to select words or phrases (as required) and use quotation marks to so indicate. Also students need to do as the question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often wrong – it is an indication that the candidate does not know exactly what the answer is.

In the preparation for **Section 3,** every candidate should have read the best story from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required. (These 'Best Stories' are available from CXC). These stories should not be memorised and reproduced with slight alterations. More generally, candidates should not memorise published stories and hope that this kind of cheating escapes the attention of the examiners. Cheating is punished severely and can have serious consequences.

Although the question paper states word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better students tend to write stories that fall within or not too far outside the word limit. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak.

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterization, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood, good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. Students should try to improve their own techniques of story writing, including the effective use of dialogue and the contrast between characters, by studying good stories written by Caribbean and other authors.

Candidates should use language that they can control. At times candidates use words and structures with which they are not really familiar. The result is that what they write is often verbose, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help students feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral, spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate interesting class productions – for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Description must be clearly constructed and developed (e.g. the different components must be linked appropriately). Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different focuses and facets must be linked appropriately (e.g. background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail). The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the purely descriptive elements. Choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself. Any change in perspective (e.g. visual, mood, tone, etc.) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words to create moods, tones, atmosphere and setting. Although responses to this question have improved over the last three years, there are still too many candidates who are writing a story and not paying attention to the instructions given.

In the case of **Section 4**, note that argument skills require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Providing information without using good argumentative techniques is a weakness; so is the reverse. Students should pay attention to 'tone' and 'audience' and not indiscriminately use the language of debating in every argument they present. Students can learn different styles of argument by studying letters to the editor and editorials in newspapers as well as short, interesting articles in popular magazines or in the magazine section of newspapers.

Candidates need to read the questions carefully, make sure they understand key words, then select their points, choose examples that support their points and be consistent and clear in their presentation. For some unfounded reason, some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think is the examiners' view or what they ought to say.

General Proficiency

SECTION ONE (Understanding & Expression)

Question 1

In this question candidates were asked to read and then summarise a passage taken from a magazine article dealing with difficulties faced by the sugar industry in the English-speaking Caribbean and solutions proposed. Candidates were expected to organise the information and present it in continuous prose in no more than 120 words.

The examiners identified the major points in the passage to be the following:–

- Sugar remained the English-speaking Caribbean's premier export crop because of high prices and preferential treatment.
- Sugar has now become unviable since prices have declined because large global producers have entered the market.
- Sugar is important, however, because of its ecological impact and because it is a part of the life of a significant part of the population.
- Caribbean economies have to change because of the WTO ruling.
- Change will not be easy because it requires money, modernization and retraining.

Following are three summaries of the passage which give some idea of how candidates may differ but still give the critical information needed:

(1) *Although many Caribbean states have abandoned sugar, chiefly because of competition from bigger producers, it remains the most important export crop in the English-speaking countries supported as it is by high prices and preferential trading agreements with the UK and the EC.*

In Jamaica, sugar still provides the livelihood for many in almost every parish and is a major foreign exchange earner. It is also environmentally friendly. However, elsewhere price cuts ruled by the WTO have led to changes in the importance and nature of the sugar industry, including the end of production in some cases. The success of this transition will depend on several factors, including European support, investments for modernization and retraining some workers. (116 words)

(2) *Although cane production was abandoned in some Caribbean countries, the industry has flourished in others because of high prices and preferential trading arrangements with Europe. In Jamaica, sugar plays a vital part in contributing foreign exchange, in preserving the natural environment by preventing soil erosion and in providing a haven for animals. Recently, however, some Caribbean sugar industries became less profitable as larger countries started to export sugar. In response to this, some Caribbean countries have diversified. Europe's decision to cut its preferred price, as directed by the WTO, has led to new industries being established, but this kind of change is difficult since European support is required as well as re-training of personnel to do other jobs.* (117 words)

(3) *Caribbean economies have to reorganize in response to changes in the market economy for sugar. This means modernizing the industry as well as re-training and re-deploying human resources into other areas. The situation is partly a result of a WTO ruling against preferential conditions offered to the Caribbean by Europe, and partly because of the advent to the market of large producers like Brazil and Australia. These factors have made sugar production in the region less viable.*

Though some countries chose to stop producing sugar, the Caribbean cannot afford to abandon the industry entirely not only because significant parts of the population rely on it for a livelihood, but also because it is an essential part of the ecological landscape. (120 words)

Performance on Question 1 this year was marginally better than last year's, though revealing the same strengths and weaknesses in candidates' answers. However, there were still too many candidates who did not understand what is required in a summary.

As usual, many candidates lifted portions of the passage verbatim, often because they were not quite sure of the meaning of a key word. Because the passage used Jamaica to show the continuing importance of the sugar industry in some places, some candidates concentrated almost their entire summary on Jamaica. Those candidates who tried to summarise by simply following the sequence of the passage (without reading the whole passage first and identifying the main points) reached the word limit when they were about two thirds in the passage and then simply disregarded the rest. This meant that they automatically lost marks for not identifying some of the main points and they lost marks for poor organisation of their summary.

Superior scripts clearly demonstrated excellent comprehension and writing skills, without any injection of extraneous material. They were able to identify all the main points, omitting unnecessary details and repetitions, and they were able to put together the points in a coherent way, using their own language as far as possible .

Suggestions for teachers and students

In preparing students for this section of the paper, teachers should:

(i) remind students to observe the stated length

(ii) drill students in the skill of reading questions for theme and specific tasks to be done

(iii) insist that students read the instruction given and not assume that every year it is identical.

(iv) help students to recognize the fact that summary writing comprises reading and writing skills (comprehension and composition skills)

(v) help students to appreciate some of the basic features of summary writing:-

a) using one's own words as far as possible

b) using straightforward English with clarity and conciseness

c) responding to the rubric of the question with its implications for audience, purpose and situation/context

d) using connectives to achieve fluency of writing/reading

e) observing correct mechanics of the language

SECTION TWO (Understanding)

Performance in this section was similar to last year's overall performance.

Question 2

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage from George Lamming's "Of thorns and thistles". The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions set:

(a) *She entered on tiptoe; she whispered*

(b) *that there is tension; that there is conflict; a dramatic effect; an effect of give and take*

(c) *Her normal attitude was pleasant and agreeable.*

(d) *A tense or unpleasant atmosphere existed.*

(e) *She disapproved of it; she disliked it; it was outrageous and offensive*

(f) *She prepared herself to receive Rose; she was trying to calm herself; she shut herself off determined to ignore Rose; she wanted to appear to be asleep; she assumed a position of protest*

(g) *She was old and weak*

(h) *She had difficulty seeing*.

Most candidates found no difficulty answering (a), (e) and (g). In the case of (b), as is usually the case, whenever a question asks *What effect does ...*, there is a sharp separation of weaker students from stronger students. In the case of (c), a high percentage of candidates seemed not to be able to contrast the incident in the passage from what was 'normal'. It is clear that they expected a clue or the answer to be near the beginning of the passage and paid little attention to *It was seldom that Angela displeased her*, which occurred in the last paragraph. In the case of (d), it seemed as if the word *atmosphere* in this context posed a problem for many candidates or that they found difficulty finding an appropriate word to identify an atmosphere. (f) was probably the most testing of the questions in that it required candidates to formulate a conclusion about Mother Barton's posture based on what had happened before. This kind of task seemed to be beyond the reach of the majority of the candidates. In the case of (h), too many candidates found it difficult to understand that a summary answer was required rather than individual answers to each phrase given.

Question 3

This question sought in part to test candidates' understanding of a passage taken from a newspaper article "Impact of Criminal Aliens" written by Tony Best. The following were deemed to be the correct answers to the questions asked:

(a) *Undocumented immigrants and immigrants who commit crimes*

(b) *It gives the idea of something happening unexpectedly or without ceremony or that it comes as a shock.*

(c) *It means one is refusing to deal with the problem of the effects on the Caribbean of the deportation of immigrants who commit crimes.*

(d) *It evokes or encourages one to have sympathy or empathy for the position of the United States*.

(e) *It suggests that "friends" is not to be taken at face value, that it has another meaning; it is an example of sarcasm or irony.*

(f) *An example is "choirboys are not being shipped to the region".*

(g) *Many of the deportees left the region as underage children and were sent back to the Caribbean as hardened adult criminals.*

(h) *He is suggesting that all parties concerned should sit down and work out a reasonable policy*.

Performance on Question 3 was below that on Question 2. As is usually the case, answers, such as (a), (g) and (h), which are explicitly stated in the passage were answered satisfactorily by most candidates. As was the case in Question 2, the phrase *What is the effect of ...* in (b) posed a great problem for the vast majority of the candidates, added to the fact that the word *jolted* seemed to be unfamiliar to many of them. The same was the case in (d) where, in addition to the word *effect*, many candidates could not get beyond using the word *understand* to explain *understandably*. In the case of (c), candidates had to know the meaning of the saying and then apply it to the passage. This double task was beyond most of the weaker candidates. It was mostly the weaker candidates who had problems with (e) and ((f).

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers still have to do more work in order to get students to grasp implied meanings and not just explicit meaning, to make summary assessments and to express these accurately. Teachers should bear in mind that questions which require judgements and assessments will always occur on the examination paper, in Question 2 and Question 3, with the balance across the two questions differing from year to year.

The incidence of particular question types and ways of phrasing questions (e.g. *What effect does ...*) will vary according to the selections the examiners make to ensure that the full syllabus is covered. Teachers should therefore familiarise themselves with all sections of the syllabus or peruse papers over the years to make sure that they provide practice for students in all the question types specified in the syllabus as well as the various ways of phrasing questions.

Teachers should dissuade students from quoting whole sentences and even paragraphs in answer to a simple question. Unusually long answers immediately cause the examiners to think that the candidate does not really know the answer. In any case, any answer which provides two or more alternatives in the hope that the examiner will select the correct one will automatically be awarded zero marks.

SECTION THREE (Expression)

Questions 4, 5 & 6

Question 4 required that candidates write a story based on a picture in which a girl appeared to be reading a book to a boy. Question 5 asked candidates to write a story which included the sentences *The door was closed and the cobwebs in front of it suggested it had not been opened for a long time. Moor turned the key and pushed open the door.* Question 6 (the descriptive essay) required candidates to describe the places along the route of a hike and the ways in which the weather affected the hike.

Question 4 produced a variety of responses with some weaker candidates resorting to a description of the picture rather than concentrating on telling a story. However, most candidates were able to integrate the picture quite well into their story and many candidates were able to produce interesting stories.

Question 5 proved to be the most attractive question for most candidates since they could easily make a story from the scenario presented. Though some responses to this question had the stimulus quotation inserted without satisfactory integration into the plot, in most cases it was reasonably well done.

In the case of Question 6, there was continuing improvement over previous years, indicating that candidates were better prepared to write a descriptive essay. It was also the case that the way in which the question was phrased allowed for more narrative into which candidates could fit their description. This year was the first time that performance on Question 6 exactly matched performance on Questions 4 and 5.

Suggestions for teachers and students

Teachers should continue to use pictures from varied sources, especially those dealing with current topics and themes in newspapers, to help stimulate and guide writing. This helps to make classroom writing interesting and should help students to focus on the use of details to create character, emotion and atmosphere. The creation of humour in writing is something that students might enjoy doing in their writing classes – how to tell a joke, how to write a joke, how to hold back the punch line are part of story-writing that might interest even reluctant writers.

Over the years, candidates have used the story lines in films they have seen as the basis for their short stories. However, even though originality in story line is not an absolute requirement, candidates should not get into the habit of slavishly copying other people's material. It may result in the copied parts of stories being discredited.

In relation to integrating the given quotation into the story, teachers are advised to work more on logical development of plot, integration of story elements, along with the other story writing elements. Candidates whose stories are impressive are those who use relevant details to create atmosphere, mood and feelings. Training in short story writing must always stress the process – thinking, drafting, editing and proof reading. In preparing students for narrative writing, teachers should have students focus on sequence of events, verb tenses and adverbs and conjunctions of time.

For descriptive writing, students can be encouraged to imagine themselves using a camera and describing what they see through the lens as they move the camera gradually from left to right to take in the whole scene. **Students need to get accustomed to the concepts 'spatial', 'temporal', and 'sensory', and to understand how these approaches bring order and meaning to their work. Critical reflection on their own writing may also be achieved through the analysis of / comparison with a range of excellent to poor examples of description.** While it is necessary for teachers to get students accustomed to description by practising descriptive phrases and sentences with striking adjectives and adverbs, students should be wary about memorising flowery phrases and sticking them, willy-nilly, into descriptive essays. In order to prepare students for descriptive writing, teachers have to focus specifically on vocabulary enrichment. One way is by providing students with a list of adjectives, one of nouns and another of adverbs, and getting students to combine them in a relevant way as they describe specific scenes. Teachers need to make these lists cover all the senses – sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste.

SECTION FOUR (Expression)

Questions 7 & 8

Question 7 asked candidates to write an essay giving their views on the statement *Watching television, rather than reading, is the best way for children to broaden their knowledge*. Question 8 asked candidates to present an argument either supporting or opposing the view that the government is wasting too much money buying school textbooks because the children are not reading them and that more money should be spent on computer equipment, which children prefer.

Candidates did not demonstrate any significant difference in preference for the one or the other question. Performance in this section this year was significantly better than last year probably because the topics were very familiar and meaningful to most candidates. There was little difference in performance on the two questions.

The good responses to Question 8 addressed both the matter of children's preference and the matter of the government investing money in the one or the other. The good responses to Question 7 addressed the advantages and disadvantages of both television and reading.

Suggestions for teachers and students

In responding to arguments, whether in real life or in examination essays, it is necessary to address all aspects of the argument that are put forward; not answering a specific aspect suggests that you have a problem with that specific aspect. In any case, answers to arguments in examination essays have to be comprehensive since marks are assigned to the different parts of a question. In other words, if you omit part of a question, you automatically lose marks assigned to it.

While this section of the paper often gives topics which are of immediate interest to teenagers, students also need to keep abreast of topics of regional as well as wider or international interest. It is not always that topics close to the immediate and current experience of teenagers will be given in this section.

Teachers need to continue to give repeated practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2010

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 01, the multiple-choice paper, accounts for most of the Understanding component of the examination overall and Paper 02, the free response paper, accounts for all of the Expression component as well as part of the Understanding Component (all of Section 2 and part of Section 1).

The distribution of marks for the two profiles (Expression and Understanding) across the two papers is as follows:

	PAPER 01	**PAPER 02**	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60* = 46^{+}	40* = 30^{+}	76^{+} = 40%
Expression	_	90* = 114^{+}	114^{+} = 60%
TOTAL	**46^{+}**	**114^{+}**	**190^{+} = 100%**

* raw score

\+ weighted score

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in January 2010 and in the two previous years is as follows:

2008	**2009**	**2010**
47.8	59.3	54.9

The overall means for the examination (out of a total of 190) for the years 2008, 2009, 2010 are as follows:

2008	**2009**	**2010**
82.23	88.19	86.04

Average performance over the last three years on the multiple-choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2008	**2009**	**2010**
26.41	27.31	24.44

Average performance (2008–2010) in the component sections of Paper 02 is given below:

Section	2008	2009	2010
Section A Summary Skills	11.51	14.15	11.13 (30)
Section B Comprehension	6.82	8.60	10.11 (30)
Section C **Story Writing** **Description**	14.25 12.21	13.29 10.24	14.52 (35) 13.70 (35)
Section D Argument	13.52	13.55	13.77 (35)

While candidates are encouraged to communicate in order to develop the facility to process and articulate ideas, there is a need for them to differentiate between the spoken language and that which is written, and to appreciate that Standard English has an international currency. CXC English A is an English Language examination and candidates are required, above all, to demonstrate competence in, and control of the English Language.

Preparation for the examination must be a gradual process of developing skills, both receptive (comprehension) and productive (expression), in the English language. In the examination, these skills must be demonstrated in all areas: the proper use of punctuation marks, not only full stops and commas, but also colons and semi-colons, as well as other conventions of writing, such as inverted commas, capitalization, abbreviations, the writing of numbers, whether in figures or in words, correct spelling, proper sentence structure, and paragraphing. Critical reading and thinking skills need also to be integral parts of the regular class sessions, because without these skills the tasks of summary writing, comprehension, argument or discussion are not easily managed.

Teachers should capitalize on the current interests of the candidates and use topical regional and international issues to help them appreciate the value of effective language use, and to help them to build personal banks of ideas. It is important to remember that very few candidates are natural speakers of Standard English and therefore every learning opportunity should be used.

Managing the examination is an area for which candidates need to be prepared. Candidates should be given strategies for interpreting and responding to tasks; for preparing simple outlines to guide their construction of responses; and for effectively editing their work. They need well rehearsed procedures for tackling each question. Candidates should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure of identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy, and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. It is only through repeated practice that each individual student will come to some understanding of the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under examination conditions. The perception that the English Language examination is not an activity for which the candidate needs to prepare should be seriously rejected.

There are also some basic examination presentation strategies that candidates need to be reminded of: it is important to write so the work may be read; care should be taken in deleting and adding information. The use of liquid paper should be discouraged in favour of neat crossing out, since candidates frequently forget to insert new material in places where the liquid paper was used. Correct question numbering and page numbering help ensure that efforts are not misunderstood.

The tasks in the examination are directly related, in most cases, to real-life skills. Employers and the general public regard performance in English Language examinations as a measure of one's ability to perform in the world of work. It should also be remembered that the sort of English required in an examination is different from what is normally spoken in every-day life. Preparation for the English examination is just as important as it is for any other subject

DETAILED COMMENTS

Section A - Understanding and Expression

Question 1

Most candidates showed some evidence of overall understanding of the passage to be summarized, grasped the concept that 'infertile soil' was responsible for the food crisis and in most cases demonstrated the ability to pull out two points from it. Several good scripts exhibited good language use. Too many candidates, however, still do not know what is required in summary writing. A large number of candidates experienced expression problems; hence, communication of their ideas was ambiguous or even contradictory. In addition, there was often a lack of cohesion.

- There were very few superior scripts, and candidates evidently experienced several problems getting beyond initial understanding of the passage: though they understood the general drift of the passage, they clearly had difficulty with the details, and the way those details developed and interacted with the main point and thrust of the writing.

- The habit of lifting and regurgitating chunks from the passage, without analysing the content, continues to be a problem. Teachers need to focus more on the need for interpretation and re-expression of the *meaning* of what is read — not just changing of words (interpreting rather than translation).

- Exceeding the word limit is still a problem. More practice is needed in the strategies of achieving economy in writing, in selection of points, and in achieving focus.

- Organization is another major problem since many candidates show a lack of ability to link points and ideas logically. Many candidates are limited to the chronology in the original.

Following are three summaries of the passage which give some idea of different approaches to presenting the critical information.

Sample Summary #1

Various factors contribute to the world's food crisis. These include pests and diseases, flood and drought, poor farming practices, the decreasing amount of cultivable cropland, and, most importantly, the increasingly poor quality of soil. Successful attempts have been made to improve seed quality but this has limited effect where the soil is poor. Producing better types of plants increased food for a

short while but failed because of soil. The world food crisis is usually seen as a result of bad marketing practices, but other things like water, diseases and soil must not be taken for granted, as is usually the case. Attention has been given to improving agricultural practices, but very little is done to improve the soil.

(120 words)

Sample Summary #2

Seeds are improving but food production is falling because soils are deteriorating and people are going hungry. According to scientists better varieties resulted in the 'green evolution'. Many years ago, improved plant varieties resulted in the 'green evolution'. This led to the belief that the crisis was over. The hope was short-lived as fertile soil, a critical factor, was lacking. The present food crisis, intensified by natural disasters and diseases, could have been averted with the promotion of fertilizers in places like Africa. Although they practice modern agricultural techniques, governments and charities are not interested in funding projects to improve the quality of soil.

(105 words)

Sample Summary #3

Although the quality of seeds is improving, soil is getting worse and there is currently a food crisis. Soil improvement is critical to solving this crisis.

While it is true that the crisis is viewed in economic terms, a combination of environmental conditions also contributes to creating the desperate food situation. The chief problem is that fertile soil is needed to capitalize on the high quality seeds and plants developed through modern scientific methods. Research in soil improvement has been neglected because it does not capture the interest of governments and charities. They fail to realize that even the best quality seeds cannot flourish without good soil. Soil health is needed to avert a worse food crisis.

(117 words)

Suggestions for Teachers and Candidates

Competence in the techniques of summary is required: a grasp of the thesis; identification of the main points; logical organization in which the correct relationships are grasped and expressed, the ability to express the material in one's own words, with an appropriate vocabulary; and completion within the word limit specified. In cases where the original is reproduced wholesale by the candidate, this is interpreted as incompetence.

Summarizing is a real-life skill (used, for example, by news reporters and policemen) and should be treated as such by teachers and candidates. In the case of business candidates who may be told that an executive summary preserves the words of the full document, this is not the case in English — candidates must be able to show that they can use words that condense the ideas of the original, and words that can link sentences together smoothly so that the summary reads like a document in itself and not like a chopped-up version of another one.

The examiners first determine whether the word limit has been exceeded. Words beyond the word limit are not considered. Consideration is next given to whether the candidate has understood and can clearly identify the main points in the passage and award marks accordingly. The examiners then assess whether the candidate has put those points together in an intelligible and logical manner using his/her own words and award marks accordingly. When candidates exceed the word limit, the marks may be reduced by as many as twenty per cent; when candidates use only the words in the original passage, the marks are automatically reduced by 33 per cent.

Care must be taken to preserve the meaning of the original, and to avoid the inclusion of extraneous material, personal opinion and commentary. In real life, such distortion would be seen as being unethical, and it could lead to wrong, unfair and disastrous decisions.

Section B - Understanding

Questions 2 and 3

Generally, candidates found the questions in this section within their reach, but there were many instances of candidates aiming to succeed by including everything in the section of the passage to which the question directs them, when in fact they are required to be specific. There were varied weaknesses in answers, most exhibiting vagueness, and problems with expression.

Suggestions for Teachers and Candidates

Answers indicate a need for teachers to help students to develop accuracy and control, for example by

- engaging students in much practice in interpreting and arriving at meaning and evidence
- involving students in practice to develop the habit of focusing and discriminating
- involving students in activities that develop their vocabulary so as to produce answers that are clear and concise
- engaging students in recognizing the difference between literal and metaphorical language.

The questions in this section are set in such a way that precise answers are required. Candidates should pay close attention to every word that is used and to the different ways in which questions are asked. Candidates are expected to give precisely what they are asked to give. Answers should be to the point. These questions **never** require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer. It is the candidate's responsibility to indicate clearly what the answer is; it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidate.

This section requires candidates to respond to different levels of meaning and to express their answers clearly. Candidates also need to do as each question asks: if it requires 'a word' or 'a phrase', then providing a sentence, for example, is often an indication that the student does not know exactly what the answer is.

Section C - Expression

Questions 4, 5 and 6

Performance in Section III was generally consistent with past years. There were a few superior scripts and also a few incompetent ones. Most of these came from Question 6 (description), as candidates

continue to ignore the requirement to describe, or to describe the scene and/or period that the question asks for.

Of the three choices given in this section, the most popular was no. 5, the word prompt, while the least popular was no. 4, the picture stimulus.

Question 4

Question 4 required candidates to write a story based on a picture of a little girl hugging a boy. Both children were smiling. Many candidates were prompted to write expository pieces in response to this stimulus.

Question 5

This stimulus was very popular with candidates. It required them to write a story beginning with the sentences 'He slammed the door behind him. He knew it would be for the last time.' Performance was generally fair.

Question 6

Many responses suggested that candidates had not studied the instructions, and, as happened in earlier examinations, they wrote mainly narrative, with some description, from the start of the assignment, rather than focus on the specific time/place elements for description.

Suggestions for Teachers and Candidates

Candidates are advised that they should read the best story from preceding years in order to get a sense of what is required, but these stories should not be memorised and reproduced. In addition candidates should not disregard the word limit set; the longer the story, the greater the chance of grammatical and other errors occurring. Although the question papers state word limits as mainly approximations, the experience has been that the better candidates tend to write stories that fall within or not too far outside the word limit. Stories that stretch into four, five, six and more pages tend to be rambling, out of control and weak.

Good stories demonstrate interesting storylines, characterization, good and effective use of details to create atmosphere and mood, and good and refreshing language use. Weak stories tend to be linear, mostly behaving like reports, with weak language. Candidates should try to improve their own techniques of story writing, including the effective use of dialogue and the contrast between characters, by studying good stories written by Caribbean and other authors.

Candidates should use language that they can control. At times they use words and structures with which they are not really familiar. The result is that what they write is often verbose, stilted, sometimes unintelligible in parts and unimpressive. Teachers are encouraged to help candidates feel comfortable with the simplicity of language and the use of language that sounds and feels natural. Oral, spontaneous story-telling based, for instance, on photographs, sketches and proverbial statements could stimulate some interesting class productions – for listening, writing and peer interaction.

Candidates continue to be unable to differentiate between exposition and description, or to create a piece in which the narrative overwhelms the descriptive. Although responses to this question have improved over the last three years, there are still too many candidates who are writing a story and not paying attention to the instructions given.

- Description must be clearly constructed and developed. (The different components must be detailed, then linked appropriately to create areas of focus; the relevant details must be logically and effectively sequenced; and then the different areas of focus and facets must be linked appropriately [e.g. background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail]).

- The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the descriptive elements.

- Choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself.

- Any change in perspective (e.g. visual, mood, tone, etc.) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words to create moods, tones, atmosphere and setting.

- Candidates should be encouraged to improve their facility with adjectives and adverbs.

Section D - Argument

Questions 7 and 8

The performance in this section was similar to that of earlier examinations but some areas of concern continue to be noted.

Question 7

This question required candidates to argue for or against the choice of local food. This was not a popular choice. While the subject was very topical candidates seemed not prepared to present arguments and comment on local foods. Arguments were often undeveloped, lacking illustrative details and comparison.

Question 8

This was by far the more popular and the better done question. It required candidates to give their views on the banning of sexual and violent songs from radio and television. It was topical and candidates were able to take a balanced approach to responding. They advanced counter arguments to show other areas of blame for behaviour beside sexual and violent songs.

Suggestions for Teachers and Candidates

Candidates need to note that skills of argument require both mastery of persuasive language and presentation of sound points, backed up by suitable examples. Providing information without using good argumentative techniques is a weakness; so is the reverse. Candidates should pay attention to ‘tone’ and ‘audience’ and not indiscriminately use the language of debating in every argument they present. Candidates can learn different styles of argument by studying letters to the editor and editorials in newspapers as well as short, interesting articles in popular magazines or in the magazine section of newspapers.

Candidates need to read the questions carefully and make sure they understand key words. They should then select their points, choose examples that support their points, and be consistent and clear in their presentation. Some candidates operate on the assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that they must agree with the opinion given and that if they do not, they will not receive high marks. The fact is, however, that the questions are deliberately set in such a way as to allow for differences of opinion and most likely if candidates state their real views, they will do better than if they merely agree with what they think is the examiners' view or the socially acceptable view.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2010

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The number of candidates writing the examination this year was approximately 100,000.

Paper 01, the multiple choice paper, accounted for most of the Understanding component of the examination overall, and Paper 02, the free response paper, accounted for all of the Expression as well as part of the Understanding component (part of Question 1 and all of Questions 2 and 3).

The distribution of marks for the two profiles, Expression and Understanding, across the two papers is as follows:

	PAPER 01 Multiple Choice	**PAPER 02 Essay**	**TOTAL**
Understanding	60* = 46^{+}	40* = 30^{+}	76^{+} = 40%
Expression	–	90* = 114^{+}	114^{+} = 60%
TOTAL	**46^{+}**	**144^{+}**	**190^{+} = 100%**
*** raw score** **$^{+}$ weighted score**			

The percentage of candidates attaining Grade III and above in the two papers this year, and the three previous years is as follows:

2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
49.01	(RoR*) 41.86 (T&T*) 49.56	56.44	66.45

* Rest of Region

* Trinidad and Tobago

The performance mean for the examination (out of a total of 190^{+}) for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 is as follows:

2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
77.94	(RoR) 74.74 (T&T) 78.58	81.82	85.33

Average performance (2007-2010) on the multiple choice paper (Paper 01) out of a total of 60 marks is as follows:

2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
23.44	(RoR) 26.24 (T&T) 26.98	27.92	26.25

Average performance (2007–2010) in the component sections of Paper 02 is given below.

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Section A	10.04 (30)	10.42 (30) (RoR)	10.69 (30)	14.57 (30)
Summary Skills		8.78 (30) (T&T)		
Section B	15.45 (29)	8.84 (30) (RoR)	11.13 (30)	9.07 (30)
Comprehension		12.98 (30) (T&T)		
Section C				
Story Writing	13.62 (35)	13.29 (35) (RoR)	13.27 (35)	13.67 (35)
Description		14.25 (35) (T&T)		
	10.63 (35)	11.23 (35) (RoR)	13.30 (35)	11.42 (35)
		13.82 (35) (T&T)		
Section D	13.74 (35)	12.78 (35) (RoR)	14.44 (35)	13.28 (35)
Argument		13.13 (35) (T&T)		

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was satisfactory, with approximately 72 per cent of candidates achieving acceptable grades. Paper 01 assessed understanding of meaning conveyed through word choice, grammar and punctuation as well as meaning constructed from reading literature and opinions expressed in various forms. Candidates performed best on items requiring understanding of literary discourse, but were weakest on understanding informative discourse, grammar and mechanics.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Summary

The summary expected from candidates writing the CSEC English A examination is one demanding the skills used in every-day situations where what is said or what is written may need to be put into a concise form. The summary should reflect the general depth and intention of the original while giving all of the necessary information in candidates' own words. There are various approaches to writing summary and teachers need to expose students to these. One may simply follow the organization of the original, moving chronologically through the points. Summary may also begin with the conclusion and then show the line of reasoning and facts. The important requirement is that the correct relationships between the points must be maintained, so that the meaning is unchanged and clear. Additionally, while it is not necessary to capture every detail, it is important that vital information is not ignored. A good vocabulary is an asset that should be cultivated, since a summary must be rendered in one's own words.

The responses to the summary question continue to suggest that many candidates are not being taught the skills of summary writing. There is persistent wholesale or partial lifting. In a large number of instances where the main points are grasped, the summaries fail because not enough attention is given to organization and meaning. Large numbers of candidates continue to have problems comprehending the passages set. This is directly related to the lack of comprehension skills generally. Poor vocabulary, poor understanding

of grammar and punctuation, weak grasp of connotative language, and weak reasoning are among the elements contributing to misinterpretation. Section A tests two elements: understanding and expression, hence the importance of comprehension skills. Candidates must not see 'comprehension' as a textbook activity, but as an essential part of daily life.

Often the skill of paraphrasing is confused with summarizing — paraphrasing will generally increase, rather than reduce the length, so that in such cases many of the main points come outside of the word limit.

Question 1

The summary passage on cassava proved to be generally manageable, based on a topic of which most candidates have some knowledge. There was a general improvement in candidates' performance in writing the summary, with more candidates demonstrating those skills needed to show competence. However, the general weaknesses continued, with such responses reflecting the same problems that have been identified in the past: lack of understanding of the passage, the use of extraneous information, use of the language of the text, and overall weakness in the use of language. This year, like other years, there were many instances where candidates wrote letters and stories about cassava preparation and use in their own homes. Not only did they misunderstand or ignore the instructions, but they indicated a serious inability to address what was asked, without permitting what was known to interfere. In instances where it was obvious that candidates were attempting to write in their own words, vocabulary deficiency was a problem.

Section B: Comprehension

In Section B, there are two kinds of texts, representing the literary and the expository genres. The questions require precise answers rather than the general or vague. Candidates should pay close attention to every word that is used in the textual piece (prose, poetry, drama) and recognize the various levels of meaning. Of importance too, is the fact that questions are asked in various ways. Teachers need to ensure that in preparing students, they use the taxonomy to help them to become familiar with types of question words and meaning. In response to each question, candidates are expected to answer precisely what they are asked. These questions **never** require paragraph-long answers. Responding to a question which requires a specific answer by simply lifting a long extract from the passage is a bad strategy, one which usually results in zero being awarded for such an answer. It is the candidates' responsibility to indicate clearly what the answer is; it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidate.

Questions 2 and 3

Most candidates performed fairly well on this section, with Question 2 being the one with which candidates were more comfortable. Question 3 appeared to be more demanding.

Questions that candidates found most challenging were 2(d), 3(c), 3(f), 3(g), and 3(h). All these questions required making judgements rather than lifting answers from the passage. Question 2(d) required the candidates not to simply list the occupations, or choose one, but to decide on the main occupation; Question 3(c) required them to decide on not why 'gut' feeling has to be developed, but why it has to be '***deliberately*** developed'; 3(f) presented problems to candidates who simply lifted from the passage; 3(g) was a test of ability to derive the meaning of an unfamiliar word from its context; 3(h) required the ability to arrive at overall meaning and the writer's intention in a passage.

Section C: Story Writing

It is recognized that candidates seem to read less than before, with each year-group reading less than the one before it. One reality is that the adult world supplies the student world with film, visual stories which reduce the need to read for pleasure or entertainment, and sometimes even for knowledge — there is no need to imagine, since the visual preempts this activity. However, the movie concretizes a story: there is character, setting, theme, conflict, climax; there are details, moods and tones. The movie gives opportunity for critique: what worked, why it did, where the situation was unrealistic, where and how could things have been improved? What would a sequel contain: what other perspectives are possible? What would you write

if you wanted to convey the beauty, emotion or some other abstract aspect to someone who did not see the movie? Are the spoken words alone enough to help someone experience the power of the movie? This suggests that while we continue to persuade our candidates into reading, we need to accept their differences and make more use of their world to stimulate their minds and efforts. Different types of stimuli are provided in the examination for story writing — the more visual student is helped by a picture stimulus, but this kind of stimulus is not designed to exclude anyone.

Candidates need to be encouraged to evaluate their own stories using a given set of criteria. The categories used in marking the examination are public. They are 'incompetent' including ranges 1 and 2, 'competent' including ranges 3 and 4, and 'superior', ranges 5 and 6. Teachers should help students to apply these categories in assessing their own efforts in the attempt to improve their skills.

A negative practice clearly evidenced by candidates' stories is that they prepare a story and are determined to write this story regardless of the stimuli given, or they tack the stimulus on to the final paragraph in the hope that it may be absorbed. In both instances, their responses are clearly incompetent, and assessed in this range.

Questions 4 and 5

By far the more popular and better done was Question 5, but Question 4 was also attempted by many candidates. Overall, candidates continue to be poor to moderate in this section. The vast majority fell into the 'competent' group, mainly at the lower end of the mark scheme. There were only occasional exceptionally good scripts. The responses generally indicate weaknesses in story-writing techniques, as well as significant weaknesses in fundamental language competencies.

Section C – Descriptive Writing

Comments made on Question 6 in previous years bear repeating here: description must be clearly constructed and developed, having the different components linked appropriately. Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different areas of focus must be linked appropriately (e.g. background vs. foreground; main focus vs. peripheral detail). The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be related to the purely descriptive elements. The choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture. Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself: any change in perspective (time, perspective, mood, tone) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words (nouns, verbs, concrete adjectives, adverbs) to create setting and atmosphere. In short, the object should be to enable the audience to see and to vicariously experience what is being described.

Question 6

Question 6 continues to be the least popular in Section C. Where it was attempted, too much narrative was included in the response. Among the weak responses, the descriptions were merely a listing of details, with little sense of the spatial or the other elements that would make the description meaningful.

It is clear that the question is not yet achieving, to a significant degree, the purpose for which it was introduced — to provide an option to the story-writing questions. Only the exceptional candidates appear to perform well on this question, which suggests that the writing of description is not being given enough attention in classrooms.

Section D – Argument

This section tests candidates' expression skills: how they organize thoughts for maximum effect, moving smoothly from one idea to another; how to express those views clearly and succinctly; how to use supporting elements; the techniques of audience appeal; the skill of reasoning and the ability to recognize and separate opinion from fact are among the skills assessed. Topics will be related to current social issues and elements

which appeal to or fall within the experience of the student, but the skills of reasoning, whether in arguing for, against, or in giving one's reasoned views should be acquired by using as wide a range of stimuli as possible. Teachers need to continue to give repeated practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

Question 7

This question presented challenges with interpretation. 'Obedience' was sometimes defined culturally as '[having] manners', and a variety of other positives such as 'trustworthiness' and 'submissiveness'. The examination is a test of candidates' ability to use Standard English as an international currency. While the foregoing kind of answer is not completely 'wrong', is it at best only a partial satisfaction of the appropriate task.

Question 8

The topic, 'Sexual and violent songs' produced scripts that never lacked content; candidates who attempted this question had much to write, so they did well in Area 1, but many experienced problems with Area 2.

The topic 'Caribbean doctors' produced fairly good responses and some of the arguments were very good. Candidates made many interesting points and showed good language control.

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Help candidates to see the relevance of the various areas of study to the immediate and future quality of their lives.
- Teach for and encourage transfer of knowledge and skills.
- Encourage candidates to see and respect the differences in the language varieties they speak and hear.
- Help candidates to understand the need, on the one hand, for Standard English mastery as their international currency, and on the other, the value of their own dialect in identifying with the local and regional space.
- Facilitate and encourage reading by using various strategies: teach English Language through English Literature or other study texts.
- Not teach for the examination but teach strategies for tackling the examination — the skill of outlining to improve organization and succinctness; the allocation of time; how to make corrections; the importance of correct numbering and how to interpret questions are some examples.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2011

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination in January 2011 followed the same format as in previous years. Paper 01 — the multiple-choice paper — tested the Understanding profile, and Paper 02 — the free response paper — tested both the Understanding and Expression profiles.

Performance remained stable in January 2011. Fifty-four per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III. This was consistent with overall performance in January 2010 when the percentage of candidates who achieved this level stood at 55 per cent. The percentage of candidates at the Grade I level increased to 9.13 in 2011 from 7.08 in 2010, and 7.7 in 2009. There was significant improvement in the performance on Profile I — Understanding, and a more modest improvement on Profile II — Expression.

Most students produced scripts that fell within the levels of suggesting or demonstrating competence. There were only a few superior scripts at one end, and also a few incompetent scripts at the other. This seems to indicate a need for teaching to focus more on improving the quality of students' general understanding and writing skills.

This target can be achieved through careful reading and critical thinking that leads to the synthesis of ideas, and more exposure to a wide range of topics that allows for garnering ideas and information for further use. The goal should be to widen the students' experiences with good models.

Equal focus must be placed on both *what* is written and *how* it is written. The latter goes beyond the mechanics of writing in terms of correct use of grammar to also include greater focus on choice of words, tone and perspective or writer's stance.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was good, with approximately 79 per cent of candidates achieving Grades I and II. The mean on this paper was 30.57 out of a weighted total of 46. Paper 01 assessed understanding of meaning conveyed through word choice, grammar and punctuation as well as meaning constructed from reading literature, informational text and opinions expressed in various forms. Candidates performed best on items requiring understanding of literary discourse. Retrieving explicitly stated information and ideas, and making straight forward inferences were well done.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Summary

Question 1

This question requires candidates to understand a piece of writing and reproduce its meaning concisely and clearly. Competent performance demonstrates both these abilities. Weak responses indicate usually major problems with understanding the passage, and with the ability to express meaning in the candidate's own words (synthesis). Many candidates try to succeed by lifting chunks or 'cutting and pasting' them together in ways that indicate attempts to hide the fact that they are reproducing the words of the passage. Teaching should concentrate on helping students to grasp and reproduce meaning. Exercises in equivalent sentences are useful, and can be extended beyond one sentence to a paragraph, and further. Practice in comprehension that involves interpretation (not just re-wording) — executed both orally and in writing, is likely to be also very useful.

Summarizing involves two major processes: *information gathering* (reading, identifying and interpreting what is relevant) and *information giving* (synthesizing, organizing and writing). Teaching must move beyond 'identifying points' to include understanding how the text is organized. Focusing on text organizational patterns such as cause and effect, problems and solution, before and after, and similar developmental strategies can lead students to greater comprehension and synthesis of information before they begin to write.

The summary question is awarded a total of 30 marks, evenly distributed among three areas:

- Understanding (Content)
- Organization
- Expression

The text in January consisted of information with which most candidates would be familiar, and their answers generally indicated that they understood the contents. It is in this area — understanding — that candidates continue to score well. Generally the instruction to write in continuous prose is observed. However, two problems persist. One of these is the practice of lifting the language of the text, apart from the permitted use of technical expressions. It now seems to be the norm to ignore the instruction to express the meaning *as far as possible in your own words.* The second is the continued ignoring of the prescribed length by a high percentage of candidates, despite repeated warnings that marks will be lost. Any points coming after the

word limit of 120 words are not rewarded. In fact, the need to go over the limit suggests that candidates are not as capable as they might be in organizing their thoughts, so they can also expect a lower mark under *Organization*. Satisfactory answers to this question

- identified the theme/subject, and the thesis or general thrust of the discussion
- located the specific issue and the reasons for focusing on this issue
- identified the causes of the problem (general and specific)
- examined specific areas by definition, recognition of causes and effects
- described the outlook for the future and the reasons for those views.

Recommendations for Teachers

- While students MUST use their own words, "in your own words" does not require avoidance of key words of the passage. The *technical jargon* (scientific terms, specialized vocabulary) of some passages cannot be avoided when students are writing summaries.

- Students need to undertake extensive practice in organizing their answers, using transition words to help the reader with understanding and readability and using simple, correct language.

- Students should be reminded that to reuse the words of the passage entirely (whether as a whole chunk or by joining phrases from all over) attracts no marks — as the student has not presented any of his/her own words for assessment. Staying within the word limit is another area for practice.

- Engage students in more close-reading exercises — paying closer attention to writer's intention.

- The internal structure of the passage should be emphasized and organizational patterns reinforced so that students understand the importance of cohesion and coherence.

- Emphasize the teaching of paragraph cohesion and the use of appropriate transitions and connectives.

- Build vocabulary and spelling skills to help with comprehension.

- Students should be taught the critical elements for superior organization and language: transitional phrases and the value to achieving economy; using appropriate transitions; avoiding arbitrary use.

Section B: Comprehension

Questions 2 and 3

Candidates demonstrated knowledge of the requirements of Questions (a) to (d) which largely required recalling information explicitly stated in the passages. It was evident that most respondents had a good understanding of what the extracts were about and therefore could give correct responses to the questions that did not test higher-order skills involving evaluating or synthesizing information. Evaluating content, language and textual elements proved difficult in some instances.

The individual parts that proved challenging for Question 3 were (e), (f), (g) and (h). While candidates understood the nature of the questions, they struggled to analyse and synthesize the information and to link it to the writers' overall meaning. Question (h) in particular proved most difficult for candidates. This required them to draw a conclusion from the last three sentences of the passage.

Recommendations for Teachers

- The teaching of comprehension can be usefully combined with the teaching of summary writing as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning.

- Students should be helped to be more focused on interpretation, more discriminating in their answers; more concerned with answering what is asked, not what is usually asked.

- As with Section A, much practice is advised in reading, listening, and reproducing meaning; in interpreting meaning at different levels; and in paying attention to accuracy.

- Practice in vocabulary building that involves not lists of words, but discerning meaning in context, is advised; practice in producing and responding to varied plausible responses helps students to ‘see’ how writing may be interpreted, but there should also be insistence on accuracy in cases where some answers are not plausible responses to a stimulus or not supported by the passage.

- Developing sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important, so that students rise above the level of seeing comprehension as guesswork or ‘anything goes’.

Section C: Story Writing and Descriptive Essay

Question 4

The picture stimulus was well interpreted by candidates. It evoked various scenes and events involving the character in the picture. The facial expression was often interpreted as grief, pain, loss or some suffering that the character experienced.

Question 5

The stimulus on which candidates were to base their story was “Kenia considered the plan she had made. She looked around sadly, then nodded. It was the best decision”. Most responses were pre-occupied with rape/sex and the abuse of teenagers by family members. The tales often lost sight of the stimulus, which was not effectively used. Candidates had difficulty integrating the stimulus into their narratives, so that most often it was 'tacked on' at the end.

Question 6

Candidates were required to describe the scenes and atmosphere in a stadium based on the stimulus “The huge crowd rose to its feet as the athletes entered the stadium”. Candidates were able to relate to the activities and events in a stadium. Most were often able to (though not in great detail) describe the ‘atmosphere’ and ‘scenes’, and very often successfully appealed to the readers' senses.

Generally, the question continues to pose challenges for candidates who have not mastered the writing of a descriptive essay. Their responses fall into the realm of the narrative which is the genre of writing tested in Questions 4 and 5. There were some instances of misinterpretation of the 'time frame' of incidents/events/scenes. In some instances, there was no focus on the athletes.

Recommendations for Teachers

- While there were some highly competent and superior scripts in response to Question 6, most scripts continue to be unsatisfactory mostly because students ignore the rubric.

- Students need to be taught how to write a descriptive essay, and to recognize (not simply told or shown) differences between it and a story. One way in which this can be done is by an

immersion strategy involving reading and writing descriptive essays, and similar immersion in stories, some of which will involve description, but are not simply descriptive essays.

- A descriptive essay allows for creativity in the same way the story does. Candidates may impose their own interpretation (so long as it is valid), and create their own scenes based on valid interpretation of the subject. Within the scene they can create different elements or aspects.

- Teachers are advised to treat the writing of description as a writing experience into which they put in as much preparation as they do for story writing — and encourage every student to write a number of descriptive essays until they know how to do them. This is more advisable than the practice of preparing students for stories only, thus closing an option that they might well have found interesting and suited to their interests and abilities.

- A danger in teaching 'story' only is that the stimulus set in the exam may not appeal strongly to a particular student and so may only evoke a mediocre response. Full exposure and teaching give the students a fair chance to do well.

Section D: Persuasive Writing

More candidates did Question 7 which required them to give their views on the need for special institutions for bullies, than Question 8 which required an argument for or against the testing of school students for HIV, with or without their parents' consent.

Candidates were familiar with the subject of 'bullying' in schools. Candidates spent most of the time dealing with bullying — the behaviour, the causes and the effects and sharing anecdotes from personal experiences. The focus should have been whether there should be an institution for those given to bullying.

Candidates responded well to Question 8 whether they were supporting or opposing the view. The words 'with or without consent' used in the question posed a challenge for some candidates. Many candidates did not establish a clear position in their line of argument.

Suggestions for Teachers in Addressing Weaknesses

- Strategies such as listening to and presenting arguments followed by peer critiquing of arguments are usually useful.

- The writing and presentation of papers and speeches are also useful, as are debates, advice corners, improvised situations such as talk-shows, and other means of promoting thoughtful speech and writing.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2011

ENGLISH A

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance this year was fair and compares favourably with the previous two years. The percentage of candidates who achieved Grades I–III was 67 compared with 66 in 2010 and 56 in 2009. The overall mean was 88 compared with 85 in 2010 and 82 in 2009. Generally, the incidence of students being wholly unprepared for the examination was small, so that answers suggesting or demonstrating incompetence were fewer. When the examination is taken as a whole, there is some improvement, but individual questions reveal fluctuations in the quality of performance.

While candidates seem to be taught the aspects of the syllabus which are examined, some candidates do not demonstrate the quality of skills that produce excellent responses. Most responses fall into the category of being adequate. There is strong evidence that questions/stimuli are not read carefully and not fully thought through. This results in many misinterpretations and inadequate responses.

The following examples are indicative of this. Section D this year included a stimulus that required students to *express their views* on the issue of banning the *import* of fruits and vegetables, in order to support local agriculture. Attention was drawn to a response which replaced the word *import* with *export*, used the word repeatedly and with confidence throughout the essay, and so missed the issue entirely. Equally concerning was the inclination of some candidates, in responding to Question 5 in Section C, to choose one of the indeterminate objects in the background of the picture and to make the story revolve around that, rather than around anything that was foregrounded.

There are still instances of candidates answering more than one question. Not only is this a poor examination strategy, since it takes time away from other questions, but it suggests that candidates do not take care to read or study the instructions.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was fairly good. The mean mark on this paper was 30 out of 46 compared with 26 in 2010 and 28 in 2009. Candidates generally performed well on items of word choice, grammar and mechanics and on comprehension passages based on informative, literary and persuasive discourse. Items presenting difficulty were those requiring evaluation of the effectiveness of language devices such as irony, innuendo and symbolism as well as evaluating appropriate use of code and style in relation to the author's intention.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section A: Summary

Question 1

This question required candidates to demonstrate both understanding and expression skills. The material is usually drawn from informative discourse or exposition (essays, reports, scientific discussions, analyses). The skills of selection and concise expression are targeted. Included in the

syllabus is the following advice: *Summaries require economy of language, the careful selection of the relevant main ideas, and the preservation of the intention of the original.*

While most candidates managed to select the appropriate information for their answers, of that group, only a small minority showed mastery of the skill of writing clearly and concisely, *in their own words*. Fewer candidates still, were able to maintain the correct relationships while reorganizing their points for brevity. They clung steadfastly to both the pattern and the language of the original, a strategy that often worked against conciseness. Most candidates continued to lift the points entirely. Often, connectives were not used so cohesion was lost. There were extreme cases where candidates' concept of summary was to simply copy the first 120 words of the passage.

The mean for the summary this year was 14 out of 30 compared with 15 in 2010 and 11 in 2009. The passage this year appears to have been well within candidates' reach, and they scored reasonably well in the content area. Following the original organization slavishly, led to answers that exceeded the limit and so candidates lost marks. Failure to use their own language also earned low marks. Those candidates who performed in the range 9 –18 selected relevant details but generally did not maintain the original focus.

A close look at the syllabus section *Notes and Suggested Activities* (specifically pages 6 –12) will help both teacher and student to identify and hone summary skills.

Section B: Comprehension

Section B is designed to test understanding, using two short passages, one literary and one expository. The skills tested are outlined in the syllabus under Understanding (a), (b) and (c) (pages 2–3). Weaker candidates responded well mainly to the first three of the ten objectives under (b) – recognizing facts stated explicitly, extracting specific and implied information.

Question 2

The literary passage dealt with a children's activity, hide-and-seek. The mean mark on this question was 7 out of 15. Part (a) asked simply for the name of the game. Examiners recognized that the game was called differently in the various countries, and these names were accepted. Part (c), which required deducing meaning, was frequently incorrectly answered as candidates were unable to go beyond the literal and repeated the answer for the previous question. The parts most answered incorrectly or omitted were (e), (f), (g) and (i). In (g), it was not recognized that a conflict must involve at least two elements. Similarly candidates failed to capture two sides of the oxymoron in (i). Questions relating to appropriateness of tone, connotative meaning and writer's craft were not well answered.

Question 3

The mean mark for this question was also 7 out of 15.

The problem parts were (f) where there was an inability to draw the inference, and (h) where again there was an inability to grasp and explain the oxymoron. It was noted that fewer candidates attempted to lift segments of the passage and tried to answer every question; there were fewer instances of no response.

Candidates continue to ignore the use of the term phrase, and give instead full sentences or even paragraphs, and so lose marks. This prompts the reiteration of the need to teach students to study the requirements of individual questions.

Section C: Story Writing

This year, Question 4 was the most popular. Question 6 was the least popular in this section. The stories demonstrated generally that competence in writing standard English is weak.

Question 4

This question used a picture of an elderly man playing a guitar as a stimulus. Candidates seemed generally comfortable with the picture stimulus. It prompted stories with good characterization and emotional involvement. Story lines tended to be similar, but those scoring the higher marks managed to create conflict or relationships with grandchildren, and tended to use symbolism. Reflection and flash back techniques were also attempted. The mean mark was 13 out of 35.

Question 5

This question was better handled. It was based on the stimulus *A cold hand grasped his wrist as he slumped to the ground*. Many candidates made unconvincing use of the stimulus often tacking it on to the end or barely including it in the story. The mean mark was 15 out of 35.

Question 6

This question was a challenge largely because candidates seemed unfamiliar with the word *pedestrian*. The question was based on the stimulus *The streets were filled with pedestrians in anticipation of their new leader.* Another challenge was also the need to describe mood and atmosphere, so that a significant number of answers scored between 10 and 13 marks. This year saw some resurgence of the tendency towards narration rather than description. At the same time, those candidates who understood the requirements wrote very good pieces. The mean mark for this question was 12 out of 35.

Section D: Argument

Questions 7 and 8

Both of these questions should have been quite suitable given the demands of the syllabus. The content required to respond to them should have been sufficiently within candidates' experience. Question 7 required candidates to write an essay giving their views on the topic *The government should ban the importation of all fruits and vegetables in support of local production*. Question 8 required an argument supporting or opposing the view that *Hungry students cannot learn. Free lunch should be provided for all secondary school students.*

Each question was structured in such a way that there were two parts to be linked to produce an acceptable response. This presented a major difficulty for large numbers of candidates who failed to create necessary links between the two parts; for example, candidates might argue *hungry students cannot learn* OR *free lunch should be provided*.

Some of the responses were quite long – in several cases two or three pages, well over the word limit. In addition, many candidates had ideas but did not have the language skills necessary to

articulate those ideas well. The mean mark for Questions 7 and 8 were 16 and 14 out of 35, respectively.

Recommendations for Teachers

- It is clear that hundreds of students across the Caribbean have not mastered the use of Standard English. There continues to be interference from dialects and patois used throughout the region; to these have been added the slangs originating from dancehall music and the North American ghettos and the abbreviations familiar to users of the messaging media of modern technology. For students who almost abhor reading, some methods must be found to encourage correct use of the language.

- Teachers need to continue to pay attention to having students use their own words when summarizing and to employ transitional words and phrases in order to develop their responses into a coherent whole. Oral and written exercises should be used to introduce these words into the active vocabulary of students. Practice in construction shifts and equivalent sentences would be useful.

- The teaching of comprehension can be combined with the teaching of summary as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning.

- Students should be helped to focus on interpretation; much practice in listening, reading and reproducing meaning and in attention to accuracy is necessary. Sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important.

- Students need to develop a firm grasp of language structure through regular reading of good literature. This includes attention to paragraphing, grammar, spelling, diction and other conventions of writing.

- Students should be given ample practice in recognizing and using the elements of story-writing and descriptive writing.

- Greater use should be made of literature to teach writing–immersion into how stories work.

- Strategies should be engaged to provide individual help to students so that personal needs can be addressed.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2012

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the January examination was moderate. Most candidates produced competent scripts. Very few superior scripts were in evidence, and, at the other end, there was no startling number of incompetent scripts. What the examination results suggest, particularly through the questions which call for reading and understanding, is that most candidates' reading is superficial. As a result, candidates miss what is being asked when they need to study and respond to questions. Research has established that poor reading and comprehension skills lead to poor writing skills. There is much need for teaching to focus more on improving the quality of students' general understanding and writing skills.

This target can be achieved through encouraging discussion, interactive reading where students are taught how to question what they read and to let themselves feel free to interpret or reinterpret the texts, more exposure to a wide range of topics and styles of writing, that allows the garnering of ideas and information for further use — in short, seek to widen the students' experiences with good models. Equal focus must be placed on what is written and how it is written. All of this is even more crucial since in our technologically advanced environment and instant solutions, our students are encouraged to be very visual. There is no need, or time, to imagine; they are accustomed to being given the interpretations.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was fairly good. Seventy-six per cent of candidates achieved scores at the level of Grades I-III. The mean score for the paper was 26 out of a weighted total of 46. Candidates performed fairly well on Questions 1–20 which assessed understanding of meaning conveyed through grammar and mechanics. Questions 21–28 assessed understanding of literary text, sampled by a poem and candidates showed good understanding of the details of the poem, as well as the tone of the poet. Performance on the narrative passage was also good while on the expository passage, performance was fair. Candidates were generally able to recognize cause and effect, identify main ideas and draw conclusions. The weakest performance was noted on Questions 43–60 which assessed understanding of persuasive text. Candidates were unable in instances to distinguish fact from opinion and to identify language devices used by the writer.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Summary

Question 1

This question requires candidates to understand a piece of writing and reproduce its meaning concisely and clearly. Competent performance demonstrates both these abilities. Weak scripts usually indicate major problems with understanding of the passage, and with ability to express meaning in the candidate's own words (synthesis). The summary question is awarded total marks of 30, evenly distributed under three headings: *Understanding* (Content), *Organization*, and *Expression*. Generally, candidates did not show any great difficulty in responding to this question, particularly in understanding the content. However, weak responses indicated a lack of the basic skills of summary writing — *using one's own words without changing the meaning of the passage*. 'Lifting', as the examiners term the partial or wholesale use of words of the passage, is therefore common. This is a major difficulty, and one which causes candidates to lose considerable marks under *Expression*. Some candidates attempt to use their own words, but are seriously handicapped by poor vocabulary.

Particular effort needs to be taken to teach strategies for organization. Most candidates choose to follow the order of the original text, and this often prevents them from achieving a shorter piece of writing. It is most important that students be taught to recognize the relationship and the links between the main ideas in the passage, so that they are not tied to copying the movement of the passage.

Candidates continue to ignore word limits, provide irrelevant details, unnecessary examples, and present information that was not provided in the passage. A major tendency is to write in short paragraphs. It is necessary to remind candidates that the summary has no single topic sentence, and should really be a paragraph which pulls together the essence of several paragraphs. There is a rich section on the kind of activities that can foster the necessary summary skills included in the English A syllabus.

The passage set for January 2012 dealt with our dependence on fossil fuel, oil. The summary expected should have included:

- The disadvantages of dependency on oil
- The advantages offered by renewable energy
- The challenges to be faced if renewable energy sources are to be successfully used.

Below are examples of summaries that could illustrate what was expected of candidates.

Sample Summary No. 1

The high price of oil has caused us to look for alternative sources of energy, which can be produced at a lower cost and are now environmentally friendly. Using renewable energy sources, which are resources that never run out, offers many advantages. They are usually indigenous to a country and so reduce the need for foreign exchange, do not pollute the environment, have a multitude of applications and can be accessed anywhere. However, the cost of implementing the use of renewable energy is very high. To successfully develop its production and use, large investments are needed. There must be policies that provide incentives, such as reducing import duties and selling excess electricity.

Sample Summary No. 2

The world is dependent on oil which is a non-renewable resource. We suffer because oil producing countries often raise the price, and our fuel costs also rise. In addition, oil production is not environmentally friendly. Developing renewable energy offers advantages. Since it comes in several forms, a variety of ways of producing it is possible, even in remote places. It costs less than oil, is more environmentally friendly and saves foreign exchange as there is no need to import. Developing renewable energy, however, is difficult. It demands much capital investment. Policies that help by creating incentives to invest, produce and use renewable energy, are also needed.

Section B: Comprehension

Questions 2 and 3

There were two types of passages used in this section — the literary and the expository. What was seen was a marked difference in the performance of candidates on Question 2 and 3. The inclusion of literary questions and the interpretation of the writer's style in Question 3 proved to be difficult for many candidates.

Candidates' Performance on Question 2

The passage was taken from *Harriet's Daughter*, a former English B text. It addressed the narrator's mixed feelings towards her father who, in her opinion, is disdainful of his Black heritage. Fifteen marks were allocated to a total of eight questions on the passage, one question being subdivided into two parts. The language of the passage was appropriate for this academic level.

Candidates were able to identify the occupation (a) and views (b) (i) of the narrator's father and were also able to recognize irony (c) and sarcasm (f). Questions which required candidates to identify and understand attitude (b) (ii) and feelings (g) were not well answered. Similarly, although they were able to correctly select an expression showing sarcasm, candidates were unable to use the context of the passage to arrive at the meaning of the sarcastic phrase "*he's so concerned about being coloured…*"

It was commendable that most candidates attempted even those questions (e), (g) (h) which apparently were challenging to them. Teachers should continue to encourage such efforts. With regard to developing higher level skills of comprehension, regular class and group discussions on appropriate passages will help students not only to identify, but to understand and articulate attitudes, feelings and tone.

Candidates' Performance on Question 3

Generally, candidates appeared to understand the passage, but they struggled to analyse and synthesize the responses and linked them to the writers' overall meaning. The mean on this question was 6 out of 15 marks. Weaker candidates had difficulty on Parts (c), (e), (f) (g). In Part (c), although the answer appeared clearly in the second line of paragraph two, candidates tended to use peripheral information. The term 'bedrock' in Part (f) should have been understood from the context in the passage, but proved to be a hurdle for many; and question (g) saw many candidates either misinterpreting the question, or attempting to answer by lifting the entire statement containing the words used in the statement.

Recommendations for Teachers

Here last January's comments bear reiteration, *the teaching of comprehension can be usefully combined with the teaching of summary writing as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning*. Summary writing goes another step, but understanding is the primary stage. It is suggested that students be helped to be more focused on interpretation; to be more discriminating in their answers; and to recognize what is asked, not what is usually asked. Benefits can be had from practice in vocabulary building that involves not lists of words, but discerning meaning in context; practice in producing and responding to varied plausible responses helps students to "see" how writing may be interpreted. There should also be insistence on accuracy in cases where some answers are not plausible responses to a stimulus or supported by the passage. Developing sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important, so that students rise above the level of seeing comprehension as guesswork or 'anything goes'.

Section C: Story Writing and Descriptive Essay

There was a noticeable increase in the number of candidates who wrote on topics that were not given on the examination paper. Although some responses demonstrated competence in English, the candidates failed to score because they did not use the stimulus. Most scripts fell within the range of *suggesting competence* to low levels of *demonstrating competence*.

Question 4

The mean on this question was 12 out of a total of 35 marks. The picture stimulus was not well interpreted. In some instances candidates did not focus their writing sufficiently on the foreground of the picture to develop their stories.

Question 5

This question required a response to the following stimulus: "Martine and Sam huddled in the scanty shelter, looked back at what was left of their house and wondered what to do next." Write a story which includes these words. While their language was competent, many candidates failed to answer the question. The mean on the question was 14 out of 35 marks.

Question 6

Generally, this question continues to pose challenges for candidates who have not mastered the writing of a descriptive essay. As in the past, most responses continue to use narrative as the vehicle for description. However, techniques such as moving in an orderly fashion over the scene, of widening or narrowing the view, are being used more than before, which is an encouraging feature. More work needs to be done on encouraging students to let characters contemplate, internalize, and reflect on the scenes suggested, so as to include feelings and reactions in the response to the task. The mean on the question was 13 out of 35 marks.

Section D: Persuasive Writing

The topics were within candidates' scope of knowledge. Nevertheless, both topics were not fully argued and explored from an informed position. Too few 'tools of argument' were employed. Weak responses indicated a lack of a clear position on the topics.

Question 7

Candidates were required to write an essay supporting the views of either of two speakers based on whether homework was a waste of time or a rewarding activity and necessary for success in life. This question was the more widely chosen of the two options. The mean was 13 out of 35 marks. In many instances, candidates merely stressed the idea that homework is good practice while largely ignoring the part of the question that asked about its relationship to success in life. There were a few candidates who disagreed, but were unable to give valid or meaningful reasons for their disagreement.

Question 8

Candidates were required to give their views on whether it should be mandatory for all secondary school students to participate in extra-curricular activities as a requirement for graduation. There were varied interpretations of 'extra-curricular'. Some candidates did not appear to fully understand the meaning of the expression. As was the case with Question 7, the last part of the question was largely ignored. Some candidates dealt with why it is good to participate in extracurricular activities, but did not make the connection with its requirement for graduation. The mean on the question was 14 out of 35 marks.

Suggestions for Teachers in Addressing Weaknesses

Strategies such as listening to and presenting arguments followed by peer critiquing of arguments are usually useful. Writing and presentation of papers and speeches are also useful, as are debates, advice corners, improvised situations such as talk shows, and other means of promoting thoughtful speech and writing.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2012

ENGLISH A

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

General performance this year declined when compared with the 2011 results. The percentage of candidates who achieved Grades I–III was 48 compared with 67 in 2011 and 66 in 2010. The overall mean was 77 compared with 88 in 2011, and 85 in 2010. The incidence of candidates being apparently wholly unprepared for the examination was higher than that of May/June 201l. Answers suggesting or demonstrating incompetence were higher in specific sections.

Generally, candidates appeared to have been taught the various aspects of the syllabus, but were unable to demonstrate the quality of skills that produce excellent responses. Most responses continue to fall into the category of being adequate. There remains strong indication that questions are not read carefully and not fully thought through, resulting in misinterpretation and inadequate responses.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was satisfactory. Candidates generally continue to perform well on items of word choice, grammar and mechanics and on comprehension passages based on informative and persuasive discourse, and less well on literary items. Items presenting difficulty were those requiring recognition and evaluation of language devices such as irony and symbolism, as well as evaluating the use of connotative language and the choice of style in relation to the author's intention. The mean on this paper was 55 per cent compared to 64 per cent in 2011 and 57 per cent in 2010.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section A: Summary

Question 1

This question required candidates to demonstrate skills in understanding, organization and expression. The material is usually drawn from informative discourse or exposition (essays, reports, scientific discussions, analyses) suitable to the secondary school age-group. The skills of selection and concise expression are targeted. The specific objectives are detailed in the syllabus under Understanding (a) and (b) and Expression (a), (b), (c). Included in the syllabus is the following advice: *Summaries require economy of language, the careful selection of the relevant main ideas, and the preservation of the intention of the original* (page 11).

The passage selected for May/June 2012 was considered to be well within the reading abilities of candidates. It was taken from a magazine article and required that candidate summarize a person's reflection on a very topical matter. The content focused on the nature of modern living, its negative consequences, and possible ways to avoid such consequences. The content of the passage was perceived to be familiar to candidates at this level, but many of them distorted the meaning of the passage or gave their own views on the topic. Only the very competent candidates managed to capture all the points made.

Weakness in selecting the crucial elements was exacerbated by lack of vocabulary when candidates attempted to use their own language. The age-old error of 'lifting' persists, and judging from the prevalence and persistence of this problem, it appears strongly that students are being *taught* to lift. This report draws attention to *plagiarism*, and stresses how vital it is for candidates to stay clear of the practice. A significant contributor to the candidates' difficulty is the apparent belief that the topic sentence of a paragraph must always come at the start of the paragraph. This belief is *wrong* and following it causes candidates to focus on minor features. As in the past, few candidates were able to maintain the correct relationships while reorganizing their points for brevity. They continued to cling steadfastly to both the pattern and the language of the original, a strategy that will work against conciseness. Candidates can be helped to learn how to.

- differentiate between topic and supporting sentences
- recognize the relationship between main points (cause and effect, solutions, alternatives)
- distinguish between explanations, illustrations, etc. and the main point
- determine when explanation is vital to good summary
- test their summaries for over-generalization.

The nature of summary (of the length required from candidates in the examination) is such that it eliminates all topic sentences, combining the information into a general thought (thesis). The candidate should therefore produce a single coherent paragraph. A close look at the syllabus section, *Notes and Suggested Activities* (specifically pages 6–12), will help both teacher and student to identify and hone summary skills. Strong support is also given in the new Nelson Thornes CXC English A Study Guide.

Section B: Comprehension

Section B is designed to test understanding, using two short passages, one literary and one expository. The skills tested are outlined in the syllabus under Understanding (a), (b) and (c) (pages 2–3). Each passage has a different focus: in the expository type of passage the objectives are outlined in (a) and (b); in the other – literary discourse – the greater number of questions satisfy Understanding (c). The results for Question 2 strongly suggest that reading and analysing writing of a literary nature needs to be given more attention. Pages 12–14 of the syllabus should be invaluable. Where questions require information obvious in the text, candidates gain marks, but fail to read between the lines, understand inference, purpose, techniques, and connotative language. These are areas which need to be stressed, as in the 'real-life' situation, the ability to penetrate the meaning of the written or spoken word is vital. Candidates with a weakness in responding to this kind of passage also find the Summary question very challenging. The mean on this question was 11 out of 30 marks.

Question 2

The selection for this question was a brief extract from a novel by Rosa Guy. The questions set followed the specific objectives of Understanding (c)**.** This aspect of the syllabus is detailed on page 3 of the syllabus, with explanations and examples starting on page 12 (Notes and suggested activities). Questions asked for supporting quotations, recognition of atmosphere, inference to be drawn from a sequence of behaviours, and evidence. This question was poorly answered. Candidates scored marks on questions where the answers were obvious (Questions (a) and (g)). Questions that required an interpretation and the recognition of writer's intent posed difficulties. Students should be encouraged to satisfy the requirements of questions — for example, "quote the sentence…" saw responses which quoted a few words.

Question 3

The content of this extract dealt with retirement savings: the relevance of financial literacy and the instituting of plans. This information was also within the experience and interest of the candidates. It lent itself well to factual questions, but also included questions requiring higher order skills — deduction and inferencing. The performance on this question was significantly better than on Question 2. Here again, questions that required candidates to draw inferences were challenging: for example, (f) required candidates to deduce the point that was being made; (h) tested candidates' understanding of the message in the last sentence, and to find the sentence near the start which gave the opposite view. Candidates experienced difficulty in providing precise answers. Many candidates showed an inability to differentiate between contextual meanings and literal meanings, treating both in the same ways, as in the case of '*roadblocks*' in Question (e). As in Question 2, there is the tendency by many candidates to cite several sentences to answer a question when a word or phrase is required. In Question (g), for example, many candidates gave unnecessary or contradictory information. The mean on this question was 8 out of 15 marks.

Section C: Story Writing

Of the three questions in this section, most candidates attempted Question 5. Question 6 was the least popular choice. Some excellent responses were generated from all topics. However, most responses were quite mundane. The use of Standard English still proves to be a challenge for too many candidates, with obvious interference from the creoles and dialects used in the region. Many stories were poor in using the elements of story writing. Students must be advised that use of the stimulus is a **requirement**. They must also be encouraged to take careful note of the rubric.

Question 4

This question used a picture of a young man, sitting under a tree, with a laptop computer on his lap as a stimulus. Around him is an array of books, some of them being study texts for CXC. Candidates seemed generally comfortable with the picture stimulus, but it did not give rise to any out-of-the-ordinary responses. Story lines tended to be similar and generally predictable. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to carry out the designated task and instead produced essays on ideas like the value of computers/technology in education. For candidates who have not learnt to discriminate among the different genres, the picture still proved to be a problem. The mean on this question was 13 out of 35 marks.

Question 5

Question 5 used as stimulus, the idea of a storm and the urgent need to warn people who were seen as being special. Very good responses came from candidates who used 'storm' metaphorically. This approach allowed creativity and freshness. While most candidates attempted this question, it proved challenging for the following reasons: many candidates seemed confused by the tense and first person narration of the stimulus. These could not transition smoothly into their stories, so the beginning was used almost as a topic. There were many instances of confusion created by changes in point of view. Too often, there was little connection between the beginning and the content of the story. The mean on this question was 14 out of 35 marks.

Question 6

Descriptive writing is a challenge for a large number of candidates. Most often, too few descriptive details are employed and too many responses are mainly narrative with some description. Candidates should be encouraged to help the audience to 'see' the situation through the details they give. Most candidates who attempted this question still needed the framework of a narrative in which the description was incorporated. This is an acceptable approach to the question, since writing 'pure' description can be quite challenging. Problems arose when candidates simply told stories with no attempt to describe. Yet, there were a few candidates who demonstrated competent descriptive writing techniques and produced interesting and lively writing, as the question "was it real or science fiction?" triggered a wide variety of ideas.

Section D: Argument

Questions 7 and 8

The topics were well within the knowledge of candidates, and some very good work emerged. Nevertheless, as has been seen in the past, too many responses lacked adequate and well reasoned arguments/points and the requisite and appropriate argumentative devices to convince or persuade their audience. Question 8 was the more popular, but better responses were written to Question 7.

Question 7 required candidates to write an essay supporting the views of either of the following speakers:

Speaker A: The government should cut subjects like Music and Visual Arts from the curriculum to save money in these hard economic times.

Speaker B: No way! I think the government should find other ways to solve economic problems!

In general, candidates tended to go off-track in Question 7. The more competent candidates made the link between solving the economic crisis without removing the subjects from the curriculum. Many candidates completely disregarded the economic factor and dealt only with the value of the Arts in education.
These answers were reasonably good. Weaker essays dealt with education generally, or with what governments should do generally. The mean on this question was 14 out of 35 marks.

Question 8 required a strong argument supporting or opposing the moot — "Education is the only avenue for success in today's world". There was much rambling and narration of anecdotes, rather than a focus on arguing the point. More careful reading and attention to the thrust of the topic "Education is the only avenue…" was needed. The mean on this question was 13 out of 35 marks.

Recommendations for Teachers

- The quality of answers in Argument suggests that time management is an issue for many candidates. The main evidence of this is the extended length of answers for Section C, followed by short, unplanned and therefore poor quality arguments. Students would benefit from some coaching in how to manage their time.

- The problem in Section C is partly caused by unawareness of the elements of short story, and of effective ways to use the strategies that will develop the stories. Students need experience in editing to get rid of details which do not help the story. For example, students will give a long list of friends who attended a party when those friends have nothing to do with the outcome; or they will spend time describing a morning when they need to focus on the night the event took place.

  The points following have been made before, but bear repeating in this report since they persist.

- It is clear that large numbers of students across the Caribbean have not mastered the use of Standard English. There continues to be interference from dialects and patois used throughout the region; to these have been added the slangs originating from dancehall music and the North American ghettos and the abbreviations familiar to users of the messaging media of modern technology. For students who almost abhor reading, some methods must be found to encourage correct use of the language.
- Teachers need to continue to pay attention to having students use their own words when summarizing and to employ transitional words and phrases in order to develop their responses into a coherent whole. Oral and written exercises should be used to introduce these words into the active vocabulary of students. Practice in construction shifts and equivalent sentences would be useful.

- The teaching of comprehension can be combined with the teaching of summary as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning.

- Students should be helped to focus on interpretation; much practice in listening, reading and reproducing meaning and attention to accuracy is necessary. Sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important.

- Students need to develop a firm grasp of language structure through exposure — if necessary, in class – to the reading of good literature. This includes focusing their attention to paragraphing, grammar, spelling, diction and other conventions of writing.

- Students should be given ample practice in recognizing and using the elements of story writing and descriptive writing.

- Greater use should be made of literature to teach writing — immersion into how stories work.

- Strategies should be engaged to provide individual help to students so that individual needs can be addressed.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2013

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, performance was moderate. There was a marked absence of superior scripts at one end, and also only a few incompetent scripts at the other. There was noticeable improvement in the Comprehension profile, but the Expression profile remained only fair, with only two per cent of candidates scoring Grade I on this profile. Candidates are encouraged to do more critical reading and discussion. As suggested last year, opportunities for more in-class reading and discussion should be created and geared to studying *how* writers say things and *why.* Such activities, through the use of a good model, provide candidates with an opportunity to widen their experiences.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was fairly good. Approximately 80 per cent of the candidates received Grades I–III. Good performance was evidenced on Questions 1–20 which assessed grammar and mechanics of writing. Performance on the questions set on the literary passages was markedly better than on those set on the expository and persuasive texts.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Writing Reports and Summaries

This section requires candidates to understand a piece of writing and to reproduce its meaning concisely and clearly. Competent performance demonstrates both these abilities. Weak scripts usually indicate major problems with understanding of the passage, and with ability to express meaning in the candidate's own words (synthesis). Too many candidates try to get by with lifting chunks of text, 'cutting and pasting' them together, and adding an occasional word or phrase. The latter is a poor attempt to hide the fact that they are reproducing the words of the passage. We advise that teaching should concentrate on helping students to grasp and reproduce meaning. Learning activities should include:

- exercises in equivalent sentences — this can be extended beyond one sentence to a paragraph.
- practice in comprehension that involves interpretation of meaning (not just rewording) executed both orally and in writing.

The following is extracted from the January 2012 report and repeated here because it is crucial:

> *Summary teaching involves two major processes: information gathering (reading, identifying, choosing and interpreting what is relevant) and information giving (synthesizing, organizing and writing). Teaching must move beyond 'identifying points' to include in summary to understanding how the text is written. Focusing on text organizational patterns such as cause and effect, problem and solution, before and after and similar developmental strategies, can lead students to greater comprehension and synthesis of information* ***before*** *they begin to write.*

Question 1

This summary question is awarded total marks of 30, evenly distributed under three headings:

- Understanding (Content)
- Organization
- Expression

Answers suggested that the text was well understood. The contents dealt with the appearance or reality of physical fitness. It noted that one could be deceived into seeing muscular structure as fitness, when in reality, many muscular persons were using anabolic steroids. These persons had the benefit of looks, but the passage told of the dangers of steroid use, and challenged persons to be sensible in their choices.

In the area of *Understanding*, students continue to score well, but there are persistent problems with *Expression* and *Organization.* The language of the text (apart from the permitted use of technical expressions) is, most often, lifted, so that candidates score low marks. It seems to be the norm to ignore the instruction *use your own words as far as possible.* Candidates still continue to ignore the prescribed length for the summary, despite repeated warnings that marks will be lost, although answers showed some improvement. The need to go over the limit suggests that candidates are not as capable as they might be, in organizing their thoughts, so they can expect a lower mark under *Organization*. Most candidates appear to have been encouraged to use the order of ideas given in the text. Only a few, usually those in the superior range, show enough understanding to group statements according to relationship, and so produce succinct and accurate summaries.

Satisfactory answers to this question

- recognized the deception of appearing fit
- recognized the willingness to take shortcuts to appear fit
- pointed out the dangers: physical, psychological and social
- cautioned those who would like to be fit to make intelligent choices.

If candidates are to better develop their skills, they need:

- extensive practice in organizing their answers, using transition words to help themselves and the reader with understanding
- to practise vocabulary exercises which help them to use simple, correct language
- reminders that reusing the words of the passage entirely (whether in its entirety, selected chunks or by joining phrases from all over) attracts no marks — as they would not have presented any language of their own for assessment
- engagement in more close-reading exercises, paying attention to recognizing tone/attitude and the writer's intention
- to engage in exercises in which analysing the internal structure of passages is emphasized
- instruction in how paragraph cohesion is achieved, and in the use of appropriate transitional and connective expressions.

Section B: Understanding

Question 2

This question, which is worth 15 marks, was a poem. Candidates responded fairly well to the questions set on the poem. This is a departure from what is generally experienced when a poem is presented. The individual parts of the question that proved challenging or problematic for Question 2 were (d), (e) and (f).

Part (d) required an understanding of language use – purpose and style. Part (e) asked for reaction, and candidates failed to distinguish between feeling and action/reaction.

In Part (f) both expressions that represented contrast were needed to demonstrate that contrast, and many candidates were not able to indicate both.

Question 3

This question was an expository piece discussing treatment of and reaction to global warming. Given that the passage dealt with an issue which should be familiar to candidates, the responses were disappointing. The average mark out of 15 was 5. Many candidates could not respond appropriately to the expressions: *political football* and *fiddled with*. The strong suggestion is that although they can recognize metaphorical language from the diction (mechanically) they are not able to penetrate the meaning of the expression and its value in the text. Responses also suggested that candidates are unable to read questions correctly — they ignore some words, misinterpret others, or simply do not understand what the question is asking. This indicates that apart from reading and discussing various texts, candidates need to be given practice in interpretation, and in recognizing key words that would reduce the chance of irrelevancies.

The teaching of comprehension can be usefully combined with the teaching of summary writing as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning. Summary writing goes another step but understanding is the first stage. It is suggested that students be helped to be more focused on interpretation, more concerned with answering what is *actually* asked, rather than what is usually asked. As with Section A, much practice is advised in reading, listening, and reproducing meaning; in interpreting meaning at different levels; and in paying attention to accuracy. Developing sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important, so that candidates rise above the level of seeing comprehension as guesswork. It is strongly recommended that teachers return to and apply Bloom's (revised) Taxonomy, (for example), in developing questions.

Section C: Writing Stories and Descriptive Essays

Following the now familiar pattern, there were three stimuli: Question 4, the picture; Question 5, the narrative prompt; Question 6, a descriptive essay responding to a specific setting. Question 5 was the most popular question, with twice as many candidates as those responding to Question 4, and three times as many as those choosing Question 6.

Questions 4–5

These questions are marked out of 35. The majority of the stories fell into range 3, with averages ranging between 14 and 15 marks.

In Question 4, most candidates were able to use the stimulus satisfactorily, although the stories were not particularly strong. The stimulus to the narrative, Question 5, was also reasonably incorporated, although some candidates did little in constructing character, or meaningfully using the strategies of storytelling.

Question 6

In general, this question was not well done as candidates had a poor grasp of the requirements, and failed to interpret the stimulus appropriately. Answers continue to be highly narrative. The majority of candidates do not grasp the need for descriptive details to create focus and are very weak in organizing movement of description. They demonstrate a lack of use of descriptive words and ability to create images, so visualization and interest are missing, and candidates resort to narrative.

Section D: Argumentative Writing

Question 7

This question invited candidates to support or oppose the view that *As long as government is paying for my education, it can tell me what to study*. There were far-ranging interpretations, including: that the government could tell the candidate what specifically to study for the examination; the pros and cons of government-sponsored education; the right to freedom of choice. The question was the more popular choice, but the answers were generally poorly handled.

Question 8

This question asked candidates to express their views on the statement that *A single Caribbean team should represent the region in all international sporting competitions*. This statement lent itself to fewer interpretations. Examiners felt that candidates were unsure of the meaning of the term *region*.

Recommendations

- *Planning***:** The rubrics which introduce each section of the examination paper invite candidates to plan their longer responses. This was often interpreted as 'write the essay, then copy it'. This double-writing affects time negatively, and many answers showed the hurry to complete. Some candidates also failed to cross out the unwanted answer. The preparation for the examination should include the skill of outlining, so the candidate can make maximum use of the time.
- *Language Use***:** The quality of language generally, but particularly in the questions which demand longer continuous answers (Questions 1, 4/5/6; 7/8) raises some concern: shifting tenses, lack of discrimination in past tenses, lack of subject and verb agreement, basic punctuation and spelling errors are all persistent problems. Very often, rereading reduces the number and type of errors, and students should be taught *how***,** and encouraged to reread critically.
- Examiners advise that much more effort should be put into helping candidates to improve their stock of adjectives and adverbs, and to provide opportunities for studying and emulating good descriptive pieces.
- Most candidates are exposed to the visual through television. This can be used constructively to help develop the skill of descriptive writing. Candidates may be invited to role-play, to be the camera or camera person. They should become familiar with the concepts of foreground, middle distance and background; with the techniques of panning and focusing; and helped to distinguish between concrete and abstract words and phrases.

- It was observed that some candidates seemed to have been prepared to write their argumentative essays along specific lines with particular techniques. Experienced examiners caution that while some students do benefit from such a strategy, teachers should use it with caution, as there is the risk that competent and even superior students will be forced into a mould which affects their expression and development negatively. It is highly preferable to teach them how to reason, and provide them with a variety of ways to open, develop, and close their arguments.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2013

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance overall this year was fair. Approximately 58 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I to III. This was an increase over 2012 when the percentage of candidates who achieved this level was 47. Performance on the Expression profile continues to be only moderate with only four per cent of candidates achieved Grade I on this profile. Students must be engaged in the myriad of ways in which language is used.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was fairly good. The trend of good performance on the items assessing vocabulary, and grammar was again evident. Performance in comprehension questions based on literary, informative and persuasive passages was fair. Items which caused difficulty included those relating to recognizing and assessing the use of devices, recognizing mood, tone and style and distinguishing between the author's attitude and attitudes of characters

Paper 02 – Free Responses

SECTION A

Question 1

Analysis of this section has frequently appealed to teachers and students to pay more attention to it. The responses for July marking 2013 demonstrate some improvement, and suggest that the entreaties have been recognised.

The passage to be summarised was an article entitled 'Water' adapted from *Global Environment Outlook for Youth in the Caribbean – A Vision for Change!* The passage highlighted the current situation in which the world is in imminent danger of water shortage, partly because water is taken for granted in some places while the supply is abused in others. The world does in fact does have sufficient water for all, but modern management measures must be employed to ensure continued world supply. The passage also points out the importance of water supply to economic prosperity, and indeed to the well being of human society.

This section was allotted 30 marks distributed evenly in 3 areas under Profiles 1 and 2.

PROFILE 1	**PROFILE 2**	
Content (understanding) 10 MARKS	***Organistion*** 10 MARKS	***Language*** 10 MARKS

Content

- There was improvement with regard to meeting the word limit and attempting the question.
- The vast majority of candidates understood well that the passage was about water supply. They also picked up on the inadequacy of current conservation strategies and the need to ensure that water would be available for future generations. Despite their understanding of these key issues, some candidates lost marks in Area 1 because they were unable to express said issues accurately and coherently with respect to the original passage. E.g. in the statement**:**

  "*At the global scale there is enough water to provide water security for socioeconomic, technical and institutional aspect of water use"*

Students seemed to have recognised and understood the point but repeated the words *"At the…security"*, and then copied the last part: "*for socioeconomic … water use"* out of context because they did not grasp the correct relationship.

The following are some of the distortions noted:

- the scarcity of water was seen as a present reality but not as a future crisis, so in many cases there was no reference to the looming water crisis
- water shortage was misinterpreted and referred to as water storage
- 'forecast' (para 2) was aligned to weather reports.
- attempts to meet the word limit by using telegraphic language resulting in incoherent responses.

Superior responses demonstrated excellence in reproducing the critical elements of the original passage in the candidate's own words, most often in flawless or near flawless language. In a few instances responses indicated a superior understanding of content but some weakness in language. Responses assessed as suggesting or demonstrating incompetence included one or more of the following:

- The introduction of extraneous material based on prior knowledge, both technical and casual.
- Misinformation prompted by imperfect understanding of details. E.g. "While a political commitment is not simple, we must demand it." This was entirely out of context and based on two sentences in the original: *"The best initiatives are those that make a political commitment to consider water as an integral part of sustainable human development..."*; "*There is no quick fix or simple solution when it comes to safeguarding and managing a resource that is in as much demand as water.*"
- Incomplete ideas.

Organization

The passages used for examination purposes are paragraphed. They follow the principles of paragraphing: a topic sentence and a number of supporting sentences. In writing summary, students are taught to recognise the topic sentence in each paragraph, and to use the meanings generated from them to create a generalized piece of writing. This suggests that the length of the piece they submit will not allow the use of paragraphs. This is a concept grasped and demonstrated by the superior student, and the understanding of the generalization principle is important for all students if they are to improve their skills in summary.

Superior responses were easily recognizable due to the smooth transition from one thought to the other and the demonstrated ability of the candidate to re-arrange the original passage into a coherent whole while maintaining its perspective, purpose, tone, as well as sense of audience without losing content.

Responses at a low level of competence follow the paragraphing of the original slavishly. They do not recognise the relationship between points that do not follow each other in the original. They generally show a passive understanding of some sentences and phrases in the extract and reproduce these verbatim. Examples of this in the paper under review include:

- At the global scale, there is enough water to provide “water security” for all...
- The scarcity of water is a very relative concept...
- A basket of factors including socioeconomic, technical and institutional aspects of water use...
- Sustainable human development...
- Inequitable distribution of water...
- Our managerial capacity has to be upgraded...

Included below are the salient points of the passage, and one of the sample summaries used to standardize the marking.

- *Water is vital to all aspects of life and human activity. It is often taken for granted and its value is overlooked.*
- *Water scarcity means different things in different places but everywhere it relates to a country's economic and social activities and to people's attitudes to water.*
- *World shortage is not actual because there is really enough water for all, but the threat is caused by careless attitudes, outdated management of resources, and waste. The impact is that a very large portion of the world will face real scarcity by 2025.*
- *Attention must be given to the problem in order to ensure that future generations have water and that the needs of the poor are addressed.*
- *The solution will come from a change in our attitude to water use, the appropriate valuing of water, and the employment of updated management strategies.*

Sample summary:

People today seldom think of water shortage; however, it is predicted that by 2025 this could be a reality for billions. The crisis will not result from real water scarcity, but from poor management and attitudes. Addressing the problem means considering all factors related to water use. Water is critical to each country's economic and cultural well being, and ideal practices must focus on sustainable human development and the reduction of poverty. If water is to be distributed equitably we have to recognise its value and the need to conserve for the future. The answer will not be found easily, and requires that management practices be updated to meet modern requirements.

(111 words)

Advice to Teachers

Judging from the relatively few instances of 'no response' to Section A, students are more willing to attempt summary writing. However, they continue to be hindered in their efforts by inadequate vocabulary which affects both comprehension and summary production. There is also low/no use of

connectives resulting in summaries that read more like lists of bulleted items than continuous prose. Generally speaking, however, there has been improvement in candidates' ability to meet the demands of this section. Following are some suggestions to keep the improvement going:

- Introduce summary writing early – some students need to start in the first year of secondary school, particularly if their reading levels are not up to required standard.
- Constantly reinforce vocabulary and effective punctuation.
- Give students practice in writing within a specified word limit.
- Provide students with activities aimed at understanding and using appropriate connectives.
- Provide students with activities aimed at mastering interpretation and construction shift.
- Encourage students to use their own word; discourage lifting from original passages.

SECTION B

In keeping with the specifications of the syllabus and the design of the Specimen Paper, poetry can be used on Paper 2, and in Paper 1. Analysis of the results in this year's examinations indicated that the two stimuli used created a good balance.

Question 2

In this section candidates were able to benefit from the allocation of marks for partial answers. The allocation of marks allowed candidates to score 1 point on questions with a full score of 2 marks. On the other hand, candidates lost marks when they failed to be specific as required, or put answers which required the examiner to select the correct response.

The poem “Carrion Crows” was within the candidates’ experience. They clearly understood what the poem was about. Candidates were aware that there were negative and positive aspects about the behavior of the crows themselves, but not all were able to make these distinctions between the crows' attitude, the poet's attitude, and the poet's craft. It was evident that a few candidates found Questions (d) and (g) challenging because they lacked the vocabulary to describe what they knew. These questions required understanding of the terms “effect” and “attitude”. On the other hand, the answers to (a) (b) and (c) which required explicitly stated information, were generally correct. Some candidates seemed unsure of what to identify specifically as alliteration and metaphor, and quoted the entire line in which the device was used: " And I have seen them perched on paling post" as opposed to "perched on paling post".

Question 3

There were a few “No Responses” for individual parts of this question, possibly because of poor time management, and also because questions demanded interpretation and deduction. Question (h), “what action concerning the environment would be recommended to the government of Socrato based on the information in the last paragraph”, was one such question. Most candidates listed recommendations that were based on what the passage stated as problems: for example some recommended that over fishing and excess road building should stop. The weaker candidates made recommendations about environmental issues that the passage/paragraph did not address. The better candidates, it seems, were either in command of effective comprehension strategies, and were able to make recommendations with more far-reaching effects on the environment such as “Be careful about development which disturbs and destroys the natural environment”.

Advice to Teachers

- It is recommended that teachers pay closer attention to writer's techniques, attitudes and purpose, and to commenting on the effectiveness of devices used.

- Candidates still need practice in quoting relevant and specific phrases and identifying key words.
- Candidates require more help in determining what specific questions ask, so that their responses may be specific.

SECTION C

Question 4

Although the story based on the picture is not usually very popular with candidates, this year it was the one which most candidates attempted. Perhaps this was because most candidates would have been familiar with the scenario, even if only vicariously. Perhaps because of this familiarity, many candidates did not seem to have worked very hard to produce interesting responses. Most were therefore simple, very similar, predictable narratives which lacked creativity.

Question 5

Of the two questions set for story-writing this proved the more challenging. Many candidates experienced difficulty incorporating the sentences into their answers. Skilled candidates responded to the stimulus in effective, interesting ways. This does not suggest that the question was too difficult: candidates writing this examination should be able to cope competently with a question like this. Unfortunately this stimulus was seen by many as an opportunity to produce television-styled violence instead of effective characterization and meaningful conflict.

Question 6

This question required a descriptive essay based on the stimulus "It was all done; all the groups were sure that nothing more could be added. Emotions were mixed as we quietly studied that large room. Describe the scenes and reactions you saw."

Although more candidates have a clearer understanding of the requirements of a descriptive essay than previously, the number of responses remains in the minority. The problems persist:

- Most candidates who attempted the question were unable to differentiate between a descriptive essay and a story. Even when there was description, it was bound to particular characters or locations in the narrative.
- There was again misinterpretation of the question so many responses were weak or irrelevant. Many candidates did not see or did not understand ***"It was all done;"*** or could not figure out how it was important to the response.

There is concern about the significant amount of interference from local creoles/dialects on the Standard English of large numbers of candidates writing this exam. Examples of this interference were again seen in areas such as the non-marking of past tenses, weak spelling, and the use of pronouns which have no antecedents.

Other problems with the mechanics of the language continue to be evident; for example;

- punctuation, especially in run-on sentences - perhaps this problem is indicative of a more serious issue: lack of understanding of sentence structure.
- non-use of paragraphs - many candidates write pages of the story in one long unbroken block.

Advice to Teachers

- There is a pressing need to deal with the issues of (1) relevance, (2) singularity of event, and to a lesser extent (3) point of view, so that candidates may better meet the requirements of length and focus in their stories.
    - Candidates are asked in this section to use Standard English to respond to a **particular stimulus**. Candidates need to be encouraged to be self critical where relevance is concerned. Weak candidates and those with a low level of competence tend to write pages of script before getting to the point of the response. The importance of 'point of view' and the need to control it must be emphasized so that clarity of the plot is maintained.

SECTION D

Questions 7 & 8

Overall, there were improvements in the use of language -grammar and mechanics in particular, in comparison to previous years. With regard to time management, this year it seems that more candidates answered the questions. There were fewer incidents of "No Response". Despite the shortcomings of some candidates who answered the questions in letter format or in the narrative form, it was clear that most candidates understood the concept of persuasive writing and used devices and transitions as needed.

The questions to which candidates responded are below.

Question 7

"Government should offer free health care for everyone residing in a country, nationals and non-nationals alike."

Write an essay EITHER supporting OR opposing this view.

Question 8

"School principals should consult with the student body on ALL matters affecting the lives of the students."

Write an essay giving your views on this statement.

Question 7

- Some candidates misinterpreted the term 'non-national', and either ignored or did not understand the word 'residing' - which should have given them the hint as to what "non-national ' meant.
- Some candidates did not define the key terms from the chosen stimulus, while other had incorrect definitions.
- Little or no supporting evidence was given for the perspectives being given in the essay.
- Many students agreed that health care should be free but did not present clear arguments that demonstrated the benefits of such a venture.
- A few candidates interpreted the word "country" to mean a rural area, rather than their home territory.

Question 8

- Many candidates misinterpreted the term "student body" to mean the Students' Council or the students' physical bodies.
- The word "consult" created some ambiguity which resulted in various interpretations . Common among these interpretations, was the notion that "consult" referred to the principal's role as counselor.
- The expression 'all matters' was not handled effectively.

- The points posited by candidates were generally not well developed. There was an absence of supporting details or appropriate rhetorical devices. Some candidates merely listed the issues without any attempt to argue how consultation would address these issues.
- Most of the issues identified were home related such as divorce, violence and abuse.

Advice to Teachers

- There continues to be significant concern that too many candidates have sentence construction challenges: sentence splices; hanging sentences; fragments; and run-on sentences. Many used the vernacular of their countries.
- Instruction may benefit from the use of more class discussions in which students are challenge to say WHY they hold their perspectives.
- Opportunity to critique written arguments from well-known persons or good Internet sources should go some way in encouraging better understanding and production of argument.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH A

PROFILE CUT-OFFS

[WEIGHTED]

JANUARY 2013

PROFILE 01 (MAX = 76)	GRADES	SCORE	PROFILE 02 (MAX = 114)	GRADES	SCORE
	I	52 (68%)		I	71 (65%)
	II	44 (58%)		II	60 (53%)
	III	35 (46%)		III	51 (45%)
	IV	27(36%)		IV	39 (34%)
	V	13 (17%)		V	17 (15%)
	VI	<13		VI	<17

COMPOSITE CUT-OFFS

[WEIGHTED]

GRADES	COMPOSITE CUT-OFF
I	123 (65%)
II	104 (55%)
III	86 (45%)
IV	66 (35%)
V	30 (16%)
VI	<16

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH A

QUESTION CUT-OFFS BY PROFILE

PAPER 02

JANUARY 2013

Question	PROFILE 1						PROFILE 2					
	GRADES						GRADES					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1.	7	6	5	4	2	<2	13	11	9	7	3	<3
2.	11	9	7	6	3	<3	NOT APPLICABLE					
3.	11	9	7	6	3	<3	NOT APPLICABLE					
4.	NOT APPLICABLE						22	18	15	12	5	<5
5.							22	18	15	12	5	<5
6.							22	18	15	12	5	<5
7.							22	18	15	12	5	<5
8.							22	18	15	12	5	<5

PAPER CUT-OFFS

[RAW]

	GRADES	SCORE		GRADES	SCORE
PAPER 01 (60)	I	39 (65%)	**PAPER 02 (130)**	I	54 (41.5%)
	II	34 (56.6%)		II	47 (36.1%)
	III	29 (48.3%)		III	38 (29.2%)
	IV	23 (38.3%)		IV	31 (23.84%)
	V	20 (33.3%)		V	11 (8.4%)
	VI	<20		VI	<11

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH A

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

PAPER 01 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

JANUARY 2013

Question Number	Objective	Cognitive Level	Question Number	Objective	Cognitive Level
1.	UA	Application	31.	UC	Comprehension
2.	UA	Application	32.	UC	Comprehension
3.	UA	Application	33.	UC	Comprehension
4.	UA	Application	34.	UC	Comprehension
5.	UA	Application	35.	UC	Comprehension
6.	UA	Application	36.	UC	Comprehension
7.	UA	Application	37.	UC	Comprehension
8.	UA	Application	38.	UC	Comprehension
9.	UA	Application	39.	UC	Comprehension
10.	UA	Application	40.	UD	Comprehension
11.	UA	Application	41.	UD	Comprehension
12.	UA	Application	42.	UD	Comprehension
13.	UA	Application	43.	UD	Comprehension
14.	UA	Application	44.	UD	Comprehension
15.	UA	Application	45.	UD	Comprehension
16.	UA	Application	46.	UB	Comprehension
17.	UA	Application	47.	UB	Comprehension
18.	UA	Application	48.	UB	Comprehension
19.	UA	Application	49.	UB	Comprehension
20.	UA	Application	50.	UB	Comprehension
21.	UC	Comprehension	51.	UB	Comprehension
22.	UC	Comprehension	52.	UB	Comprehension
23.	UC	Comprehension	53.	UB	Comprehension
24.	UC	Comprehension	54.	UB	Comprehension
25.	UC	Comprehension	55.	UD	Comprehension
26.	UC	Comprehension	56.	UD	Comprehension
27.	UC	Comprehension	57.	UD	Comprehension
28.	UC	Comprehension	58.	UD	Comprehension
29.	UC	Comprehension	59.	UD	Comprehension
30.	UC	Comprehension	60.	UD	Comprehension
60 questions – 1 mark each Profile assessed – Understanding Total UA – 20 Total UB – 9 Total UC – 19 Total UD – 12			**Total 40 – Comprehension 20 – Application**		

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH A

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

PAPER 02 – GENERAL PROFICIENCY

JANUARY 2013

Question Number	Profile and Marks Awarded	Syllabus Objective	Cognitive Level
1.	Understanding – 10 marks Expression – 20 marks	UB	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis
2. (a)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(b)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(c)	Understanding – 1 mark	UC	Application
(d)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(e)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(f)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(g)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Application
(h)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
(i)	Understanding – 2 marks	UC	Comprehension
3. (a)	Understanding – 1 mark	UB	Comprehension
(b)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(c)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(d)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(e)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(f)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(g)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
(h)	Understanding – 2 marks	UB	Comprehension
4.	Expression – 35 marks	UC	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis
5.	Expression – 35 marks	UC	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis
6.	Expression – 35 marks	UC	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis
7.	Expression – 35 marks	UD	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis
8.	Expression – 35 marks	UD	Comprehension/Application/Synthesis

Understanding – 40 marks
Expression 195 marks (Total expression marks candidates can achieve on this paper is 90)
Cognitive Levels
Comprehension – 15
Application – 2
Comprehension/Application/Synthesis – 5

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2014

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in January 2014 compared favourably with the results in earlier years. As has come to be the norm, there was neither an outstanding improvement, nor significant decline, but the results continued to be skewed towards the lower grades. The incidence of candidates being wholly unprepared for the examination was again relatively small, yet most responses tended to fall into the category of being 'adequate'. Teachers are urged to make use of the various guidelines and aids to learning being developed by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), to help students be more comfortable with both language and literature, and to improve language through the skills acquired in studying literature. One resource is the syllabus document, in which there is a large section which helps with interpreting the syllabus objectives and requirements, and suggests a variety of activities which can help in developing the appropriate skills.

Taken as a whole, there is some improvement in the performance, but individual questions as expected, show fluctuations in quality. Candidates seem to lack strategies to help them use their time and skills to the best advantage under examination conditions. At the start of each question there are instructions and cautions to which examination candidates need to be encouraged to give thoughtful and careful attention. The following advice was among several pieces offered to instructors in 2009, and is still very relevant today:

> Students should come to the examination with a well-rehearsed procedure for tackling each question…they should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure for identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. Teachers should advise each student, based on the student's ability and speed, about the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under examination conditions.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was good. Approximately 84 per cent of candidates received Grades I–III. Exercises on word choice, sentence completion and equivalent sentences were well done. The area in which greatest weakness was evident was usage where candidates experienced difficulty recognizing sentences which contained clichés, misused metaphors or redundancies, and sentences that were incorrect grammatically.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Writing Reports and Summaries

This section of the paper — summary — tests skills which people generally use daily in summing up responses to life's experiences. It is an academic activity therefore which has practical value, and

students might respond better to the challenges of summary if teachers remember to teach for the transfer of skills. Discussions with persons approaching tertiary level academic pursuits, and with many in the work sector, indicate that there is a strong tendency to confuse the strategies — paraphrasing, quoting and summarizing.

There are also observations that while secondary level students are required to research and produce scholarly evidence, the manner of presentation accepted is very often sheer plagiarism. The plagiarized presentation delivers the impression that the student is low in understanding. For this reason teachers are encouraged to explore with the students the Skills and Abilities to be Assessed as presented in the syllabus document: Understanding (a) and (b) (i) to (x), and (d) (i) and (ii); Expression (a) and (b).

Question 1

Among the comments which examiners and assistant examiners made on the passage and task were:

- The instructions given to the question clearly indicated what was expected of candidates.
- Candidates seemed able to relate well to the passage as the issues addressed were within their experience.
- The level of vocabulary in the passage was not unduly challenging.
- The length was suitable to the time frame allowed.

Comments made on the candidates' responses included the following:

Strengths

- General understanding of the passage
- The ability to identify key points
- Organization of material

Weaknesses

- Using transitional devices
- Creating accuracy because of some inability to interpret or express relationships
- Far too much lifting of phrases and sentences rather than using their own words
- General expression

The points expected in the summary were:

- The 1990s widespread encouragement of lower income persons to enter university has led to disappointment and frustration.
- Governments cannot maintain the costs.
- Students entering university have unrealistic hopes and expectations from the degrees.
- Students entering university require remedial help.
- Falling standards have resulted from lower level entry requirements.
- When universities seek higher fees students are frustrated.

- There are too many graduates in areas which are not vital to national development.
- Jobs formerly held by those without degrees are now claimed by the high numbers of graduates, thus causing employment and job dislocation.

Section B: Understanding

Questions 2 and 3

The passages in this section followed the established pattern: one literary piece, one expository piece. Examiners were happy with the length and degree of complexity/simplicity in both passages. The first passage was an extract from *God Bless the Child*, published in *Essence*, September 2006. The issue dealt with homelessness and the impact on children.

The examiners' overall assessment was that most candidates attempted all questions, and interpreted them satisfactorily. The major problems came from questions that required skills of literary analysis. Such questions included:

- Why does the writer use the expression…?
- List two ways in which the family was affected by the mother's decision.
- What is the narrator's attitude to the situation described in the passage?

The expository passage was less well handled. Its subject was Yoga in the Caribbean. Though the language was well within their reach, it was observed that some candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the term *Yoga*. Most of the candidates' difficulties arose from inadequate vocabulary, and a weak response to the written expression, that is, weakness in analysing the written word.

The questions offering most challenges were (b) and (c), which asked for recognition of contrast; (e), in which the word "complementary" appeared to be unfamiliar (it was frequently interpreted as meaning 'free'); and (f), which required an appreciation of connotation and denotation, indicating that there is still some inability to distinguish between literal and figurative language.

Teachers and students are again referred to the Skills and Abilities to be Assessed section of the syllabus and encouraged to pay attention to Understanding (c) — grasp insights from reading literature.

Other persistent problems are the failure to use quotation marks when asked to *quote*, and the use of full sentences when asked for *phrases*. This becomes a problem when the sentence used contains ideas that are opposed to the answer required.

Section C: Writing Stories and Descriptive Essays

For the January examination, candidates were given more details in the instruction to encourage them to be conscious of their task. This seems generally to have brought good results. Problems continue, however, in the ability to distinguish between narrative and description.

Question 4

It was noted that candidates were better able to respond to the picture stimulus. Though there were responses which were expository, these were fewer — an improvement over the past.

Question 5

For the most part, responses were satisfactory. Candidates in instances were able to use the stimulus to develop interesting story lines and characters. Stories were generally effectively organized. The areas of weakness were in most instances weak language structure and mechanics.

Question 6

This question continues to produce answers that make heavy use of narration rather than description, but there has been improvement in the number and quality of the descriptions.

Section D: Argumentative Writing

Question 7

As with Section C, examiners felt that the expanded rubric worked to the candidates' advantage. Several approaches to the dialogue seemed possible, but candidates successfully responded to a selection of aspects given in the stimulus. Valid points were made and correct arguments and strategies employed.

Question 8

This was the more popular choice of stimulus. Again, there was scope for several interpretations or reactions, as there was some scope for addressing some social issues. Responses suggested that candidates identified with the topic.

Weaker scripts demonstrated:

- Inability to develop points rationally
- Poor organization
- Limited vocabulary
- Weak sentence structure
- Misuse/overuse of the rhetorical question
- Inadequate linking of points/paragraphs

Assistance with this part of the syllabus is found in the document, under the heading Expression. The section with suggested activities, in particular Expression (c) and (d) contains many suggestions.

Recommendations

- *Planning***:** The rubrics which introduce each section of the examination paper invite candidates to plan their longer responses. This was often interpreted as 'write the essay, then copy it'. This double-writing affects time negatively, and many answers showed the hurry to complete. Some candidates also failed to cross out the unwanted answer. The preparation for the examination should include the skill of outlining, so the candidate can make maximum use of the time.
- *Language Use***:** The quality of language generally, but particularly in the questions which demand longer continuous answers (Questions 1, 4/5/6; 7/8) raises some concern: shifting tenses, lack of discrimination in past tenses, lack of subject and verb agreement, basic punctuation and spelling errors are all persistent problems. Very often, rereading reduces the number and type of errors, and students should be taught *how*, and encouraged to reread critically.
- Examiners advise that much more effort should be put into helping candidates to improve their stock of adjectives and adverbs, and to providing opportunities for studying and emulating good descriptive pieces.
- Most candidates are exposed to the visual through television. This can be used constructively to help develop the skill of descriptive writing. Candidates may be invited to role-play, to be the camera or camera person. They should become familiar with the concepts of foreground, middle distance and background; with the techniques of panning and focusing; and helped to distinguish between concrete and abstract words and phrases.
- It was observed that some candidates seemed to have been prepared to write their argumentative essays along specific lines with particular techniques. Experienced examiners caution that while some students do benefit from such a strategy, teachers should use it with caution, as there is the risk that competent and even superior students will be forced into a mould which affects their expression and development negatively. It is highly preferable to teach them how to reason, and provide them with a variety of ways to open, develop, and close their arguments.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2014

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in English A remained moderate in the May/June 2014 examination sitting. Fifty-nine per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I to III, consistent with overall performance in May/June 2013 when 58 per cent of the candidates achieved similar grades. There was a moderate improvement in performance on Paper 01, which assesses Profile 1, Understanding, and a small improvement on Paper 02 which also assesses Understanding but focuses primarily on Profile 2, Expression.

However, performance on Paper 02 continues to be below the expected standard. The questions in the three sections on this paper generally elicited only moderate levels of performance. General weakness was observed in many candidates' inability to organize ideas and to use grammatical English in expressing these ideas.

The instructions to Sections A, B, and C have been expanded in order to help the candidates maximize responses and scoring opportunities. There is some evidence that the candidates' attention has been drawn to this feature, but more encouragement is necessary to ensure greater compliance with these instructions. Too many candidates lapsed into the vernacular in answering Questions 2 and 3, and in responses to Section C.

Apart from the grammar, vocabulary and expression issues, poor handwriting and spelling stand in the way of obtaining the best marks.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice

Generally performance on Paper 01 was good, with approximately 82 per cent of candidates achieving the three top grades. The areas of particularly weak performance on this paper were the questions set on the expository extract.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Writing Reports and Summaries

Question 1

Candidates were instructed to read an article about the moon and its perceived effects on various aspects of life and activity on Earth, and then write a summary not exceeding 120 words. While the article captured the attention through a popular connection between the moon and insanity, that was not its focus. The article established through examples, that some ideas about the moon's influence leaned towards the scientific, others towards popular folk tales and beliefs, and that research and investigation continue.

Candidates' responses were generally in the moderate to lower levels of competence. While many were able to recognize and express the moon's importance to life, its suspected link to insanity and other negative behaviours, many were deceived by their own knowledge of the myths, folklore and old wives' tales which are associated with the moon and focused incorrectly on these areas. Answers strongly suggested weakness in understanding the passage, and an inability to analyse the ideas expressed in it. This meant that such candidates were, in turn, unable to express those ideas cogently and in their own words. Answers showed significant weakness in making appropriate links between ideas, resulting in inappropriate strategies, ranging from repetition and/or extensive 'lifting', to the extreme of simply copying the passage until the word limit had been reached.

A major hindrance to successful summary is lack of vocabulary, and poor expression. The CXC English A syllabus strongly suggests and seeks to foster a working relationship between literature and language. This gives students the benefit of experiencing, first hand, language in effective use. Use of good literature does not seek to force students to study literature per se, but exposes them to the quality of vocabulary and syntax that create good expression.

The following italicized section is taken from the scheme used for marking the summary in each English A examination, and should be kept in mind as part of the teaching:

Content

The answer will be judged for its adequacy with respect to the following criteria within the set word limit.

- *Selection and accuracy of details (and their original linkages) and their completeness.*
- *Clarity and faithfulness in respect of purpose/intent, and appropriateness of message and tone.*
- *Attention to perspective/point-of-view and consistency of focus.*

Organisation of Content

- *Arrangement presented through sequencing, selection of cohesive ties, achievement of economy.*
- *Arrangement of information in a coherent structure and sense of audience.*

Points to be noted in the answer:

The moon is believed to have a variety of effects on all forms of life, but the extent to what is fact and what is fiction is still unclear. People are still inclined to mix scientific thought with myth. The facts are:

- The moon has a strong gravitational pull on large masses of water on earth.
- The human body is 70 per cent water, but it is too small to be affected by the moon.
- The moon's phases affect the reproductive cycles of humans and marine life.

The beliefs are:

- Madness, arson and violent crimes increase with the full moon.
- More babies are born with the full moon.

There is a suggestion that human behaviours are affected by beliefs, and research shows some correlation between change of behaviour and the changes of the moon.

Sample Summary:

Sample 1

Several aspects of our lives, and events on a planet, have long been associated with the moon and its phases. Some of these things are built on scientific fact, others on folk beliefs. Researchers have investigated some of the beliefs, but results are inconclusive. One accepted feature is that the moon affects reproduction among females and some sea creatures. There is the belief that our bodies which are 70% water, are affected by the moon, but since such effects are only shown on large bodies of water, the belief is questionable. The moon's connection to madness is also questionable. One lecturer in psychology suggests that our beliefs shape our lives and that we change our behaviour according to the things we believe. (110 words)

Sample 2

It has been long believed that the moon affect many forms of life in some way. Some effects have been accepted by scientists such as the moon's influence on the movement of large bodies of water and the reproductive cycles of women and some types of shellfish. There is the belief that there is a correlation between the moon's phases and negative changes in human brain activity and actions. Anecdotes suggesting a rise in the number of babies being born at a particular time of the month and an increase in violent crimes have been linked to the moon's cycle. Although the results of research into these areas have been inconclusive, the moon continues to fascinate us. (119 words)

Sample 3

People have long been led by evidence or story, to believe that the moon influences our lives. For instance, scientists accept the moon's influence on reproduction among marine life, and its effect on the human female's menstrual cycle. It is also known that the moon's gravity affects water on Earth, but that water must be in very large quantities, so effects on the human body are rejected. Some people link insanity, higher birth rate, and periodic peaks in violent crime with the full moon. Scientists are investigating because of the many stories of lunar effects, true or imagined generally there is some acceptance of a connection between the full moon and behaviour changes, but conclusions are still mixed. (118 words)

Superior responses reproduced the critical elements of the original passage in the candidate's own words, most often in flawless or near flawless language. In a few instances, responses indicated a superior understanding of content but some weakness in language.

Responses assessed as suggesting or demonstrating incompetence included one or more of the following:

- The introduction of extraneous material based on prior knowledge.
- Misinformation prompted by inadequate understanding of details.
- Incomplete ideas.
- A listing of ideas with no recognition of the relationship between points.

Recommendations for Teaching

Comprehension skills (primarily) and summary writing skills need to be reinforced. Students should:

- be exposed to a wide range of expository passages and be guided in analysing text structures and modes of development
- receive more practice in expressing what they read in their own words
- be given exercises using transitional words
- be exposed to good summaries which they are encouraged to critically examine for content, technique and length
- be encouraged to participate in oral exercises in recounting versus summarizing (using topical issues, events and popular shows) which will grasp their attention, stimulate understanding, and demonstrate the goals of summary
- exposed to sessions of functional vocabulary

As understanding and summary exercises done in the classroom demonstrate mastery, attention should then be given to completing tasks within a given time frame. Penalizing the use of the language of the passage will drive home the value of using one's own words.

Teachers are also encouraged to make use of the Internet, and to encourage students themselves to explore this avenue. It will alert them to the value of the skill, and break the tedium of the classroom. What the students learn, they can themselves introduce or teach to their peers. Several URL's will be evident through a Google search, many of them produced by teachers.

Section B: Understanding

Section B continues to offer the candidates two short pieces of writing for study and comprehension: one piece expository, the other literary. These questions assess candidates' preparedness to interact with various kinds of writing in their adult life, including their ability to recognize fact and fiction, and to appreciate the wealth of meaning conveyed by good writing. It seems, however, that the students are not challenged during their preparation for the examination, to recognize the different kinds of writing; their purposes, audiences, and styles, and therefore to expect a difference in the kinds of questions attached to each type of writing.

According to the syllabus, candidates are expected to consider and appreciate the various techniques used and their effects; to recognize and understand literal and figurative language; to be able to quote accurately; to know the differences between 'phrase', 'sentence', 'word' and 'expression'; to find the direct statement and the inference. Unfortunately, the evidence is that most candidates are able only to respond adequately to the straightforward, information-gathering kind of question.

Question 2

This question consisted of an extract from *Harvey River: Memoir of My Mother and Her Island*. The term 'memoir' should have alerted candidates that this is more artistic than factual. It makes use of figurative language from the first sentence, "Hard Life was an ill-mannered visitor …" and uses expressions like "oily-mouthed feasts', for instance. Individual sub-questions asked candidates to recognize the words and phrases which created particular meaning and many candidates did not demonstrate the ability to do so. Many also failed to respond well to questions which asked for purpose, effect, feeling, description of character, or recognition of irony.

Question 3

This question presented a discussion on the effects of fast food. The passage is written in a matter-of-fact style, provides definitions, offers evidence through statistics and cites authority and is more in keeping with the kind of passage that candidates seem to like. Candidates appeared to have understood the content, but had severe difficulty in expressing meaning. One of the problems noted was a carry-over from Section A: a question which enquires interpretation cannot be effectively answered by simply lifting a sentence and presenting it as the answer. Based on this particular passage, candidates were required to recognize attitude, explain phrases, identify intention, recognize implications and give reasons. All of these proved to be very challenging tasks. Very noticeable again was the problem caused by poor vocabulary and, it is strongly suspected, by lack of exposure to extended, high-quality writing on various topics. Challenging words in this extract included "epidemic" and "unnecessarily".

Recommendations for Teaching

- Make use of high-quality magazine articles which provide writing that is modern, and factual without being pedantic and 'highbrow'.
- Teach students how to structure answers. For instance, when a question asks "What is the writer's purpose, the answer must include the infinitive: "To…"
- Recognize that figurative language is not restricted to literary texts.
- Use the CXC literature texts as part of the language instruction.
- Find ways to introduce vocabulary exercises. For example, the Toastmasters Club has a practice of introducing, explaining, and encouraging correct use of a new word each meeting. This may be adopted as a daily classroom activity.

Section C: Writing Stories and Descriptive Essays

Question 4

Again in this examination sitting, the story based on the picture was the one which most candidates attempted. Unlike last year, this year's stories were the best done of the choices. Generally candidates managed to successfully incorporate the stimulus into their responses. Answers ranged from simple stories of a haunted house to some attempts at metaphor and personification.

Question 5

This was the second choice of the narratives, and was more challenging. Though the idea of music and a party attracted candidates' attention, their answers were less successful and less imaginative. Answers were less sure as some candidates could not determine whether to focus on the mistake, or the hesitation. Only a few combined the two successfully. Many spent the time describing a situation leading up to the decision or mistake, and were ineffective in structuring satisfactory endings, often petering out into simple, predictable and anti-climactic outcomes.

Question 6

The stimulus given in this year's paper read: "When the fishermen finally reached the shore, what greeted them was nothing that they could have described." The focus of this stimulus was the shore. There is room in this stimulus for the candidate to spend some time **describing** what was experienced before reaching the shore, in order to emphasize the unimaginable nature of the actual beach, **which must also be described** (i.e.: visual detail given). In fact, the wording made the beach scene the area of greater importance, but candidates did not seem to recognize this. In addition, what was seen (described) on the beach could have been negative or positive, as the candidate chose. The problem is that the candidates **need to be taught how to analyse, then encouraged to use the analytical skills** to interpret what is said **or** not said, required **or** not required, in a stimulus; and through the analysis to find the focus. Otherwise they could (and did) misapply their time and energy.

Among the problems noted this year were:

- Low level of ability to differentiate between a descriptive essay and a story. In fact, the number and quality of responses to this option indicated a regression from the standard achieved in the past two years.
- Fewer candidates showed an understanding of the requirements of a descriptive essay. They failed to see the accumulation of details in order to give a picture, and settled, instead, for vague generalizations.
- The organization was weak, so that many candidates were unable to master the spatial aspect: moving left to right, top to bottom, panning, etc.)
- Rather than say what could be seen, and involve the audience in seeing the details so they might react on a personal level, candidates told the audience what to feel (e.g.*:* … *it was warm and sunny* … instead of … *people were dressed in as little as was allowed, short shorts, sleeveless shirts, old ladies carried umbrellas*…)
- Candidates were trapped in the concept of time and event (in the narrative '… and then, and then …")

Recommendations for Teaching

- Our students, born and raised in a visual age, may have reached a point where they no longer see what is around them. In addition, they are blasted almost continually with loud and demanding sound. There are many practical reasons for learning to 'see' and describe.

- This suggestion invites the teacher to conduct brief but enjoyable training sessions:

  - Provide students with only the sounds, then ask them to supply the visual, first orally, then in writing. Use a radio play, or a song, for instance.
  - Have students, working in small groups, blindfold each other and then experience something.
  - Present students with jumbled details, then have them arrange the material logically, and account for their choices.

- A writer may make use of multiple strategies to develop a piece of writing, and students need (i) to recognize these techniques and (ii) to understand how to identify the piece according to the predominant purpose and style. For example, an argumentative essay may use some definition or narrative to help in making a point clear. Narratives very often use description, in order to establish 'setting' in time and place. Students must be encouraged to see the differences when a piece of writing is dedicated to story, OR to description.

- Teachers are encouraged to use literature (the texts set for English B, for instance) to help students to recognize and create different kinds of writing.

Section D: Argumentative Writing

The questions were appropriate for the age level of the candidates, and examiners generally thought they were apt choices as they allowed candidates the opportunity to express their reasoned views and arguments on topical issues, bearing in mind that candidates range from those of middle to upper high school age to those who are at the age of adult maturity.

Question 7

Responses to Question 7 suggested that it offered candidates a manageable challenge in terms of ideas for or against (i) the claim that homeless people are a nuisance, and (ii) that the homeless should be forced into government-provided housing. Candidates had many ideas, but the challenge lay in their ability or inability to:

- recognize the aspects of the discussion
- organize their thoughts effectively to cover all aspects of the discussion
- organize their ideas for the best strategic impact (move from stronger to weaker or from weaker to stronger points)
- link their ideas and achieve cohesion
- muster syntax and vocabulary well enough to express themselves clearly.

Less able candidates understood the concept of 'nuisance', but then devoted the entire essay to establishing that nuisance element, abruptly attaching the 'forced into …housing' as a conclusion. In many instances candidates failed to support their claims, and relied instead on repetition of opinions.

Question 8

Question 8 required that candidates recognize the nature and purpose of rules generally, and of school rules in particular. It also required that they have some understanding of freedom generally, and a consciousness of how personal freedom fits into the broader issue. The problem of inadequate vocabulary negatively

affected understanding and responses to the prompt. Particular areas included the meanings of 'violate' and 'personal freedom'. Violate was often interpreted as 'annoy'. Many candidates took the statement personally or very narrowly, and related incidents of personal affront or negative reactions by schoolmates, rather than explore the concept of violate. Most often the focus was on specific rules in specific schools.

Recommendations for Teaching

- In responding to arguments, whether in real life or in examination essays, it is necessary to address all aspects of the argument that are put forward; not answering a specific aspect suggests that the candidate has a problem with that specific aspect. In any case, answers to arguments in examination essays have to be comprehensive since marks are assigned to the different parts of a question. In other words, if the candidate omits part of a question, he/she automatically loses the marks assigned to it.

- While this section of the paper often gives topics which are of immediate interest to teenagers, candidates also need to keep abreast of topics of regional as well as wider or international interests.

- It was observed that some candidates seemed to have prepared to write their argumentative essay along specific lines with particular techniques. Experienced examiners caution that while some students do benefit from such a strategy, teachers should use it with caution, as there is the risk that competent and even superior candidates will be forced into a mould which affects their expression and development negatively. It is highly preferable to teach them how to reason, and provide them with a variety of ways to open, develop, and close their arguments.

- Teachers need to continue to give repeated practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relations, as in cause and effect, contrast and concession. Words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast' and 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2015

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in English A in January 2015 was fair. This was reflected by an increase in the percentage of candidates achieving acceptable grades. Approximately 56 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III, an improvement on January 2014 when the percentage of candidates who achieved this level of performance was approximately 52 per cent. The percentage of candidates who achieved Grade I increased from approximately seven per cent in 2014 to eight per cent in 2015.

Improved performance was evidenced on Profile 2, Expression. While overall there was an improvement in the quality of responses on questions on Paper 02, candidates continue to experience difficulty on the Expression profile.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was very fair with a mean score of 57 per cent. Nineteen per cent of the candidates achieved Grade I on this paper while 80 per cent of candidates achieved acceptable grades, I–III. Candidates were generally able to recognize facts stated explicitly and to extract specific and implied information. Items based on word and sentence meaning were generally well done. Items requiring recognition of errors in usage, inappropriate grammar or vocabulary in sentences were also generally well done. In the comprehension items weakness was noted in some candidates' ability to evaluate the effectiveness of language devices used and the appropriateness of different forms and structures used to achieve the author's intention. This was especially evident in Items 21–30, which were based on a poem. Items 23–26 and 29 assessed candidates' knowledge of metaphor, tone, mood and connotative meaning. Items 40–47 assessed candidates' ability to obtain information accurately from informational text. Candidates were expected to understand the writer's intention, make comparisons and sequence information.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Summary

Question 1

In Section A candidates are required to demonstrate the ability to understand the written text, organize information and express the ideas clearly. To reiterate the message of past reports, the material is usually drawn from informative discourse or exposition (essays, reports, scientific discussions, analyses) suitable to the secondary school age group. The skills of selection and concise expression are targeted and specific aims are detailed in the syllabus under Understanding (a) and (b) and Expression (a), (b), (c). Included in the syllabus is the following advice: *Summaries require economy of language, the careful selection of the relevant main ideas, and the preservation of the intention of the original.*

The passage selected for January 2015 instructed candidates to read an article entitled 'Our History, Our Future' and write a summary of it not exceeding 120 words. Candidates' responses were generally below average. The mean on this question was 12 out of 30. Some candidates' answers suggested that they understood that man's past mistakes are being repeated and that these could be avoided but they copied the words/sentences which expressed such. The majority was unable to say how to avoid the mistakes without using the words from the passage. In fact, most candidates

began and completed their summaries using the same vocabulary presented in the passage. Many candidates actually wrote 'summaries' with six paragraphs (the same number as the original). This method of summarizing (slavishly following the structure of the original) prevented them from making appropriate links between ideas and resulted in repetition/extensive 'lifting'. Many candidates also rewrote the examples and the quotation with a few ending their summary with the latter. There were also instances where candidates simply copied the passage until the word limit had been reached.

Apart from the language weakness, candidates demonstrated weakness in selecting the crucial elements and were hampered by a lack of vocabulary. Other persistent problems come from the assumption that the first sentence in a paragraph must be the topic sentence.

The points which should have been included are:

- History is full of valuable information, not only about events and dates, but also about behaviours and the consequences of those behaviours.
- People usually learn about history but do not learn from it, so they make the same mistakes of earlier generations.
- In order to learn from history, the reader must go beyond superficial study, must analyse and so learn from the earlier mistakes and best practices.
- Good research skills applied to history can lead to the discovery of effective strategies to be used in business and social development.
- Since history records human and cultural attitudes and behaviours, individual and national expectations, societies' strengths and weaknesses, a study of it shows how to avoid conflict in a variety of contexts.

Sample Summary 1

History provides considerable information about dates and events, but also stores knowledge and examples which we, as individuals and leaders, can use in our daily personal and business lives. To get the benefit from history, we need to approach it inquiringly and analytically. We are then able to recognize, understand and appreciate character, patterns of behaviour, cultural peculiarities, social conditions and needs and responses. We also have a chance to understand more of the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors relating to managing people, our businesses, and our lives. When we fail to study history appreciatively we miss the warnings, repeat the experiments and bad practices, and get the same disastrous results as our predecessors did.

114 words

Sample Summary 2

History books contain useful knowledge of events, situations and human interactions. If we really want to reap the benefits of this knowledge, we need to use an analytical approach to the study of history. We will find that it gives us blueprints and advice on how to alleviate a wide range of negative human activity. We can avoid global and personal conflicts while we improve our business practices and our social and cultural interaction, both locally and globally. In short, the application of history's lessons can be of great benefit to man's progress. Instead, we learn only the contents of history and continue to make the same mistakes our ancestors did, so that history repeats itself.

116 words

Sample Summary 3

History contains a wealth of information relating to dates and events. In addition, not only are examples of human behaviours and actions recorded, but also the results of such; yet man has the tendency to simply learn history without using the analytical approach to it that would enable him to learn from it. As a result, the patterns that history has created are often unnoticed. By failing to make use of the positive insights provided, the mistakes of previous generations are repeated. The application of the analytical approach produces guidance for human interaction. Through it we avoid cultural and social conflicts. The result should be an improvement in human relations in all spheres.

113 words

Recommendations

Comprehension skills need to be reinforced and students should

- be exposed to a wide range of expository passages and be guided in analysing text structures and modes of development
- receive more practice in expressing what they read in their own words
- be given exercises using transitional words
- be encouraged to complete classroom exercises within the specific timeframe and word limit. Students should also be penalized for 'lifting'.

Notes and Suggested Activities (specifically pages 6 –12) of the syllabus, will help both teacher and student to identify and hone summary skills. Strong support is also given in the new Nelson Thorne's *CXC English A Study Guide*.

Section B: Understanding

Questions 2 and 3

These questions are designed to test understanding, using two short passages, one literary and one expository. The skills tested are outlined in the syllabus under Understanding (a), (b) and (c) (pages 2–3). Each passage has a different focus: in the expository type of passage the objectives are outlined in (a) and (b); in the literary, the greater number of questions satisfy Understanding (c). The results for Question 2 strongly suggest that reading and analysing writing of a literary nature needs to be given more attention. Pages 12–14 of the syllabus should be invaluable. Where questions require information obvious in the text, candidates gain marks, but fail to read between the lines, understand inference, purpose, techniques, and connotative language.

Question 2

The performance of candidates on this comprehension question indicated a wide range of abilities in comprehension, with scores ranging from 1 to 15. The mean on the question was 7 out of 15. While many candidates were able to correctly quote the phrase required in Part (a) (ii), there was the tendency to quote the entire sentence given in line 5, clearly indicating that candidates have not mastered the skill of 'quoting a phrase.'

The passage set was an extract from the (Caribbean) novel *The Leopard* by Victor Reid. It is a reflective piece in which, through the night, the protagonist experiences a rainstorm and compares its destructiveness with the behaviours of a woman. In contrast, as morning comes and the storm is ended, he uses the metaphor of a fun-filled golden ball rising and breaking over the land.

Many candidates were able to identify the impact of the storm on the environment as requested in Part (c) (i). They were also able to accurately identify the words or phrases which conveyed this idea.

From the response of candidates, the most challenging question was Part (d). For this question, candidates were required to identify the difference in mood between paragraphs 1 and 3. Many could not use the terminology expected: *dreary/dull*; *bright/hopeful*. In some cases, instead of identifying the mood of the paragraphs, candidates reverted to identifying the mood of the writer.

Part (e) required candidates to quote pieces of evidence that suggested different times of the day. Some candidates were able to accurately quote the evidence, but others experienced difficulty producing answers that focused on the same time of the day, for example, morning.

Another challenging question was Part (f) (ii) where candidates were asked to identify another phrase in the passage which conveyed the same idea as "beyond the limits of the land". Many got this incorrect. In other cases the question was not even attempted, suggesting generally a discomfort with metaphorical language.

The performance of candidates on the question indicates the need for some level of integration: using literature in the language classroom. It is evident that when candidates are asked to identify terms that are all too familiar in literature classrooms, those without that experience perform poorly.

Question 3

This passage examined the advantages and disadvantages of the increasing use of information technology in industry and commerce. It also looked at the impact on social and community life. It argued that in spite of the benefits, people and communities are vital and efforts must be made to maintain the connections between people. While Parts (a) and (c) which assessed the ability to retrieve information explicitly stated were answered correctly by the majority of candidates, Parts (b), (d) and (f) were not well done as many candidates did not seem to interpret these questions correctly. The term 'remote access' used in Part (b) did not seem to be understood by some candidates while the writer's 'attitude' was also not deduced by many candidates in answering Part (d). The 'effect' the writer wanted to achieve by using the word 'yet' in Part (e) was another question not well answered. Part (f) required an inference which was not made in many instances, while Part (h) required candidates to draw a conclusion. The mean on this question was 8 out of 15.

Section C: Story Writing

Of the three questions in this section, most candidates attempted Question 5. Question 6 was the least popular. A few very good responses were generated from all topics, but most responses were quite mundane. The use of Standard English continues to be a challenge for too many candidates, with obvious interference from the dialects used in the region. Many stories were poor in using the elements of story writing. Candidates must be encouraged to take note of the rubric especially as it applies to the way the stimulus is to be used, and to the length of responses.

Question 4

This question used a picture of a clearly malnourished dog about to be captured by a group of 'dog-catchers'. The picture focused on the animal and the devices used to catch it. Only the legs and arms of the catchers were visible. The stimulus offered candidates an opportunity to fully display

the elements of short story writing and many candidates did a fair job of developing a story line and some attempts at characterization were quite good. The stimulus was used to present stories from several perspectives, for example, the dog, the dog-catcher or an animal lover. In many instances the conflict situation was clearly developed and a resolution established. The language component, although quite good in instances, revealed many areas of concern. The mean on this question was 12 out of 35.

Question 5

The stimulus for Question 5 introduced a male, sitting on a bus between two persons who said they were his parents, and feeling that 'something just did not feel right'. The candidates could have chosen any age group for the protagonist. A story which included internal conflict/reflection/suspense, and even comedy, was possible. Responses ranged from demonstrating incompetence to suggesting superiority although there were very few at the upper level. Candidates used the stimulus to varying degrees of effectiveness with most responses falling in the 'suggesting competence' range. Some candidates seemed to have difficulty linking the second part of the stimulus 'something just did not feel right' with the first part 'two persons who said they were his parents'. The mean on this question was 17 out of 35.

Question 6

Descriptive writing continues to be a challenge for a large number of candidates. Pieces which focus on narration with only incidental description still form a major part of the submissions. Candidates should be encouraged to **show** the situation to the audience through the details they give. Much work needs to be done in helping students to use structure and sequence to produce a good description. Candidates may be further encouraged and motivated if they are helped to see that the ability to describe is a vital aspect of our lives, part of our mechanism for self-protection. Observation, attention to details, and logical movement are relevant skills to be developed. The mean on this question was 15 out of 35.

Section D: Argument

Candidates were comfortable with these topics, and some very good work emerged. Still too many responses lacked adequate and well-reasoned arguments/points and the requisite and appropriate argumentative devices to convince or persuade their audience.

Question 7

This topic was within the range of candidates' experience so they were able to generate clear points for their responses. They were able to elaborate on these points thus providing the needed support for the topic. In addition to presenting sound arguments, many candidates were able to acknowledge and refute the counterarguments in a logical and mature way. For example, candidates argued that some of the benefits of the school setting include developing conflict resolution skills and team building while at the same time enabling individuals to develop a sense of independence. These responses showed that there was some awareness of the genre of writing that they were asked to address.

Some candidates demonstrated the ability to organize an essay vis-à-vis introduction, body and conclusion. This was probably facilitated by the extra page provided in the candidate booklet. There was evidence of prewriting activity such as brainstorming, outlining and the use of cluster webs — approaches that facilitate essay writing.

Unfortunately, too many weak aspects of grammar and poor spelling were evident. Some weaknesses were subject and verb agreement, pronoun usage, past tenses and weak sentence structures. Strategies need to be developed to help students to value their dialects while appreciating the need to use the standard variety of English. The mean on this question was 16 out of 35.

Question 8

This question required candidates to give their views on the statement "No matter how old you are, as long as you live with your parents or guardians, you should obey the rules they set in the home".

The question required three areas to be addressed, age, living at home and rules. Many candidates failed to address all aspects of the topic and repeated the same points throughout. In instances, their writing lacked clarity. Weak responses ignored punctuation, lacked logical sequence and used transitional words and phrases inappropriately. The mean on this question was 15 out of 35.

Recommendations for Teachers

- The quality of answers in Argument suggests that time management is an issue for many students. Students would benefit from some coaching in how to manage their time.
- Students need experience in (1) planning stories and (2) editing to get rid details which do not help the story. For example, students will give a long list of friends who attended a party when those friends have nothing to do with the outcome; or they will spend time describing a morning when they need to focus on the night the event took place.

The points following have been made before, but bear repeating in this report since they persist.

- It is clear that significant numbers of students have not mastered the use of Standard English. For students who almost abhor reading, some methods must be found to encourage correct use of the language. More frequent exercises in writing, including taking dictation (of short stories) will help provide greater comfort with standard English.
- Teachers need to continue to pay attention to having students use their own words when summarizing and to employ transitional words and phrases in order to develop their responses into a coherent whole. Oral and written exercises should be used to improve the active vocabulary of students. For the more competent students, practice in construction shifts and equivalent sentences would be useful.
- The teaching of comprehension can be combined with the teaching of summary as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning.
- Students should be helped to focus on interpretation; much practice in listening, reading and reproducing meaning and in attention to accuracy is necessary. Sensitivity to how words and sentences work in the language is important.
- Students need to develop a firm grasp of language structure through exposure — if necessary, in class — to the reading of good literature. This includes focusing their attention to paragraphing, grammar, spelling, diction and other conventions of writing.
- Students should be given ample practice in recognizing and using the elements of story writing and descriptive writing. Television watching is still a favourite pastime and can be a teaching–learning tool.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2015

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The results of the May/June 2015 English A examination revealed fair overall performance. Approximately 59 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I–III as was also the case in 2014.

Performance on Paper 01 which assesses understanding declined over that in 2014, but this was compensated for by performance on Paper 02 where there was an increase in the percentage of candidates achieving acceptable grades. Paper 02 which assesses predominately expression showed some improvement with approximately 54 per cent of candidates achieving Grades I–III compared with 47 per cent in 2014. All questions in the four sections on this paper produced fair levels of performance. A general weakness was observed, however, in many candidates' inability to organize ideas and to use grammatical English in communicating these ideas.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was fair, with approximately 64 per cent of candidates achieving the three top grades. Good performance was noted on the literary comprehension passage and the graphic representation, but there was some weakness in responses to questions on the poem and the expository text. The questions on grammatical conventions were fairly well done.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Writing Reports and Summaries

Question 1 on Paper 02 was an extract from a magazine article on the Caribbean creative arts festival, CARIFESTA. It informed that the region has much pride in its rich cultural diversity and that the festival was an opportunity to showcase both artists and arts; that the festival is as effective, though it works differently, as cricket in uniting the peoples; that organizers had visions of various positive outcomes for the festival, some of which have been realized, despite difficult economic times and natural challenges; and that it had been hoped that the festival would be staged at regular intervals in different parts of the region.

It seems now to be the norm for candidates, in doing Question 1, to settle for copying long phrases and sentences from the text. It is also noted that they are unable/unwilling to study the given text and to separate the *main points* from the supporting or illustrative statements. This latter issue is closely connected with the erroneous perception that the first sentence in a paragraph is the topic sentence. Very few candidates demonstrate the skill of recognizing thought patterns and relationships, and being able therefore to start their summary from any point. Concerning this particular passage, it seems as if the candidates did not understand the passage and so simply lifted verbatim a line from each paragraph without even using any connectives. Following are some of the weaknesses noted in answers to Question 1.

- Many of the candidates wrote what seemed to be a summary of each paragraph and set them out as such. This resulted in repetition and, in some cases, a lack of connection of ideas.
- Some candidates got carried away with the idea of a 'festival' and did not focus on Carifesta specifically.
- Words/phrases such as *originally intended* seemed to have been ignored, misunderstood or overlooked.
- Link words/connectives were rarely used, and many of those were used inappropriately, leading to the opposite of what was stated in the passage.
- There was a high level of 'tense-ignorance', with candidates confusing the timeframe in terms of what was to happen and what did happen.
- Candidates simply copied the passage until the word limit was reached, or copied the whole passage leaving out a word/sentence.

Following are the main points from the passage, and one sample summary.

- Caribbean lifestyle is influenced by a variety of histories and cultures.
- Carifesta was visualized as an opportunity to focus on the artistic, creative and cultural diversity in a single place.
- Carifesta is just as effective as cricket in uniting the people but for different reasons.
- It was hoped that the region's artists who migrated would be inspired by the cultural richness to return.
- Carifesta is mounted in different countries at intervals but the original plan was to hold it every two years.
- The intervals of Carifesta vary as the region has to cope with economic, physical and other challenges.

Sample Summary

Caribbean people share a common history and enjoy close proximity but they are culturally diverse. The cultural festival, Carifesta, unites them as much as cricket does but differently. The goal of the festival is to showcase Caribbean and South American culture and creativity. It was conceived of to highlight the multicultural heritage of the region, to create an environment for the development of the arts. It also hopes to encourage the return of migrant artists. While the intention was to make Carifesta a biennial event, this has not materialized because of economic, environmental and other problems. Nevertheless, the festival has been held several times and has become a major regional and international event. (114 words)

Responses assessed as suggesting or demonstrating **incompetence** included one or more of the following:

- The introduction of extraneous material based on prior knowledge
- Misinformation prompted by inadequate understanding of details
- Incomplete ideas
- A listing of ideas with no recognition of the relationship between them

Recommendations for Teaching

Teachers and students need to avail themselves of the help offered in the Study Guide (*English A for CXC: A Caribbean Examinations Council Study Guide).*

- Comprehension skills need to be reinforced and students should be exposed to a wide range of expository passages and should be guided in analysing text structures and modes of development.
- Students should have more practice in expressing what they read in their own words. Exercises in which summary comes from listening would be a tremendous help in (1) focusing and in trying to grasp the idea, and (2) forcing students to use their own words since the original is not available for copying.
- Students should be given more exercises using transitional words.
- Students should be given more exercises in using cause and effect reasoning, comparison and contrast, and all of the other strategies of developing exposition.

Practice in timed exercises would help students to finish and read over their work, and to respect the word limits set.

Section B: Understanding

These questions assessed candidates' preparedness to interact with various kinds of writing, their ability to recognize and differentiate between fact and opinion, and to appreciate the wealth of meaning conveyed by vocabulary, tone, juxtaposition and the other tools of good writing. Responses continue to suggest that the students are not challenged during their preparation for the examination, to recognize the different kinds of writing — their purposes, audiences and styles — and therefore they are not prepared for a difference in the kinds of questions attached to each type of writing. In short, while they manage the factual, they lack the skill and knowledge to allow them to handle literary passages.

Question 2

The passage for this question was a literary piece dealing with the struggle of a youth who seemed to be suffering from a variety of things: low self-esteem, intense shyness and nervousness to the point of nausea. Most candidates attempted to respond to the questions on this passage, and though scores ranged from 0 to 15, the majority did not earn 15 marks.

Question 3

The second passage was an expository piece considering what should be the roles of education in a changing age and society. It recognized the value of technology and academic success but demanded more of education in personal and social development, and in preparing students to find a place in the society while being able to improve that society, by their contributions. In general this comprehension exercise was better done than the first.

The following observations cover both comprehension exercises (Questions 2 and 3).

- Questions requiring literal interpretations were handled more effectively than those requiring higher order skills.
- Questions requiring the identification of specific words or phrases often elicited answers that showed candidates did not know how far to go, so many gave whole sentences.
- Candidates do not recognize the difference between *attitude to* and *feelings about*.
- Questions requiring inferencing were poorly answered

Recommendations for Teaching

- The responses to this section suggest the need for teachers to dwell more on questions that require students to identify an individual's feelings about **and** attitudes to situations, as being different things, each requiring a particular frame for the answer.
- Students need to be reminded that when a question requires that they provide a phrase or expression, they are not expected to simply reproduce an entire sentence or paragraph, even though the required phrase/expression is contained in the sentence/paragraph.

Section C: Writing Stories and Descriptive Essays

Overall, performance on these questions revealed that strong responses were those in which candidates interpreted and handled the topics well, and were fluent and creative in their expression. Many an interesting description or story was negatively affected by ongoing flaws in grammar, organization, vocabulary, and the mechanics of writing. More students need to develop not just knowledge of the language form but a ***feel*** for it, its power and nuances — which we continue to think come from teaching that promotes reading and writing as the focus and the very life of the language arts classroom at all levels.

Question 4

This question required candidates to write a story based on a photograph which showed one hand of a person on a steering wheel of a vehicle, the other holding a cellular phone. As some candidates recognized, stories do not need to be slavishly 'about' the picture (The question instructions stated *based on the picture*); they could be suggested by or derived from the picture; but there were not many highly creative, imaginative attempts — whether in interpretation or in storytelling.

This question attracted a fairly wide range of answers but most revolved around the dangers of texting while driving — demonstrated in narratives that ended with accidents, and most of which moralised at the end.

Interestingly, this is the only one of the three topics on which candidates (albeit not many) seemed to have felt that they could write an expository essay instead of a story. But there were also a few imaginative interpretations that took the reader away from the typical driving + texting = accidents. On the whole, stories on this topic were competent, embodying characteristics of story writing but tending to be linear, less engaged in character development and emotional experience, therefore showing competence but not superiority.

Question 5

The stimulus here was: *As I stepped through the front door, something felt different. The usual smell of dinner was absent and I knew something had changed*. This stimulus, produced more varied interpretations and responses than did Question 4. There were better efforts at characterization, atmosphere, suspense and the occasional use of reflection, as well as some strong endings.

Question 6

This question was based on the description stimulus: *The sounds, sights and smells of the festival filled the air. It was to be a new experience for me. Describe what you saw and your thoughts and feelings*. This year most of the answers were interesting, truly descriptive essays. Candidates clearly took advantage of the freedom allowed in the wording of the question to capture the spirit as well as the features of the festival environment, and did not limit themselves to describing aspects of staging and dreary stage performances typically associated with 'festivals'. The question was a fairly popular choice and was not swamped in narrative.

Responses to this question interestingly, also remind us (classroom teachers and examiners) that interpretation is not universal and that assessment has to keep focus on its objectives — the purpose of the assessment. Responses to this question indicated that there are different kinds of festivals in the experiences of candidates — some simply saw festival as an event at school (like a fair) or a celebration of sorts, or (as in Jamaica) a kind of fried product eaten with 'jerk chicken' or 'fry fish' at Hellshire Bay and elsewhere. Fortunately, the question asked candidates to describe not the festival itself but the experience — what you saw and your thoughts and feelings. Teachers who have been guiding students in applying the approach *show not tell/show me; don't tell me* would have felt satisfaction at some of the essays produced in answer to this question.

Recommendations for Teaching

Teachers must

- build more reading and writing into classroom activity
- expose students to good expression by having them listen to good pieces of writing
- help students to study and comment on what is appealing in written texts.

The above suggestions can be coalesced into one single piece of advice — In the classroom, ensure a sound relationship between literature and language as two parts of one subject.

Section D: Argumentative Writing

Question 7

This question, which dealt with the effect of peer pressure on the individual, was the more popular of the two questions in this section. Most candidates did not appear to have difficulty with understanding this question. There were various aspects to the question, not all of which were

always recognized or responded to. Responses could have dealt with, for instance, the issue of being tired of hearing about peer pressure, or the nature of peer pressure, or the concept of being one's own person. Candidates were probably able to identify with this question better since it was within their experience. Many selected influences such as drug use, violence and theft, and sexual involvement as their examples. Many candidates wrote of the role of parents in preparing youngsters to resist, or defending the youngsters from the effects of peer pressure. Some of the better answers acknowledged the unavoidability of peer pressure, and highlighted it as being present in many forms, and still others pointed out that peer pressure is not necessarily bad.

Question 8

This question presented a greater challenge for several candidates. It was apparent that many of those who chose to respond to this stimulus did not themselves have meaningful knowledge of the nature or role of business education. A great many answers dealt with school leavers' ability to open their own businesses on leaving school. While some were able to list the contents of the Business Education programme, these aspects were not developed in order to show the benefits. Answers reaching the 'competent' range were those showing an understanding of techniques in arguing, rather than being strong in the content of the argument.

Candidates had many ideas in instances, but the challenge lay in their ability or inability to

- recognize the aspects of the discussion
- organize their thoughts effectively to cover all aspects of the discussion
- organize their ideas for the best strategic impact (move from stronger to weaker or from weaker to stronger points)
- link their ideas and achieve cohesion
- master syntax and vocabulary well enough to express themselves clearly.

Recommendations for Teaching

- In responding to arguments, whether in real life or in examination essays, it is necessary to address all aspects of the argument that are put forward; not answering a specific aspect suggests that the student has a problem with that specific aspect. In any case, answers to arguments in examination essays have to be comprehensive since marks are assigned to the different parts of a question. In other words, if the student omits part of a question, he/she automatically loses the marks assigned to it.
- While this section of the paper often gives topics which are of immediate interest to teenagers, students also need to keep abreast of topics of regional and international significance.
- It was observed that some students seemed to have prepared to write their argumentative essay along specific lines with particular techniques. Experienced examiners advise that while some students do benefit from such a strategy, teachers should use it with caution, as there is the risk that competent and even superior candidates will be forced into a mould which affects their expression and development negatively. It is highly preferable to teach students how to reason, and to provide them with a variety of ways to open, develop, and close their arguments.
- Give repeated practice in logical development of argument, especially in the proper use of conjunctions and adverbs which express logical relationships, as in cause and effect, contrast

and comparison. Words and phrases such as *however*, *although*, *consequently*, *in contrast* and *accordingly* should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2016

ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in English A was moderate in the January 2016 examination. Sixty-two per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I to III, an improvement in overall performance when compared with January 2015 when 55 per cent of the candidates achieved similar grades. Across the two years, there was similar performance on Profile 1 which assesses Understanding, but there was a small improvement on Profile 2 which assesses Expression. The overall mean on the examination was 48 per cent with a mean on Paper 01 of 53 per cent and on Paper 02 of 46 per cent.

Performance on Paper 01 was very fair while performance on Paper 02 continues to be moderate. Some improvement was however noted in the percentage of candidates who achieved Grades I to III on Paper 02, approximately 51 per cent, this year compared to 40 per cent in 2015. Although the questions in the three sections on this paper generally elicited moderate levels of performance, continuing weakness was observed in some candidates' ability to organize ideas and to use grammatical English in expressing these ideas.

The incidence of candidates being wholly unprepared for the examination was again relatively small, yet most responses tended to fall into the category of being 'adequate'. Teachers are urged to make use of the various guidelines and aids to learning being developed by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), to help students to become more comfortable with both language and literature, and to improve language through the skills acquired in studying literature. One resource is the syllabus document, in which there is a large section which helps with interpreting the syllabus objectives and requirements, and suggests a variety of activities which can help in developing the appropriate skills.

The following advice offered before remains very relevant:

Students should come to the examination with a well-rehearsed procedure for tackling each question they should have deeply ingrained in them the procedure for identifying the topic, jotting down points, doing a rough copy and producing a fair copy. This is especially important in writing a summary, in doing a description, in writing a story and in producing a cogent argument. Teachers should advise each student, based on the students' ability and speed, about the best way to move from a rough copy to a fair copy under examination conditions.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Performance on Paper 01 was good. Approximately 70 per cent of candidates received Grades I–III. Exercises on word choice, sentence completion and equivalent sentences were well done. The area in which greatest weakness was evident was usage, where candidates experienced difficulty recognizing sentences which contained clichés, misused metaphors or redundancies, and sentences that were incorrect grammatically. The mean on this paper was 25 out of 46 or 53 per cent.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section A: Summary

The type of summary expected from candidates writing the CSEC English A examination is a general-purpose summary, demanding the skill used in everyday situations, where what is said or what is written may need to be put into a concise form. Candidates' work should reflect the general depth and intention of the original while giving all of the necessary information in the producer's own words. Among the skills and knowledge candidates are expected to bring to the exercise are

- a good vocabulary
- the ability to use syntax and grammar effectively to communicate meaning
- the ability to recognize and separate the main point and necessary reasoning from examples, embellishments and repetition.

There are various approaches to writing summary, and teachers need to expose students to these. One approach is simply to follow the organization of the original, using the same chronology. Another is to begin with the conclusion and then show the line of reasoning and facts. The important thing is that the correct relationships between the points must be maintained so that the meaning is unchanged and clear. While it is not always necessary to capture each and every detail, nothing vital should be ignored. A reasonably good vocabulary is an asset that should be cultivated, since a summary must be put into one's own words.

Summary answers continue to indicate that most candidates are not paying attention to the skills. There is persistent lifting of the language, wholesale or partial. There is a major tendency to selectively remove various words and substitute supposedly suitable synonyms. Very often the substitute is incorrect. There is slavish following of the paragraph sequence, even writing the summary in that paragraph form. Other problems include less than careful reading, the use of extraneous information, and overall weakness in the use of language. Most candidates simply list points, or use the 'joining terms' (for example, 'however', 'on the other hand') in the wrong way or create previously non-existent relationships between points. Large numbers of candidates continue to show poor comprehension skills: poor vocabulary, poor understanding of grammar and punctuation, weak grasp of connotative language, and weak reasoning are among the contributing elements. This results in misinterpretation. Section A tests two elements: understanding, and expression, hence the importance of comprehension skills. Students need encouragement to see 'Comprehension' not as a textbook activity, but as an essential part of daily life.

The weaknesses continued, however, with responses reflecting the same problems that have been identified in the past. However, significantly fewer candidates either simply copied, or wrote their own parallel discussion. Following are the points expected and a sample summary.

- *Consumerism refers to the activity of buying and selling in which we all participate.*
- *Responsible consumerism requires the application of information to decision−making.*
- *Choices have consequences and if we make the choices we must live with the consequences.*
- *Choices are sometimes made using information or conditions set down by others. These early decisions affect what we can now know, and condition how we choose. Choices that may have once been wise may no longer be.*

- *The choice we make becomes part of a network, in which our choices affect others.*

- *Modern technology, with its insistence on immediate response, can negatively affect our ability to make wise choices, so we need to resist, while we explore all the information.*

Sample Summary

Since we buy, sell and use goods and services, we are consumers. In choosing or buying we are expected to use the ability to make responsible decisions. This ability and responsibility allows us to analyse our behavior as consumers. Recognizing that each choice has consequences with which we will need to live, we apply knowledge to help us choose. Sometimes, we are hampered by decisions made by others, which affect what we can know or do. Our ability to choose and to act responsibly is affected by a network of choices. In addition, modern technology which insists on immediate response, can negatively affect our ability to make wise choices, unless we resist, while we explore all the information.

The passage again proved to have been generally manageable with the majority of answers falling into the competence area−either suggesting or demonstrating competence. It is hoped that more candidates would demonstrate competence. There was, overall, a better kind of writing, demonstrating the acquisition of those skills needed to show competence. The mean on this paper was 12 out of 30 or 40 per cent.

Section B: Comprehension

This section maintained two kinds of texts: literary and expository. Candidates were required to

- give specific rather than the general answers.
- pay close attention to every word that is used in the textual piece (prose, poetry, drama)
- recognize levels of meaning.

Responding to questions which require a precise answer by simply lifting a long extract or quoting lines other than those required is a bad strategy which usually results in zero being awarded. The candidate's responsibility is to indicate clearly what the answer is−it is not the examiner's responsibility to select it out of a number of possibilities given by the candidate. It is a matter of concern that candidates do not know how to structure answers that ask for mood, tone and drawing inferences. Generally, performance on Section B was competent. The mean on Question 2 was 5 out of 15 or 33 per cent while for Question 3 it was 8 out of 15 or 53 per cent. Sample correct responses are reproduced below.

<u>Question 2</u>

(a) *Two examples of sensory appeal made in stanza one: hearing, sight, feeling, touch, movement.*
(b) *Hearing: unceasing beat/ running children's feet/ silently*
Sight: dark cloud/ filmy veiling/ wraith-like mist
Feeling/Touch: nestled softly/wet breast
Movement: running, skid, nestled
(c) *Simile:*
Any one of the following: 'like a weird song' / 'like running children's feet' / 'like a strange…'

(d) *Stanza 1 conveys a mood of gloominess, mystery and coldness, while Stanza 2 suggests warmth, brightness and excitement.*

(e) *'But, lo'*

(f) *The device used is a metaphor.*

Question 3

(a) *Save human lives and protect wildlife*

(b) *With special attendance only/invited guests only/restricted attendance.*

(c) *Motive/reason/motivation for the project/the real purpose is hidden /there was another purpose/the real reason was to save lives of people and animals there were other important issues / there is more to it than people are aware of/there is a truth that people are unaware of.*

(d) *People are sometimes forced to move into unsafe areas/live in the migration path of wildlife/many people were killed by animals*

(e) *To draw attention to the fact that people more willingly agreed to relocation away from animal migration paths*

(f) *To show satisfaction that government departments agreed to creating protected wildlife corridors to draw attention to the fact that when something bad happens because of a situation, people are more willing to change.*

(g) *To show how unlikely it is for the people to survive a conflict with the animals to show partiality to the animals to suggest that the animals have a right to the space hopes that statistics will show the importance of the work of the Wildlife Trust to create the picture that people's lives are in danger and that the animals need their space to make people realize how dangerous or how serious the situation really is to inform of the urgent need for the projects*

(h) *To shock the audience through scientific argument*

Section C: Story Writing

Questions 4, 5 and 6

A comment on this section coming from several teachers involved in marking is that the stories lent themselves to mature interpretation and less to fantasy. It was also noted that students tended to gravitate towards the morbid, and the approach of moralizing. Both the picture and the word stimuli fit this approach. The picture was often interpreted as fighting against the odds. Generally the responses in this section were competent and interesting. The mean for Question 4 was 16 out of 35 or 45 per cent, for Question 5, 17 out of 35 or 46 per cent; and for Question 6, 51 per cent.

There is still a body of students who need encouragement to write out of their own environment; who still set their stories in lands never visited except in dreams. As a result, stories are weak, with a scarcity of atmosphere, interaction, appropriate characterization, and even conflicts are missing and difficult to achieve. The complaint is that our students do not read, but perhaps instructors can select and read to them from regional writers who achieved the sensible blend of standard English and dialects.

For Question 6 (Description) specifically, the following points remain pertinent:

- Description must be clearly constructed and developed, having the different components linked appropriately.
- Details must be logically and effectively sequenced. The different areas of focus must be linked appropriately (for example background vs. foreground; main focus vs peripheral detail).
- The interpretive interventions (reflections) of the writer must be relevant to the purely descriptive elements.
- The choice of features to be described must be clearly motivated and must effectively contribute to the whole picture.
- Sometimes students need to rely on the narrative framework to be able to describe. In such cases it is necessary for teacher and student to remember that a piece of writing is defined by what is dominant. Students need to recognize this discrimination, which offers scaffolding in their efforts to make description dominant.
- Description, even if imaginative, must be consistent within itself: any change in perspective (time, perspective, mood, tone) must be clearly established. There should be varied and lively use of language to create picture elements as well as appropriate choice of words (nouns, verbs, concrete adjectives, adverbs) to create setting and atmosphere. In short, the object should be to enable the audience to see; to vicariously experience what is being described.

Section D: Argument

This section tests the candidates' expression skills: how they organize thoughts for maximum effect, how clearly and succinctly views are expressed, the ability to reason and support their views, the facility in refuting opposing stances and arguments. Better candidates will also have the ability to appeal to the audience, and the ability to recognize and separate opinion from fact. The use of words and phrases such as 'however', 'although', 'consequently', 'by contrast', 'accordingly' should be mastered and used in full sentences rather than meaninglessly or in fragments, as they often are.

Questions 7 and 8

The stimulus for Question 7 read "All parents should be taught how to be good parents; send them back to school to learn parenting skills." This question stirred no controversial interpretation. Question 8 challenged that "Young people spend too much time indoors surfing the Internet. Let them spend more time in outdoor activities. Ban the Internet."

Both stimuli produced good responses, with the most thoughtful responses coming in Question 8. Here candidates broke the statement into 3 or 4 aspects and explored these: the health benefits of outdoor activity, the benefits and uses of the Internet, the hazards of being out of doors in today's violence-prone society; the recognition of the advantages brought by the Internet, and the need to use reason in the context. Question 7 produced less rational answers; in fact, responses here tended towards using the emotional, taking an opportunity to express criticisms, and to enjoy the chance to chastise the adult. Generally, these stimuli evoked good answers. The mean on Question 7 was 14.82 out of 35 or 43 per cent, and on Question 8, 17.56 out of 35 or 51 per cent.

Recommendations

- Much work needs to be done on summary. It is a skill relevant in all assignments; it is essential in research and essay writing; its value can also be recognized in regular human interaction. Recognizing its value should spur teachers on to revisit teaching strategies so that the opportunity for practice is created.
- There is a pressing need to help our students to develop a wide vocabulary.
- More of the teaching of comprehension skills should focus on higher order skills.
- The teaching of comprehension can be usefully combined with the teaching of summary as both require thoughtful reading and understanding of meaning.
- Much practice is advised in reading, listening and reproducing meaning, in interpreting material at different levels and in paying attention to accuracy in expression.
- Strategies such as listening to and presenting arguments followed by peer critiques of arguments are useful.
- Writing and presentation of speeches, debates, advice corners, improvised situations such as talk shows and other means of promoting thoughtful speech are highly recommended.
- Use of the CXC syllabus document is highly encouraged as it contains many ideas for teaching English effectively.

TEST CODE **01219010/SPEC/2009**

FORM 0121901/SPEC 2009

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 01 – General Proficiency

1½ hours

In addition to the 1½ hours allowed for the examination, you are allowed 15 minutes in order to read through the entire paper.

You may write during the 15-minute period.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. **This paper consists of THREE questions.**
2. **Answer ALL three questions.**
3. **EACH question is worth 20 marks.**
4. **Begin each question on a new page.**

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SECTION A – DRAMA

1. Read the following extract carefully then answer ALL the questions that follow.

Act One Scene Two

[The lights come up on JOE in his space and ROSCO half asleep on the couch. PAT and RUSS enter the staff-room from Down Left.]

PAT: The place is as you see it, the staff as you saw them, a bunch of bloody clowns, with one or two exceptions. The students, semi-literate mostly. The smell, it grows on you, conversation piece. Things are bad but we get by. Expect nothing, avoid disappointment. Things won't change, not with jokers around like … Let's not call names, but take a fellow like Callender. He should be banned from the classroom. Does more harm than good. He and the one they call the Chaplain, tongue like a female, mind like a gutter. Money-grubbing capitalistic sex-fiend, bound to go to Heaven.

CHAPLAIN: [*Entering*] Ah, Mr. Campbell, I see you are taking good care of our latest addition. You are in good hands. So how is it going, Mr. Dacres?

RUSS: Okay.

CHAPLAIN: No trouble with the students?

RUSS: None.

CHAPLAIN: You should have no problems if, like me, you don't spend fifteen minutes to settle your class, like some of the others. You just go in – bang, bang – get some order. If they fool, you run them out. Thirty, if need be. Teach the other five. Many are called, etc. etc. Gospel.

[The bell goes. DACRES *collects his things quickly and is on his way out as* MICA *enters. They smile at each other.* PAT *notices, so does* ROSCO.*]*

ROSCO: Boy, the new man anxious, eh? What a man can move fast! Him will learn all the same. [*He looks directly at* PAT*, smiles mischievously, then picks up a table-tennis bat.* HENDRY *enters as* ROSCO *begins to play with an imaginary ping-pong ball, each shot giving him a great deal of pleasure. Synchronise his smash with the first stroke of the cane offstage*.]

CHAPLAIN: Ah, the Head. [*As he goes over toward the Headmaster's door*.] Whoever is getting it obviously deserves it. A good licking is like a good tonic [*Whacking continues*.] Tones up the skin, repels the devils. Never spare the rod. Gospel. Rules are to be obeyed [*whack*]. Each student, boys and girls, should get at least six a week [*whack*]. They thrive on it. Break the law, you'll be punished. Break God's law, you know the consequences [*whack*]. Yes [*whack*]. Yes [*whack*]. Yes. Ahhh! [*Overcome with pleasure*.]

BLACK OUT

Trevor D Rhone, "School's Out".
In Two Can Play and School's Out,
Longman, 1986, pp. 95 - 96.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

1. (a) What is the setting for the scene? **(1 mark)**

(b) What is the significance of the stage directions 'The lights come up' and 'BLACK OUT'? **(2 marks)**

2. What do Pat's statements in lines 3 - 9 suggest about his attitude to the school and his colleagues? Support your answer. **(3 marks)**

3. What is the dramatic effect of Chaplain's entrance (line 10) immediately following Pat's description in lines 7 - 9? **(2 marks)**

4. Identify TWO signals that the playwright uses to make the audience aware of the headmaster's entry. **(2 marks)**

5. What TWO inferences can be drawn from Russ Dacres' actions as the bell goes (lines 18 - 19)? **(4 marks)**

6. Explain the irony of Chaplain's statements in lines 15 - 17 and his behaviour in lines 24 - 29. **(3 marks)**

7. (a) What atmosphere is created by the sound of the cane offstage (line 23)? **(1 mark)**

(b) How do the stage directions in lines 24 - 29 indicate the Chaplain's position on discipline in school? **(2 marks)**

Total 20 marks

SECTION B – POETRY

2. Read the following poem carefully then answer ALL the questions that follow.

Those Winter Sundays

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labour in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the clod splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays".
Sound and Sense - An Introduction to Poetry, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1992, p.56.

1. What does the use of the word 'too' in line 1 tell you about the life of the speaker's father?

(1 mark)

2. From stanza 1, quote TWO images that show the effect of the weather on the old man and comment on their effectiveness.

(4 marks)

3. What do you learn about the old man's character from the poem?

(2 marks)

4. How does the speaker convey his feeling in the last two lines?

(4 marks)

5. Identify ONE example of metaphor OR personification (not identified in question 2 above) and comment on its effectiveness.

(4 marks)

6. Show how the poet uses contrast to create the mood in the poem.

(5 marks)

Total 20 marks

SECTION C – PROSE FICTION

3. Read the following extract carefully then answer ALL the questions that follow.

Everybody in the district knew Miss Dorcas was the best looking among all other girls. All the men of his father's time said so. Knowing how to be warm and modest, rounded and curved in all the right places, she was the most appealing from Negril to Mount Point, they all said. Her deep brown eyes, her voice, her smiles and slim legs carried her like a princess. Though living alone with her poor granny, she was kept and shaped with a certain kind of pride, everybody said.

Miss Dorcas could have married Mr Felix King, the Parochial Board representative, a man who these days owned lands from mountain to sea and took truckfulls of coconuts and bananas to market, but her granny threw him out. She could have married Mr Walter Hoffman the tax collector but her granny threw him out. The Reverend's son had eyes on Miss Dorcas but her granny put him off. All the other men who hung around with their favours and gifts practically came to blows with Granny. Then Granny got Miss Dorcas a place at the backra-house, saying: she wants her only person in the world to do things nicely, to learn to be respectable and be respected, to get away from all no-good man-hawks.

Miss Dorcas had been quick to learn and Mr Bill had been quick to notice her. He watched her in the garden, about the house and about his meal table. Miss Dorcas began to have supper with him and he began to go to her separate quarters at night. Mr Bill gave Miss Dorcas a room in The Haven. She took on management of the servants and everything and became the mistress of the household.

Then Mr Bill wanted to marry a backra girl. The man aranged with friends in town to take Ms Dorcas among their servants. When he broke the news to her Miss Dorcas leapt on the backra man like a wild cat. Next day, a dramatically changed person, she was taken to hospital. And Miss Dorcas never recovered from her derangement. After months in hospital she came out with every hair on her head gone white.

James Berry, "Miss Dorcas".
In Caribbean New Wave Contempory Short Stories, Heinemann,
1990, pp. 21-22.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

1. Miss Dorcas is described as being physically attractive in paragraph 1. Quote TWO expressions from paragraph 1 that support this description.

(2 marks)

2. Identify THREE phrases in paragraph 2 that illustrate the intensity of granny's response to Miss Dorcas' suitors.

(3 marks)

3. What aspects of Miss Dorcas' character are revealed in the statement 'Miss Dorcas had been quick to learn' (line 18)?

(2 marks)

4. What does Mr Bill's behaviour in paragraph 3 show of his character?

(2 marks)

5. Explain how the writer prepares the reader for Miss Dorcas' downfall.

(4 marks)

6. Explain the contrast between paragraphs 1 and 4.

(3 marks)

7. Suggest a title for this extract. Justify your answer.

(4 marks)

Total 20 marks

END OF TEST

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TEST CODE **01219020/SPEC/2009**

FORM 01219020/SPEC/ 2009

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

ENGLISH B

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper 02 – General Proficiency

2 hours

In addition to the 2 hours allowed for the examination, you are allowed 10 minutes in order to read through the entire paper.

You may write during the 10-minute period.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. This paper consists of TWELVE questions, arranged in THREE sections as follows:

SECTION A: DRAMA

Questions 1 and 2: Shakespeare
Questions 3 and 4: Modern Drama

SECTION B: POETRY

Questions 5 and 6

SECTION C: PROSE FICTION

Questions 7 to 10: Novel
Questions 11 to 12: Short Story

2. Answer THREE questions only, ONE question from EACH section.

3. You MUST write in the essay format and develop ALL your responses fully.

4. Only the books from the prescribed list for this examination MUST be used to answer the questions.

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For each question in Sections A , B and C, in addition to the 25 marks indicated for content and argument, a maximum of 10 marks is also allocated for structure, development and competence in the mechanics of writing.

SECTION A – DRAMA

Answer ONE question in this section.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM - William Shakespeare

EITHER

1. In the opening scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia is brought before Duke Theseus for refusing to marry Demetrius, the man her father has picked out for her.

(a) Describe what happens in this scene up to the point where Theseus leaves the stage.

(8 marks)

(b) What do you learn about Hermia's character from this scene, and how is this view of her character supported by subsequent events in the play?

(9 marks)

(c) Discuss the ways in which Hermia's character challenges the conventional role of women in society.

(8 marks)

[25 marks]

OR

2. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* several different worlds meet and interact.

(a) Identify TWO of these worlds and explain how they are different from each other.

(8 marks)

(b) Discuss how Shakespeare uses the plot to connect the different worlds.

(8 marks)

(c) As these different worlds interact, what similarities are noticed between them?

(9 marks)

[25 marks]

OLD STORY TIME - Trevor Rhone

OR

3. 'In the opening scene, Pa Ben sets the stage for the major themes and dramatic strategies that the audience can expect throughout the rest of the play.'

(a) Briefly describe Pa Ben's role in the opening scene.

(8 marks)

(b) How does Pa Ben introduce the concept of 'old story time' ('old time story') in the opening scene?

(8 marks)

(c) How does Pa Ben's role in the opening scene foreshadow his role in the rest of the play?

(9 marks)

[25 marks]

OR

4. 'Most elements of the play *Old Story Time* contribute to the theme of class-colour prejudice.'

To what extent is this true of TWO of the following:

- characterization
- setting
- costuming
- flashbacks?

[25 marks]

SECTION B – POETRY

Answer ONE question in this section.

EITHER

A WORLD OF POETRY FOR CXC - Mark McWatt and Hazel Simmons-McDonald

5. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and 'This is the dark time, my love' are both poems that present a horrific picture of the experience of war.

(a) Briefly outline the experience of the persona in EACH poem.

(8 marks)

(b) Discuss the ways in which EACH poet conveys the horror of the experience.

(9 marks)

(c) What comment does EACH poem make on the subject of war?

(8 marks)

[25 marks]

OR

6. Choose TWO poems you have studied that deal with the effect of prejudice on individuals' actions**.**

(a) For EACH poem, describe the type of prejuduce, showing how it affects the actions of individuals.

(8 marks)

(b) Demonstrate how the poet's use of any ONE device heightens the presentation of this effect in EACH poem.

(8 marks)

(c) What issues does EACH poet raise by his or her exploration of the theme of prejudice?

(9 marks)

[25 marks]

SECTION C – PROSE FICTION

Answer ONLY ONE question in this section.

You MUST state the title of the books OR short stories to which you refer in your answer.

You should refer only to books OR short stories that are on the prescribed list for this examination.

NOVEL

SONGS OF SILENCE – Curdella Forbes

EITHER

7. In *Songs of Silence* the narrator Marlene reveals much about her community.

(a) Describe what we learn from the narrator about the life and personality of Mister Papacita.
(9 marks)

(b) By what strategies does the narrator reveal her attitude to Mister Papacita?
(8 marks)

(c) How does the story of Mister Papacita's life contribute to one theme in the text as a whole?
(8 marks)

[25 marks]

OR

8. Use the character Nathan to discuss the ways in which Forbes presents the theme of silence.
[25 marks]

THE WINE OF ASTONISHMENT – Earl Lovelace

OR

9. 'Bolo is a heroic figure whose heroism is not always understood by those around him.' Discuss the character of Bolo in light of this statement.
[25 marks]

OR

10. '*The Wine of Astonishment* explores the ways in which power can be creative or destructive'. Dicuss with reference to one character in *The Wine of Astonishment*.
[25 marks]

SHORT STORY

OR

11. The short stories 'The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream' and 'Mom Luby and the Social Worker' are both stories about a child's unfortunate circumstances, yet the reader's response to each story is different.

(a) Describe the central unfortunate situation in EACH story.

(8 marks)

(b) Compare the writer's narrative strategies, showing how EACH creates a different response in the reader.

(9 marks)

(c) Which story's ending do you prefer? Explain why.

(8 marks)

[25 marks]

OR

12. Choose TWO short stories you have studied and discuss how the MAIN character in EACH deals with a challenging situation.

[25 marks]

END OF TEST

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C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L
HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

MAY/JUNE 2009

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION A

1. (a) The staffroom of a school / A school.

(1 mark)

(b) Focus on the scene and end of the scene.

(2 marks)

2. One of:

-- he is contemptuous ('bloody clowns', 'semi-literate', 'tongue like a woman')
-- he is cynical ('expect nothing, avoid disappointment', 'bound to go to heaven')
-- he is intolerant (says nothing good about anyone).

(1 mark for identification of attitude)
(2 marks for evidence)

(3 marks)

3. Chaplain's character comes under suspicion **OR** the audience is alerted to pay attention to the character to assess whether Pat's statements are true.

(2 marks)

4. Any two of:

-- the stage directions 'synchronise his smash with the first stroke of the cane offstage'
-- Chaplain's acknowledgement ('Ah, the Head')
-- the sound of flogging
-- the stage direction 'as he goes over to the headmaster's door'.

(2 marks)

5. Dacres is determined to make a good impression on the students OR he takes the Chaplain's comment to heart **OR** he is a conscientious teacher. His smile at Mica could have been friendly or may have indicated a more intimate interest.

(an answer that addresses both stage directions – 'collects his things' and 'smiles at Mica')

(4 marks)

6. The irony is that as Chaplain he should be an example of care and compassion, yet he gleefully displays his lack of care for and brutality towards the students, even using scriptural allusion to support his attitude.

(3 marks)

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION A cont'd

7. (a) Frightening **OR** horrifying.

(1 mark)

(b) The synchronizing of his utterances with each stroke of the headmaster's cane ('rules are to be obeyed/whack; 'yes, whack') indicates his pleasure. He enthusiastically supports physical punishment.

(2 marks)

Total 20 marks

Any other reasonable response must be suitably rewarded.

SECTION B

1. He worked non stop, Sundays as well as weekdays.

(1 mark)

2. Images: 'blueblack cold; cracked hands; that ached from labour in the weekday weather'

Comment: The images depict the extreme severity of the weather and its punishing effect on the old man. 'Blue black cold' paints a picture of a winter so cold it has turned the old man black and blue – almost as if he is already dead. 'That ached from labour in the weekday weather' suggests constant, unrelenting exposure to the weather; 'cracked hands' suggests physical pain.

(2 marks for 2 images)
(2 marks for fully explained comments)

(4 marks)

3. He is selfless **OR** caring **OR** loving

(2 marks)

4. The speaker feels great pain or remorse as he reflects on his almost callous treatment of his father, the ways he had taken him for granted. This pain or remorse is conveyed in the repetition 'what did I know' which sounds almost like a wail. The speaker realizes that his father had loved him though they had not communicated.

(1 mark for identification of the feeling)
(3 marks for full discussion of the devices used to bring it across)

(4 marks)

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION B cont'd

5. Examples of metaphor: 'blueblack cold'; 'the cold splintering, breaking'; 'driven out the cold'.

Examples of personification: 'the chronic angers of that house'

Comment:

-- blueblack cold – see question 2 above. **NB: If this image was chosen for question 2, it cannot be chosen for question 5.**

-- 'the cold splintering, breaking' – conveys several pictures. Sound image – was the old man chopping wood to keep the house warm? Was there winter ice that was cracking as the fire the old man lit spread its warmth? This suggests that there was a war between heat and cold and the cold was giving the heat a knockout punch **OR** metaphor for tensions in the house – the relationship between father and son so chilling it is like winter ice.

-- 'driven out the cold' evokes a picture of the cold as a live intruder that the old man is attacking.

-- 'the chronic angers of that house' conveys a double meaning: the house so cold it seems the cold is angry; and the hostility or tension between the people in the house is as severe and long-lasting as the winter.

(1 mark for identification)
(3 marks for fully explained comment)
(3 marks)

6. Examples of contrast:
-- heat ('banked fires blazed'; 'when the rooms were warm') and cold
-- the father's actions of love and the son's indifference
-- the young boy and the adult father
-- the speaker's boyhood self and his adult self looking back and reflecting

The contrast helps to evoke sadness **OR** wistfulness **OR** pain **OR** a sense of conflict.

(1 mark for identifying a contrast)
(4 marks for well developed explanation)
(5 marks)

Total 20 marks

Any other reasonable response must be suitably rewarded.

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION C

1. 'Rounded and curved'
'She was the most appealing'
'Her ... carried her like a princess'

(2 marks)

2. The writer repeats phrases eg. 'but Granny (threw him out / put him off) in a humorous way to show the extent of Granny's determination-no one below backra status was good enough for Miss Dorcas. It amusingly shows Granny's determination to interfere **OR** Granny's domineering control **OR** Granny's possessiveness.
(3 marks for a fully developed answer focusing on effect of repetition as a technique)

(3 marks)

3. Her awareness of the opportunity for social mobility and her alertness in learning what she had to do in an attempt to achieve it **OR** her determination to get what she wanted.

(2 marks)

4. He is calculating OR he is an opportunist.

(2 marks)

5. The writer sets her up in the backra-house where she behaves like the mistress of the house – the pride that goes before a fall – and then he announces Mr Bill's intention to marry a real backra girl.

(4 marks)

6. In paragraph 1 Miss Dorcas is a polished princess, in paragraph 4 she has changed to a wildcat OR in paragraph 1 Miss Dorcas is the most desireable woman, in paragraph 4 she is devastatingly rejected.

(3 marks for a fully explained answer)

(3 marks)

ENGLISH B

PAPER 01 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

SECTION C cont'd

7. Title should highlight ironies OR hazards of ONE of the following:

-- conceit
-- social climbing / snobbery
-- the overriding powers of grandmothers / parental figures
-- 'anancyism'
-- any other reasonable theme

(1 mark for appropriate title)
(up to 3 marks for justification)
(4 marks)

Any other reasonable response must be suitably rewarded.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L
HEADQUARTERS

ENGLISH B

PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY

MARK SCHEME

MAY/JUNE 2009

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Rubric for Language and Organization

Level of Performance	Criteria
Excellent to superior 8-10	• Demonstrates excellent organizing skills: essay format with coherent presentation of points, effective linkages, well executed introduction, paragraphs • Demonstrates excellent grammar, sentence and syntactical structures, fluent or elegant style
Good 6 - 7	• Demonstrates good organizing skills: points clear; uses introduction and coherent paragraphs • Demonstrates fluent use of English with minor errors
Acceptable 4 - 5	• Essay not as cohesive, but paragraphing used • Several errors in language
Weak 3	• Weak organizing skills: very flawed paragraphing, or sectionalizing of essay answers, or little understanding of paragraphing • Many errors in language
Very Weak 2	• Little demonstration of essay format, few or no organizing skills • Many language errors which hinder meaning
Extremely Weak <2	• Many language errors or too little information presented to make an assessment

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Rubric for Content

Level of Performance	Criteria
Excellent to superior 19-25	• Demonstrates in-depth and thorough knowledge of texts • Demonstrates excellent understanding of questions; where appropriate, makes comparative statements about texts • Demonstrates excellent synthesis & analysis • Demonstrates appropriate & effective use of illustration/examples • Demonstrates awareness, application & evaluation of writer's craft • Demonstrates sensitivity, personal response, and an understanding of the text as an integrated whole • Makes appropriate value judgements, recognizes issues and thematic significance
Good 14-18	• Demonstrates good knowledge of texts • Demonstrates good understanding of questions • Demonstrates fair -- good synthesis & analysis • Illustration/examples reasonable, not as many or as fully developed
Acceptable 9-13	• Demonstrates knowledge of some texts, or knowledge of texts only adequate • Demonstrates fair understanding of questions • Illustration/examples not full but reference made • Literal level of analysis, may engage in story telling
Weak 5-8	• Limited knowledge of texts • Little or no analysis • Illustration/examples flawed or inadequate
Very Weak	• Very little or questionable knowledge

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Level of Performance	**Criteria**
2-4	of text • Little attempt to meet the demands of the question • Little or no organization skills
Extremely Weak <2	• Effort not in essay format • No understanding of texts. Demonstrate high levels of unpreparedness.

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Question 1

(a) Describe what happens in this scene up to the point where Theseus leaves the stage.

[8 marks]

Hermia's father Egeus has brought his daughter and her lover Lysander before Theseus to ask for is intervention in the dispute among them. Hippolyta, Thesesus' Amazon bride to be, is also present. Egeus asks Theseus to force Hermia to give up Lysander and marry Demetrius, whom he has picked out for her and who has accompanied them to court. If she refuses, he wants Theseus to give him permission to dispose of her in whatever way he sees fit. Theseus agrees with Egeus' stance, in keeping with Athenian law, which dictates that a father has sole rights over his unwed daughter — she is his property. Hermia stands up for herself and challenges the duke and her father. She says she is in love with Lysander, and will marry only him. Even when Theseus threatens her with the law, which stipulates that must either marry the man her father has chosen or stay unmarried forever, Hermia says she would rather accept the punishment than marry a man she does not love. She tells Theseus her father can marry Demetrius if he is so in love with the young man. Lysander and Demetrius both also have their say. Demetrius tells Hermia and Demetrius to give in, since his 'right' to Hermia's hand is indisputable. Lysander argues that Egeus has no good reason to refuse him Hermia's hand, since not only are he and Hermia in love, but he is at least as rich as Demetrius. Furthermore, Demetrius has broken faith with another girl, Helena, who is still in love with him. Theseus admits that he has heard about Demetrius' treatment of Helena but has had no time to think about it. He leaves the stage, inviting Demetrius and Egeus to come with him so he can give them some advice and ask them to do some work for his wedding. Hippolyta also leaves with Theseus. Lysander and Hermia are left alone on stage.

An answer that mentions the role of all the characters on stage and outlines the central conflict in sufficient detail

(6 - 8 marks)

An answer that outlines the central conflict but omits some of the characters

(4 – 5 marks)

A sketchy answer or an answer that demonstrates insufficient knowledge of text

(Up to 3 marks)

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Question 1 cont'd

(b) What do you learn about Hermia's character from this scene, and how is this view of her character supported by subsequent events in the play?

- She is respectful but fearless 'I do entreat your grace to pardon me/I know not by what power I am made bold').
- She is very determined to have her way.
- She believes in true love over male law or paternal dictates.
- She is willing to fight for her beliefs.
- She is not intimidated by men — she defends her case in a court in which she is the only woman except the subdued Amazon queen.
- She is fierce and passionate about what she believes in **OR** she is driven by passion.
- She is heroic — being willing to stay unmarried in a society that looks down on single women (there is even a suggestion that Theseus means to put her in a cloister/convent).

TWO qualities well developed - 3 marks each (6 marks)

How this view of her character is supported by subsequent events:

She runs away with Lysander, braving the unknown, unafraid of possible consequences of being an unmarried woman alone with a man. Up to the point where Oberon's magic takes over, she controls Lysander's actions in the woods (telling him to sleep at a distance from her). When Demetrius pursues her in the wood, she curses him vigorously, and she even takes on Helena, who is bigger than she is, in a cat fight when Oberon's magic shifts Lysander's attentions from her to Helena. What is amusing is that in the wood Hermia throws off all the decorum she had shown in front of Theseus. Helena tells us that in fact she had been 'a vixen' in school. It seems that once she in in a free space, Hermia's strong personality blossoms even further. Significantly, Hermia, unlike the men, never comes under Oberon's spell.

(3 marks)

[9 marks]

ENGLISH B
PAPER 02 - GENERAL PROFICIENCY
MARK SCHEME

Question 1 cont'd

(c) Discuss the ways in which Hermia's character challenges the conventional role of women in society.

Hermia represents a radical challenge to strictures about women's place in male-dominated Athens and by extension Shakespeare's society. The entire play shows that these strictures hold very strong. Even in fairyland where Oberon and Titania are supposedly equal rulers, Oberon wants to rule Titania. The rude mechanicals' play is about lovers who die because of similar social strictures against women in Babylon. Hermia is quite heroic and her attitude must have had a major effect on members of Shakespeare's audience, whether shock, consternation, support, or joy.

She goes against the following:

- The (male) Duke has sole authority over his subjects
- Daughters are their father's property
- Marriage is a market/business transaction in which the woman is sold to the highest bidder even if he's dishonorable (Demetrius, by Lysander's report, has jilted Helena after 'making love' to her, and Egeus must have known this since obviously it is widely rumoured)
- A woman's feelings are irrelevant in marriage
- Women are delicate
- Women are/should be timid
- A woman who runs away with a man is dishonorable

Any other reasonable answer

TWO well developed points - 4 marks each [8 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

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Question 2

(a) Identify TWO of these worlds and explain how they are different from each other.

The worlds: the world of the Amazons; the fairy world; the upper class world of the Athenian court; the working class world of the rude mechanicals

Identification of two worlds (2 marks)

Differences

Amazon (shown in the play only through Hippolyta, their Queen. Theseus reports that he conquered her and has brought her to Athens to marry him).
- -- ruled by women, men not welcome
- -- serious

Athenian Court and upper class
- -- ruled by men/ Theseus, male power and male law dominant
- -- parental dictates valued over personal choice
- -- marriage arranged, love takes second place
- -- serious

Fairy world
- -- has both King and Queen, with equal powers
- -- love allowed to thrive, is even magically assisted - law of feelings dominant
- -- both serious and comical

World of 'rude mechanicals'
- -- freedom dominant—the men decide for themselves that they want to put on a play for the Duke's wedding
- -- no women
- -- ruled by theatre/carnival (rules of playwriting and acting, Bottom as comic leader)
- -- humorous/hilarious

Discussion of two differences, well developed with evidence – 2 x 3 marks
(6 marks)

[8 marks]

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Question 2 cont'd

(b) Discuss how Shakespeare uses the plot to connect the worlds. **[8 marks]**

The Amazon and upper class Athenian worlds meet when Theseus conquers Hippolyta the queen of the Amazons in battle and takes her to Athens to wed. Hippolyta is further drawn into the Athenian world as she is present when Hermia is brought before Theseus for disobeying the male law. She is also drawn into the working class world when Bottom and his crew perform their play at her wedding. Though she does not know it, the fairy world also affects her because the fairies come to bless the house after the wedding.

The upper class and fairy worlds meet through the lovers. Hermia and Lysander take refuge in the fairy wood in the hope of being able to find happiness and to escape the tyranny of the Athenian court. Demetrius, in love with Hermia, pursues them there and Helena who is in love with him, pursues Demetrius in the hope of weaning him away from Hermia. Oberon the fairy king gets mistakenly involved in their affairs as he overhears them talking and decides to try and right the situation by secret magic, with hilarious and often suspenseful results. The complications eventually get sorted out by Oberon's magic. Just as all this is resolved, the Duke turns up in the fairy wood, pardons Hermia and Lysander and takes the lovers back to court.

Working class Athenian and fairy worlds meet through theatre: The rude mechanicals meet in the fairy wood to practise their play. Their self appointed leader, Bottom, gets caught in Oberon's plots, is turned into a donkey and is then kidnapped by Oberon's wife Titania, who falls in love with him in his donkey form. This is because she has been put under a spell by her husband, who is punishing her for refusing to give him an Indian boy she has in her possession.

Working class Athenian, fairy, and upper class Athenian worlds meet through theatre: When Oberon finally relents and removes the spell, the rude mechanicals emerge from the fairy wood to perform their play before the Duke Queen Hippolyta and the other human characters. The play ends with the fairies blessing the Duke's house as Bottom's crew finishes their play.

A full discussion of all the <u>events</u> that link the two worlds; must mention <u>setting</u> (wood, court etc) since in this play the setting is an integral part of shifts in events

(6 - 8 marks)

A discussion of the main events that link the two worlds

(4 - 5 marks)

A sketchy discussion or discussion showing insufficient knowledge of plot (Up to 3 marks)

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Question 2 cont'd

(c) As these worlds interact, what similarities do you notice between them?

Possible similarities include (candidates must discuss examples from text for each)

- conflict
- gender wars/differences
- power struggles
- tyranny
- complicated by love OR desire
- illusion as a powerful force
- any other reasonable answer

Any 2 similarities fully discussed 2 x 4 marks (8 marks)
Comment on Shakespeare's purpose (1 mark)

[9 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 3

(a) Briefly describe Pa Ben's role in the opening scene.

Pa Ben's role as narrator
Pa Ben announces his role as narrator by intoning 'Old Story time, Old Story Time.' After he sets the stage for the story, we see the young Len, his mother and later Pearl, his childhood friend. The audience sees first hand, the conflict between Len and his mother from way in the past. Issues of blackness, identity and advancement are brought across.

Through flashbacks and Pa Ben's narration, the audience sees time sequences: Pearl's five pregnancies grow into eleven pregnancies; the young Len and the mature, accomplished Len, the Sly George as a boy and as an adult, are seen.
Pa Ben controls the action and directs the audience to crucial themes such as race and class issues.

Pa Ben's role as social commentator
Pa Ben introduces the audience to issues of history and culture. Audience is made aware of how things were in the past – limited advancement/social mobility for blacks. Living conditions were equally bad – bad roads, no water, no electricity.

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Question 3 cont'd

Pa Ben's role as character

Pa Ben's centrality as a major character is highlighted. He is neighbour to Miss Aggy and therefore close to the action. He interfaces with all the major characters and is Len's confidante. Through Pa Ben, all the important themes are brought across.

Pa Ben's role as director

Pa Ben's action in changing scenes as in his initiation of the song, "Change the house round" to convert Miss Aggy's house to the bank scene with Lois and George.

Pa Ben's re-setting of the stage in putting the chairs back in place as he and Miss Aggy prepare to go to Pa Zaccy's nine night.

Pa Ben's input in the action as he bridges gaps in the story as it unfolds (e.g. informing us about George's marriage and commenting on it, describing his visits to Len's school on occasions when he accompanied Miss Aggy.

Any 2 points, 4 marks each [8 marks]

(b) How does Pa Ben introduce the concept of "old story time" in this scene?

The concept of "old story time" is brought across through:

- His own narrative of the past – his father's penchant for storytelling and the rituals involved (drinking rum, singing)
- Pa Ben's repetition of "Old Story time, Ole Story time" to begin his storytelling event (a kind of call to arms/a summoning of the village)
- The events, places, people – all in the past, although he was a key participant and observer to the story he is going to tell
- Naming (his own name and reference to Pa Zaccy)
- Common courtesies, for example "All well," and reminding George that "thanks" is part of rural value system.

Any 2 points, 4 marks each [8 marks]

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Question 3 cont'd

(c) How does Pa Ben's role in the Act foreshadow his role in the rest of the play?

- Pivotal to the action – present or within earshot of most of the action
- Keeper of secrets (and Pa Ben being the balance between Len, Lois and Miss Aggy)
- Adds to tension
- Adds to suspense
- He continues to speak to the audience, bridging gaps in the narrative

Any 3 points, 3 marks each [9 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 4

"Most elements of the play *Old Story Time* contribute to the theme of class and colour prejudice." To what extent is this true of TWO of the following?

Characters

- The black, brown/near white characters are presented to reflect the ethos of the period. The colonial society is reflected in the socio-economic and socio-political realities of the blacks being at the bottom and the near whites at the top and the typical demarcation of the underprivileged and privileged. However, as time passes, we see that in the later years (1970s) things have begun to change somewhat.

- Miss Aggy is filled with self-hate ("anything black no good') and drums this into her son to aspire to Miss Margaret, the pastor's daughter, with long hair down her back.

- Using characters to bring across contrasts – the black Pearl (perpetually pregnant, who might have been different had she had the home support) and Lois, who was the first black woman to work in the bank.

- Exploring stereotypes and the irony involved – the white George (mongoose) is a schemer and quite dishonest (an ironic response to Miss Aggy's belief that blackness is "no good.")

- Len and Lois represent black people who are breaking the glass ceiling. Rhone presents them as very mindful of their roots as poor working class. They never come across as people who will show off on less fortunate black people. They will not adopt the colonial ways.

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Question 4 cont'd

- Pa Ben as wise, experienced commentator discusses the theme of class-colour prejudice in different ways. He criticizes Miss Aggie's self-hate and George's marriage.

Setting

The technical aspects of the stage/staging and the physical locations/scenes contribute to the theme of class and colour prejudice:

- Miss Aggie's house in the rural village, with chamber pot and outside toilet contrasted with the bank where upper class/near white George reigns supreme; contrasted also with Munro College where Len who is black and poor is abused by white upper and middle class boys. This setting is introduced by the sound of horse - drawn buggies depicting the domain of the rich. All of these together show how much the lighter skinned people were in control in the past

- The house in town where Len and Lois live. The fact that this is a well-appointed house and that they live on the same street as George shows that in the 1970s things are beginning to change — black people are breaking the glass ceilings through education, ambition and intelligence.

- The fact that the same set is changed around to become all these various locations (for example, the song 'Change the house around' is sung while this happens) becomes symbolic that the class-colour divides of the past are not fixed in stone — change is coming.

Costuming

The divisions among people based on class and colour are identified and portrayed:

- Peasantry costume
- Miss Aggy's market clothes, Pearl's tattered attire, Pa Ben's clothing
- George's suits
- switching or donning pieces of clothing (hats for example) to indicate change in status (for example, Lois changing into bank teller's clothes, Len in the present in suit showing he has breached the class-colour divide).

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Question 4 cont'd

Flashbacks

Flashbacks contribute to colour and class prejudice:

- The first flashback introduces the audience to the main themes in the play – blackness, identity, advancement, class restrictions. Miss Aggy beats Len because he associates with Pearl, the "frowsy-tail, jiggerfoot…board head gal". She insists instead that he cultivate the friendship of Margaret, the "nice brown girl with tall hair down to her back."

- The time shifts allow the audience to make comparisons of events, behaviours and people: Len's treatment at school by George, Margaret and the well to do; George's blackmailing of Lois; Miss Aggie and George

- Flashbacks allow the audience deeper understanding of events and consequences, for example, Lois' stealing to help Len and the subsequent blackmail; George's threat of making an example of her race by exposing her.

Any 2 elements with any 3 points fully developed, using examples from the text, 4 marks each 2 x 3 x 4 (24 marks)
Showing that the two elements inter-relate (1 mark)

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 5

(a) Briefly outline the experience of the persona in EACH poem.

The experience of the persona in each poem:

"Dulce"

A soldier vividly describes the horrors of war as he helplessly watches one of his comrades being "gassed." Returning from the battle scene, "bent double," coughing and limping with blood-shod feet, they had not heard the gas-filled shells being dropped. Most managed to escape, but this one comrade did not. The experience is traumatic for the soldier who recounts this experience of his unfortunate comrade and lashes out at all who buy into or are brainwashed into thinking that it is a good thing to die for one's country.

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MARK SCHEME

Question 5 cont'd

"Dark Time"

The speaker describes his country at war and being taken over by foreign forces. The landscape is changed. All are sad, anxious and afraid. Gunshots ring out daily and even nature seems to take part in this national mourning.

4 marks each [8 marks]

(b) Discuss the ways in which EACH poet conveys the horror of the experience.

Ways in which EACH poet conveys the horror of the experience:

The following devices/strategies should be connected to the horror of the experience of war. Mention must be made of how they enhance/heighten the feeling of repulsion/revulsion and general distaste of war. Sound and sight imagery must be linked to emotions evoked and mental pictures created in the mind of the reader. Figurative devices should suggest how the experience is horrible for the speaker and by extension, the reader.

"Dulce'

Any two devices:

- Vivid diction: graphic words/ideas – blood-shod feet; white eyes writhing; froth-corrupted lungs; blood gargling
- Imagery, especially relating to sight and sound: "thick green light," "white eyes writhing;" "blood/come gargling"; (these are also metaphors)
- Simile: "like old beggars under sacks; " "as under a green sea;" "like a devil's sick of sin;" "obscene as cancer;" "bitter as cud"
- Metaphor: "an ecstasy of fumbling"
- Repetition: "all" in stanza one; "gas" in stanza 2; the many words ending with "-ing" and the choking/stifling feeling generated e.g. fumbling, stumbling, flound'ring, guttering, choking, drowning, smothering,
- Irony: the title as against the poem itself (way in which the poem exposes this "lie")

"Dark time"

Any two devices:

- Repetition: "dark"/"dark time;" repetition in questioning (last stanza)
- Imagery: sight and sound, especially: use of colours (red flowers [blood?], brown beetles, dark time, strained and anxious faces; gunshots

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Question 5 cont'd

- Oxymoron: "festival of guns"; "carnival of misery"
- Personification: "Red flowers bend their heads in awful sorrow"
- Metaphor: "brown beetles" could allude to army invasion
- Contrast: boot of steel versus the slender grass, showing the vulnerability of the people versus the brutality of the invaders

Any 2 devices well explained for each poem, 2 marks each [8 marks]

(c) What comment does each poem make on the subject of war?

"Dulce"

Any two of:

- Being on the battlefield is a horrifying experience. It dehumanizes people. Many are scarred for life. The feeling of helplessness and hopelessness is horrifying.
- Dying in the above - mentioned scenario is not noble.
- The stereotypical assumptions about war and fighting for country are lies. Children (or the young and those anxious for glory) should not buy into this belief.
- The "old lie" is exposed and explored though what might be seen as an eye-witness account.
- When we have an intimate knowledge or experience (as in the dying soldier's reaching for the speaker to help him) we are able to see what is taken for granted with fresh eyes.

"Dark Time"

Any two of:

- War affects all.
- War is so dehumanizing that even nature makes a statement (as in pathetic fallacy).
- There is a kind of helplessness that comes with war.
- War imposes itself on a nation's culture (festival, carnival)
- War robs a nation of its independence and its dreams ("aiming at your dream")

Any 2 comments made for each poem, 2 marks each (8 marks)
Any attempt at comparison/synthesis (1 mark)

[9 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

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Question 6

(a) For EACH poem, discuss the prejudice, showing how it affects the actions of individuals.

A model answer will identify the type of prejudice, outline the context in which the prejudice is being demonstrated or contemplated, and discuss how and why it manifests in the actions of the character/s who practise it or are victimized by it. For example, a discussion of 'Dreaming Black Boy' in answer to this question should include this information: the picture is presented of a little black boy in Jim Crow America thinking about the ways in which racial prejudice as practiced by whites has surrounded his life and attacked his dreams. His teacher ignores him in class, he is given sub-standard education so that he will have to 'lick boots for a living', he cannot travel the globe freely because hotel owners might bar him from entering their premises. We get the sense that the boy is sitting by himself musing sadly.

[8 marks]

(b) Demonstrate how the poet's use of any one device heightens the presentation of this effect in EACH poem.

The model answer will also identify a device and discuss examples of HOW the device works to sharpen the reader's awareness of the effects of the prejudice. 'How' means that it is not enough to name the device and its effect, but to demonstrate exactly how it manages to achieve this effect. Here is a good example: 'In "Dreaming Black Boy" the poet's use of the repetition "I wish…" throughout the poem achieves several effects. For example, because it begins every stanza, we get a sense that the boy is constantly repeating to himself the ways in which he longs for a world without racial prejudice. This conveys a sense that the prejudice surrounds his entire life, and that he is in constant pain because of it.' A less effective answer might identify the device, give an example and state the effect without showing <u>how</u> we got there. For example 'The speaker's repetition of 'I wish' tells you that racial prejudice hurts him.' The least effective type of answer will sketchily mention the device and the effect 'The poet uses repetition to show how the racial prejudice hurts the boy.' The element of personal response—how the poet's use of the device affects your own thoughts or emotions will enhance the quality of this model essay.

[8 marks]

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Question 6 cont'd

(c) What issues does EACH poet raise by his or her exploration of the theme of prejudice?

The model answer will identify important general principles or ideas (the poet's messages) that emerge from the poet's treatment of prejudice.

[9 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 7

(a) Describe what we learn from the narrator about the life and personality of Mister Papacita.

- He brought joy to the children with his songs as he engaged them with the call and response communal activity
- Through the ribaldry of some of his songs he also introduced adult themes to the children and helped to bond the adult community through entertainment.
- He made work blessed as he blended his garden work with songs
- He beat drums and chanted at wakes and funerals and weddings
- He became a different person at weddings/community gatherings of mourning or celebration—physically he was transformed and he transformed others as they heard his songs and hymns.
- He was the perfect husband and friend to Miss Aita, except that he refused to go to church with her.
- A turning point came in his life when Miss Aita died. His life-giving spirit left him, and he turned to drink.
- He became unruly and unmanageable, destroying the furniture in his house and leaving a trail of grief in the community.
- In his drunken state, he would call on all to serve God, as if Miss Aita's churchgoing had somehow had a deep unconscious effect on him, or as if he felt unaccountably guilty about her death.
- After his hospital visits for detoxification he returned as a spiritless, tired old man, and rejected attempts by the villagers to lure him to church.

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Question 7 cont'd

- Then another turning point came—the climax of the narrative. Unexpectedly, mysteriously, he joined the staid Weslyan church. At his baptism his early spirit of music returned and caused several conversions, most of which did not last. He, however, remained faithful to his church.

- The reader, like the narrator, is left with more questions than answers (silence) about the real reason for Mister Papacita's conversion.

A well expressed answer that covers Mister Papacita's relationship with the children, the adults, the community as a whole, and Miss Aita; the significance of these relationships; and the turning points in Mister Papacita's life that introduce the issue of silence. [9 marks]

(b) By what strategies does the narrator reveal her attitude to Mister Papacita?

- The narrator maintains a child's perspective on Mister Papacita, so her naïve puzzlement about the reasons for his change is convincing

- At first, like the other children, she is excited by and welcomes Mister Papacita's singing, games, jokes etc. This is shown in the descriptions she uses (diction, images etc)

- The narrator expresses perplexity about the changes in Mr Papacita's character through her constant use of questions

- She is confused by the change in Mister Papacita after Miss Aita's death, and she uses the strategy of the community's gossip to explore the possible reasons

- She intuitively compares the reasons put forward for the changes and shows her bias in the process—she reveals her preference for the colourful Mister Papacita, indicating that to her, he is 'the real Mr Papacita.'

Any 2 strategies fully developed, 4 marks each [8 marks]

(c) How does the story of Mister Papacita's life contribute to ONE theme in the text as a whole?

- The theme of experience — how adults and children's perspectives differ. (sometimes the narrator is young and naïve; at other times she is a reflecting adult seeking to make sense of life and events)

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Question 7 cont'd

- The role of the church and its meaning and relevance to the community as a whole

- The nature and meaning of silence, the part that music and harmony, and chaos and noise play in expanding our understanding of silence

- The nature and meaning of silence — what for example is the connection between visible action and hidden mutation?

- Relationships — how opposites can attract.

Any 1 theme fully discussed **[8 marks]**

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 8

Use the character Nathan to discuss the ways in which Forbes presents the theme of silence.

The chapters of Songs of Silence hold together as a chorus of songs from one community, but shaped by the recollections of a narrator whose perspective ranges from the innocence of childhood to the maturity of a young adult who emerges unbroken from a failed relationship. In the chapter 'Nathan', the narrator is the reflective adult with a sophisticated notion of the wide range of meanings 'silence' holds. Through the character of Nathan she is able to present some aspects of this theme, which runs throughout the text in many different ways.

- Nathan acts strategically without words, but with potent meaning — revenge (poking Tony's eye).

- Silence is a characteristic feature of Nathan's personality, which is deep and profound even though he uses few words. The absence of words can mask/hide a great deal.

- Nathan's deep and profound silence was evident even from his birth and the close connection he had with his sister, the narrator – '…soulmates, welded together by our common need for silence.' They both started speaking late. However, her silence was different from his — 'he was a man of dark blue silences,' hers 'was a silence of moons.' Here the narrator suggests that contrary to the saying 'silence means consent', silence dies not always mean one thing nor are all silent people to be treated the same.

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Question 8 cont'd

- The 'manna manna manna mahkita' game establishes the communication between the narrator and Nathan. It has unspoken personal meaning for them and suggests that its ritual is imbued with almost religious or spiritual significance. It shows that codes of communication that may seem meaningless to others looking on, may be a way of expressing connections that [known] words cannot express.

- The different silences of the siblings allow them to explore, define and find their own authentic selves in their own ways. (Narrator and ants, Nathan and tightfistedness with money). Silence, like language, can express identity.

- Forbes presents the narrator speculating on the genesis of Nathan's tightfistedness — was it a reaction to their parents' wastefulness or their loud quarreling? Silence generates questions that try to fill up the space of what we don't know/what silence withholds from us. This idea is one of the most pervasive throughout the entire book.

- Silence emerges as fate — instrumental even in their adult years, in ironic ways, as illustrated by the fact that the narrator 'entered a profession that fractured [her] silence' and Nathan married a 'noisy' woman. Silence is insufficient just as speech is insufficient—both Nathan and his sister look for their opposites in order to complete their personalities, just as Miss Effie went silent after speech betrayed her.

- Colours are a major element in defining the nature of silence, just as colours differentiated the nature of Mister Papacita's music.

- Water-river or sea — is also used to define/differentiate the nature of silences (as in 'Morris Hole'). This is similar to the 'snail's shell upon my back' in 'The Woman with No Name.'

- Through these symbols and images Forbes helps us to understand intuitively the narrator's conflict with her brothers, and Nathan particularly, as she gains greater awareness of her femaleness in response to their overwhelming maleness. Are women's silences different from men's, and men's words different from women's? ('mine was a silence of moons'). These are some of the questions we ask.

TOTAL 25 marks

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Question 9

'Bolo is a heroic figure whose heroism was not always understood by those around him.' Discuss the character of Bolo in light of this statement.

Candidates do not need to agree with the statement. 'Discuss' indicates that a candidate may agree fully or partially or not at all. This question requires the candidate to indicate the definition of heroism that will guide the essay. As with other essays, scripts that make some reference to the author's techniques indicate superiority. Candidates should include examples to prove their points.

Possible definitions of heroism:

- defying great odds or dangers in order to fight for what one believes in
- sacrificing (for example, one's life) for others
- sacrificing for others (for example, one's life) even when they don't understand us or our sacrifice
- having a vision of the greater good and being willing to take the lead in bringing it to fruition
- standing up for one's beliefs in the face of great hardship, even putting oneself at risk
- standing up for others in the face of great hardship, even putting oneself at risk
- being willing to lead others in dangerous situations, in pursuit of high ideals

Instances of Bolo's heroism:

- At the end of the first chapter Bolo is introduced as 'the warrior still' who is shocked and heartbroken by the church's self rejection. Warrior' introduces the idea that he will be a fighter, his heartbreak introduces the idea of what he will fight for—ideals. Bolo's idealistic insight is contrasted with the church's pragmatic acceptance of defeat. Bolo represents an ideal and a promise. '

- Bolo fearlessly questions the dominant views of the group about Ivan Morton. He does not believe, as they do, that Morton is a man of the people or that talking to him will lead to their advancement or freedom from persecution.

- Bolo is not afraid to defy the authorities. He recognizes that the colonial police are the enemies of the people and he feels 'We have to kill Prince.' He understands this at a literal and symbolic level. This contrasts with Bee and Eva, who as representatives of the church and the people, even accept their son's application to the constabulary. Bee and Eva are heroic enough to break the law by worshipping in their own way, but they lack the radical daring of Bolo.

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MARK SCHEME

Question 9 cont'd

- When he fights against Prince and the other policemen for arresting his mother among the worshippers, Bolo's heroism is realized through his blood relations

Possible points of view in response to the statement:

(i) Bolo is a heroic figure who was not given a chance to display his full heroism as the people he defended were too afraid to work with him against the colonial authorities. They did understand him but were afraid.

(ii) Bolo has potentially great qualities but he becomes mean-spirited and judgemental when his people do not agree with his approach to fighting the colonial authorities. A true hero is able to understand the people he wants to help, and does not humiliate or hurt them.

(iii) Bolo is a warrior hero but his people no longer want [or needs] warrior heroes; they want educated leaders who can use the system to beat the system.

(iv) Bolo is an anti-hero — one of those characters in books who rebel against everything an unjust and hypocritical society views as heroic. Through such characters, authors send a message to society, which often does not understand the anti-hero, and may even despise him.

Some points to support (i):

- Bolo is a stickfighter in the carnival tradition. So he is associated with the warrior hero. He is strong and bold and loves his people, does not think only of himself but of them. At the end of the first chapter he is introduced as the 'warrior still', who is shocked and heartbroken at the Spiritual Baptist church's acceptance of the unjust law. He also tells them that they are wrong about Ivan Morton. He does not believe, as they do, that Morton is a man of the people or that talking to him will lead to their advancement or freedom from persecution. Bolo's idealistic insight contrasts with the church's pragmatic acceptance of defeat. His willingness to tell them the truth shows that he cares for them and that he is offering himself as their leader.

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Question 9 cont'd

- It is clear his people do love and admire Bolo, even though they are not able to rise to his level of heroism. Eva, the narrator, presents him in a sympathetic manner, and tries to understand him even though much of what she learns about his behaviour is reported to her third hand. As a member of the community that deserts him, Eva accepts blame for Bolo's tragic demise and describes him as a crucified Christ. After his death she says he is not dead and hopes he never dies. By this she means that his memory, the memory of the things he tried to teach them but which they were too afraid to learn, and the memory of their shame and how they failed him, will live on.
- Bolo recognizes that the colonial police are the people's natural enemies. The brutal officer Prince represents the worst excesses of the Police force, and it is clear from Eva's narration that he is despised and feared. But while Bolo argues that 'We have to kill Prince', Bee and Eva, who can be seen as representing the church's and the village's attitudes, fail to send the right message to their son Winston and so Winston joins the police force. Bee is enraged and ashamed at this betrayal of ideals on Winston's part. But unlike what Bolo would have done, he still tells Winston to go ahead. When Bolo says 'we have to kill Prince,' he means this at both a symbolic and literal level. Bee and Eva's heroism goes only so far as to declare 'we have to break the law', meaning that they will worship in their own way in spite of the law against it. They are too afraid to accept Bolo's radical solution. They are afraid for their children; also they feel defying the law by violence will only bring more violence down on them. Yet they love and admire Bolo and feel he is destined for great things (Eva's descriptions).
- Bolo matches heroic actions to words: he fights physically against Prince for arresting his mother; and fights Innocent for taking advantage of 17 year-old Lester, both in support of Lester and to show the community that they had turned against themselves in the most unjust way.
- When Bolo turns 'badjohn' it is still in an effort to make his people learn self-defence and courageous action. His rogue-like behaviour has a kind of logic in it – to show that he detested what the community had become. The trend of the community turning against itself was most represented by Mitchell's exploitative and corrupt business practices, and Bolo uses 'badjohnism' to protest against this. He takes the two sisters as a challenge to his people; he is most offended by the introduction of the police in what he believed was the community's business. Eva's narration tells us that he looked heartbroken when this happened, almost as if he were pleading with them to have the courage to face him instead. (The one person who ever stood up to him was Charleau, and as a result, they became friends).
- Bolo's tragic death can indeed be blamed on the community. It is as though he sacrificed his innocence and good reputation, even his

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MARK SCHEME

self - on their behalf, to no avail. Fear of the colonial powers made them impotent. Bolo is a tragic hero.

Any other reasonable point

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MARK SCHEME

Question 9 cont'd

Some points to support (ii):

Bolo's great qualities include: champion stickfighter in the great warrior tradition of Africa and the carnival; community consciousness, idealism, and love for the people ('...he don't just fight to win battles for himself…and he do it with love and respect, more as if he was making a gift of himself, offering himself…as if what he really want is for the people to see in him a beauty that wasn't his alone, was theirs, ours…').

- However, he fails to understand the real dilemmas the people face. Their fear for their children if they use violence is legitimate. Also, it is not easy for them to commit murder ('kill Prince'), and they also want to promote civil society in which law works for them, not against them. They are trying to give Ivan Morton a chance to help them by legal means. They need to hope that one of their own has not really betrayed them. Bolo is right—they are shortsighted in not eventually getting up and fighting, whether physically or otherwise when it becomes clear Ivan is a traitor, but their point of view is understandable. Bolo isn't able to see inside their minds but Eva as narrator is, and she gives a sympathetic portrayal of Bee and the others even though she too does not agree with them.

- When Bolo kidnaps the two sisters and abuses Mitchell we lose sympathy for him no matter what Eva says. His treatment of them is inhumane and extreme. It seems he hopes that this will hold up to them a mirror of what they have become in their self-rejection, or a mirror of what the colonial establishment is doing to them. But how can people follow a leader who leads by fear or by terrorizing their children? How can love show itself in actions of hate? The tragedy of Bolo is that both he and the community became confused, one by disappointment, one by fear. Bolo's confusion led to his loss of self and loss of heroism.

- Any other reasonable point

Some points to support (iii):

- The Caribbean has a long tradition of warrior heroes (for example, Maroons, Three Finger Jack). The people usually love and admire them, but often they lead lonely lives as most people are afraid to adopt their radical means of resistance. Eva tells us several times that Bolo is 'alone.' Eva gives many descriptions showing the people's admiration for Bolo's physical beauty and strength, his stickfighting reputation and the fact that he is a 'warrior still.' But she also tells us several times that he is 'alone.'

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Question 9 cont'd

- The people see Bolo more as a symbol than the leader they want. They do not believe in the kind of leadership he offers. They don't want to meet violence with violence and kill Prince. This may be because of their cowardice or it could be because the society has changed. Eva says what the people need now to help them is the educated man who can take on the white man on his own terms. Eulalee's rejection of Bolo for Ivan Morton is symbolic, as is Morton's betrayal of her.

- They pin all their hopes on Ivan Morton and even after he fails them they are afraid to adopt other means, and soon after, Bolo turns badjohn and they reject him even further, since now they are afraid of him.

- Going to prison may have brutalized Bolo and made him use violence against his people. But what it certainly does is show how alone he was — he is the only villager who went to jail because he is the only one who fought the police who arrested the church people unjustly (to defend his mother). It is most painful that no member of the group was sufficiently moved to join him. Bolo is a hero deserted by the people he fought for.

Any other reasonable point

Some points to support (iv):

Anti-heroes are characters who do not have the traditional qualities of heroes, and often have opposite qualities to those of the traditional hero. They stand alone against society and are often disliked.

- Bolo starts off as a warrior hero admired by his people (see discussions at I, II and III). However, when he turns badjohn after the people desert him or fail to stand with him when he fights for his mother's release, he begins to look more like an anti-hero.

- Bolo becomes an anti-hero through his people's fault (see discussions at I, II and III).

Any other reasonable point

3 marks for definition of heroism that candidate will use to guide the discussion.
Up to 8 marks for identification and description of Bolo's heroic qualities and acts OR lack of such qualities and actions
Up to 7 marks for the interpretations of Bolo's acts by those around him
4 marks each for 3 fully developed points about Bolo: 4x3=12
5 marks each for 2 fully developed points about those around him: 5x2=10

TOTAL 25 marks

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Question 10

'*The Wine of Astonishment* explores the ways in which power can be creative or destructive'. Dicuss with reference to one character in *The Wine of Astonishment*.

Characters:

Bolo

Bolo's power is both creative and destructive.

Creative: Bolo's admirable qualities of power: Bolo is a champion carnival stickfighter who is looked up to and admired by the people of his community. Everyone admires him for this warrior prowess, and expects great things of him. The women admire him for his strength and physical grace as well as his sense of humour and community spirit. He is able to charm even the very old women. Bolo knows who he is and as a result is not afraid to speak out against the injustice meted out to his people or fight physically to free his mother when she is arrested unjustly. He is willing to take on the colonial establishment and 'kill Prince', both literally and figuratively. Bolo's power is multiple: the power of the warrior, the power of the charmer, the power of the revolutionary, the power that comes with self-recognition. However, his potential to use his power lead the community and the church against the colonial establishment is lost as the people are too afraid to adopt his approach of direct, physical and radical resistance. They allow the power of the colonizer to win. This is the great tragedy of the novel.

Destructive yet ironically creative aspects of Bolo's power: When Bolo's power is not given its proper outlet he becomes a badjohn and terrorizes his people until they bring the police against him and he is killed. Bolo's death however is not the end of his power. Eva the narrator says he is not dead, and she hopes he never dies. This suggests that Bolo still has power over the people's memory. He has impressed them with his beauty and his strength. He has taught them shame, he has taught them how to be a man and not give in.

Lovelace's techniques

- Imagery – description of Bolo's appearance etc
- Symbolism - Bolo as stickfighter symbolic of his moral warriorhood
- Contrast – with Morton,Prince, Bee etc
- Irony – Bolo/Christ rejected for Morton/Barabas
- Symbolism – Christ analogy
- **Any other appropriate technique**

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MARK SCHEME

Question 10 cont'd

Ivan Morton

Ivan Morton's power is totally destructive

Morton is an agent of colonial power that oppresses the people. He is mentally enslaved. Worshipping the white man's power, he turns against his own people and in a sense, himself.

- colonial education empowers Morton to rise above the circumstances that oppress other poor blacks

- ironically, his parents' sacrifice helped to give him this power through which he betrays everything they stood for (abandoning his father's unfinished house is symbolic)

- he has power over the people as they believe in him and think he shares their dreams and aspirations

- Morton trades on his people's belief in the power of education; he uses education to trick his people into believing he will help them

- their votes put him in power, whereupon he promptly betrays them by feathering his own nest (new cars etc)

- he shows his allegiance to white power and contempt of his people by moving out of the village and into the white backra's house, dressing always in suit and tie, deserting Eulalie and marrying a light skinned wife who approximates the criteria for white beauty and femininity, etc

- although Morton is in power, he does nothing to repeal the law against free worship, and in fact the persecution increases

- he keeps the people bamboozled by giving a few handouts and doing a few useless favours, for example, writing recommendations for jobs they can't get

- in the end Morton is able to succeed because the people refuse to act on their knowledge of his betrayal, refuse to follow Bolo, and give up Bolo for Morton. This leads to Bolo's turning against his people and finally his tragic death

- through this character Lovelace shows the evils of colonialism, fear, etc

Any other reasonable answer

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MARK SCHEME

Question 10 cont'd

Lovelace's techniques

- Imagery - (descriptions of Morton' clothes, his nose that is always in the air as if sniffing something better)
- Symbolism - his always standing sideways, using two victory signs instead of one, the Richardson house that he moves into — described as a tomb
- Contrast — between Morton and the other villagers, between Morton and Bolo
- Parallels (with Prince, Mitchell, the Catholic church)
- Irony
- **Any other appropriate technique**

Prince

Like Ivan Morton, Prince is an agent of colonial power that oppresses the people. He is mentally enslaved, worshipping the white man's power, he turns against his own people and in a sense, himself. His power is destructive.

- However, Prince's weapon is not colonial education but colonial brutality.

- Prince is a member of the constabulary and he uses his position to brutalize the people. While other policemen will warn the church when a raid is being planned or will turn a blind eye to their mode of worship so long as they don't flaunt it too blatantly, Prince pursues them relentlessly as if it is a personal vendetta

- Prince seems to be a sycophant who wants to show his superiors that he is not like these 'backward people'

- he doesn't care about his people, only about promotion

- Prince seems to enjoy brutality for its own sake, as if he has some secret insecurity that is satisfied by this power over others

- He seems to think his position gives him absolute power, so he doesn't even feel he should answer legitimate questions such as 'why are you arresting these people?'

- Bolo challenges him by trying to incite the people to kill him, and then by physically attacking him when he arrests his mother

and the other church members. Bolo shows that colonial power is not absolute

- The showdown between them shows that Prince by himself is not really strong; it is only when a lot of other policemen come and beat him up that Bolo is subdued.

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MARK SCHEME

Question 10 cont'd

- The lack of human care by those in power is shown when the police throw Bolo in the jeep without caring if his head is damaged.

- Tragically, no one except Bolo dares to fight Prince—they are afraid of the power behind him. Their failure to fight leads to Bolo's going to prison and later to Bolo's downfall.

Any other reasonable point

Lovelace's techniques

- Imagery – description of prince's brutal physique
- Symbolism — description of prince's brutal physique
- Contrast - with Bolo
- Parallels - (with Morton, Mitchell, the Catholic church)
- **Any other appropriate technique**

Irony — Prince turns against the people, mirrors the people turning against themselves
Irony — people turn to police against Bolo and destroy Bolo in the process
Irony — Bee's son becomes a policeman because of their failure to 'kill Prince.'
Irony — police/the law acts illegally to make people unsafe yet their role should be to protect
Irony — Prince's brutality shows not his strength but his weakness—bully
Any other appropriate technique

Mitchell

Like Morton and Prince, Mitchell is an agent of colonial power that oppresses the people. He is mentally enslaved. Worshipping the white man's power, he turns against his own people and in a sense, himself. His power is destructive

- Mitchell's weapon of oppression is money.

- Achieving business success by craft and corruption (examples)

- Like Prince's, the contemptible nature of his power is exposed by Bolo, who terrorizes him, destroys his shop etc.

- Bolo stands alone as the rest of the village while aware of Mitchell's wickedness, do nothing about it

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Question 10 cont'd

- Bolo tries to fight against Mitchell's corrupt power by showing the people how Mitchell is oppressing them. His badjohn behaviour smashing up Mitchell's shop is meant to show them in a mirror how Mitchell is a badjohn oppressing them yet they do not recognize this lesson

- Although Bolo is destroyed in the end, he succeeds in erasing Mitchell's illegitimate gains. The end of the book also vindicates him as Eva acknowledges that he had been right about fighting against men like Mitchell.

- Through this character Lovelace shows the all - pervasive evil of colonialism, fear, etc

- Rather than through his allegiance to the church.

- **Any other reasonable answer**

Lovelace's techniques

- Imagery
- Irony
- Symbolism
- Contrast
- Parallels
- Any other appropriate technique

Any 4 points fully developed for the ONE character's qualities and behaviour related to power, 4 marks each (16 marks)

Any 2 points fully developed for the author's techniques in showing the character's relation to power, 4 marks each (8 marks)

Reference to other themes OR for demonstrating knowledge that the character discussed is similar to other characters in the book (1 mark)

TOTAL 25 marks

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Question 11

(a) Describe the central unfortunate situation in each story

'The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream'

Benjy's unfortunate situation is the combination of his family's poverty and his father's attitude, and how these threaten his dream. Benjy has never seen or tasted ice-cream but his sister Elsa has described it to him in such magical terms that his life's dream is to taste the ice cream sold by Mr Doran at the Harvest Festival Sale. This dream provides an important source of hope for Benjy, who is not particularly happy at home, mainly because his father does not always treat him well. This is because his father secretly thinks that his wife cheated on him and Benjy is not his. At last Benjy's chance comes when the family attends the Harvest Sale. Benjy is full of excitement and terror, as he is not sure his father will be in a good enough mood to buy the ice cream Elsa has promised he will finally get to eat. And in fact for a while it seems that Benjy will get no ice cream, as his father is busy watching his mother to see which man she is talking to. Benjy is so distressed that he starts to cry, much to the disgust of his mother and sister whose impatience only makes him cry harder. At last his father, reassured that his wife isn't clandestinely meeting any man after all, purchases ice cream for himself and the children. But there is a dreadful final twist. Just at the moment when Benjy, seized by fearful anticipation, tremblingly hesitates to taste his since cream, his father sees his mother talking to a well dressed town man, and in rage grabs Benjy and rushes towards his mother. Benjy's ice cream falls to the ground, never to be retrieved.

'Mom Luby'

The I-narrator Elijah (along with his sister Puddin') has lived with his grandmother Mom Luby for three years, since his mother died. His unfortunate situation is that he is at the mercy of his aunt's questionably morals and engagement in illegal activities. He is subject to the wills and scheming of Mom Luby who seeks to milk the welfare system, bribe the police to protect her illegal dealings and expose the children to illegal and perhaps immoral influences in the process. Elijah is obviously very happy living with Mom Luby, but but after a while their financial situation gets so difficult that Mom Luby decides she has no choice but to seek State assistance. She takes the children to the State Aid office to put in her request, and shortly after, a social worker from the office arrives to assess whether Mom Luby is deserving of this aid. The supercilious, insensitive social worker is appalled by the family's cultural habits and way of life (for example she scorns their food).

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Question 11 cont'd

Mom Luby sharply and humorously responds to every rude criticism made by the social worker, who is increasingly discomfited. The last straw is when she finds out that Mom Luby, the community's 'matriarch', who is not educated as she is, is 'practising law, medicine, and the ministry without a licence.' She decides to get her own back at Mom Lube by refusing to approve her for State Aid. As a result, the reader is made aware, Elijah (and his sister) remain subject to the colourful but illicit activities of Mom Luby.

4 marks each [8 marks]

b) Compare the writers' strategies showing how each creates different reader response.

Possible points of comparison:

- Senior's narrative technique is heart-wrenching, Hunter's hilarious. As a result we feel Benjy's situation as a tragedy, and Elijah's as a comedy — Elijah will survive; we are not sure about Benjy.

- Senior makes Benjy's hunger for ice cream and the fact that his father may be a stumbling block to his getting this ice cream, central from the beginning, whereas Hunter makes Mom Luby's feisty, hilarious personality central, so that we feel from the beginning that whatever the outcome, Elijah will be all right.

- Senior uses a carefully graduated series of images and events to build up the reader's agony on Benjy's behalf (for example, his terror is vividly described at every stage; and at several stages she outlines a possible threat to Benjy's dream of ice cream) while Hunter has the reader laughing throughout as Mom Luby takes control of the situation (for example, at the very beginning she tells the children to shut their mouths — 'don't mess up my lie' — when she tells the Welfare people she is their mother. At first we are worried that she might be a shady character, and she is. She is a street-wise character who attempts to exploit the weakness in the social system and we even applaud her for that, but Hunter also reveals Mom Luby's consistent trait of resistance to the legal mores and requirements of the society.

- Benjy's story is told from the point of view of a sympathetic third person narrator who feels his suffering and relays it to the reader as if from inside Benjy's head. Elijah is his own I-narrator who tells the story as an observer of Mom Luby's indomitable self-possession and feisty strategies of survival. He never expresses any feelings of fear, so we know he is not concerned about whether he has shoes or carfare for school — the great Mom Luby will take care of it all.

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Question 11 cont'd

- Benjy's story ends with a stream of consciousness (all his thoughts running together without full stops or other punctuation) to show his distress, whereas Elijah's ends with Mom Luby gambling/playing a card game and laughing (showing her contempt for the social worker's view that she is bringing up the children in an unhealthy atmosphere

- Any other reasonable point of comparison. Answer MUST show the contrast between the tragic vision in Senior's story and the comic vision in Hunter's story.

2 comparisons fully developed, 2 marks each (8 marks)
Explicit comparison (1 mark)

[9 marks]

(c) Which ending do you prefer and why?

To gain full marks, the answer must focus on the endings. It must state the candidate's preference, which can either be one ending over the other, or equal satisfaction/dissatisfaction with both endings. The candidate must give clear reasons for this response, based on comments about either the writer's technique; or the 'vision'/perspective (on life, on the child's situation etc) that the ending encourages.

[8 marks]

TOTAL 25 marks

Question 12

Choose two short stories you have studied and discuss how the MAIN character in each deals with a challenging situation.

The essay encourages candidates to cover the following:

- Select two appropriate stories, correctly identifying the main characters.
- Provide a description of the challenging situation.
- Show how the character deals with the situation, and what this tell us about him or her
- Discuss the strategies/techniques used by the writers to bring across the challenges
- Suggest some theme that the writer invites us to think about.

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Question 12 cont'd

Identifying and Describing the Challenging Situation

Some stories present challenging situations on a personal level, as in "The Man of the House" where the young boy has to take care of his sick mother.

Sometimes the personal may cover challenges such as confronting our own inner fears, problems, and prejudices as in "Blackout." Here a white woman is approached by a black man as she waits in the dark at a bus stop.

What might appear to be challenges to child might not be the case with an adult. In "The Day the World almost came to an End," the child's fertile imagination conjures images of the end of the world. Her hysterical reaction to an airplane flying overhead is humorous in its presentation.

Often challenging situations exist in everyday life and play out in the larger political arena. "Berry" explores the sinister issue of racism, exploitation and prejudices.

Other Points to consider

- Who is facing this challenging situation (is it a child, an adult, a male, female) and where this is occurring.
- What caused the challenging situation (is this of the character's doing, some outside force)?
- How is the problem resolved?

How the Writer Brings Across the Challenging Situation

This kind of essay requires the identification and use of techniques used by the writers to get the message across. The challenging situations therefore, can be portrayed through the narrative perspective, symbols, figurative language, suspense, setting, flashback etc.

Story, 12 marks each (24 marks)
Comparison, 1 mark (1 mark)

TOTAL 25 marks

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JUNE 2004

ENGLISH B

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ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JUNE 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2004, the second year of a new cycle (2003 - 2005), the overall examination performance was quite consistent with that of 2003. Mark allocations were again indicated for the various parts of each question. This helped candidates to manage their time more efficiently.

Generally, candidates demonstrated an acceptable familiarity with texts and understanding of them, and displayed a satisfactory grasp of the mechanics of writing. Still, avoidable errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation are far too common across the board. Teachers and candidates need to be reminded that there is no such word as “alot” in standard English; and that “all right” is the standard form of the phrase; and that "its" is the possessive form of the pronoun (Every dog must have its day); and that “it's” is an abbreviated form of “it is.”

Some candidates demonstrated a commendable ability to organize ideas into logical, well-argued paragraphs; to frame their essays effectively with an introduction and conclusion; and to effect a smooth transition from quotation to discussion. Too many, however, made little effort to structure their responses. It must be emphasized that while the candidate is not penalized for sectionalizing responses, more marks are given for a well-developed essay.

While most candidates performed very well in segments of questions requiring recall, most were not as competent in analysing texts. Questions that asked for a discussion of the dramatic significance, or for comments on poetic devices, for instance, tended to be poorly done.

Candidates need to be taught how to read examination questions carefully, and to respond fully or briefly, as instructed, to all parts. Their attention should be drawn to the meaning of instructional words used in the examination such as “Comment on,” “Describe,” “Identify,” “Compare,” and “Discuss.” These all require different responses, and “briefly” means just what it says. They should know, too, that proper names should ideally be correctly spelt, and the titles of works underlined.

Far too many candidates still disregard the caution that the same text is not to be used to respond to more than one question, and many continue to use texts that are not on the syllabus. Candidates should be reminded that they will be penalized for not observing these instructions.

Intention of Questions

All questions were designed to test the specific skills listed on Page 8 of the syllabus:

1. Knowledge and Insight (Profile 1)

    (a) Relevance and adequacy of content
    (b) Relevance and accuracy of illustration
    (c) Quality/Clarity of argument

2. Organizing of Response (Profile 2)

    (a) Organizing (Structure and development of relevant ideas or points into coherent paragraphs)
    (b) Grammar and mechanics of writing (Sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, diction, etc.)

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 01

Section A tests

(a) description, analysis (that is, the ability to break down and select relevant data), and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form, information drawn from various sections of the text), for the purpose of answering a particular question.

(b) the ability to support an argument based on reference to the text, a response to or opinion about a play, novel, short story.

(c) an elementary awareness of the writer's craft (that is, of the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of the language and the presentation of human character and behaviour).

(d) an ability to recognize and distinguish between qualities of feeling as presented in a particular test.

(e) a grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Section B tests

(a) the same skills as indicated for Section A. However, because of its focus on themes and the comparison of texts, Section B requires an equal measure of analysis but a greater effort at synthesis to answer questions adequately.

(b) an appreciation of the social content and context of literature.

Skills and Aptitude Tested in Paper 02

This paper tests

(a) comprehension.

(b) awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet/dramatist achieves his effect).

These skills require

(a) analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function in the passage.

(b) attention to dramatic devices, for example, stage direction and "props".

(c) awareness of the relationship between action and motive.

(d) awareness of the interaction among characters.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01

Section A – Set Texts – Questions 1 - 14

ROMEO AND JULIET

Question 1

This question required an understanding of a crucial moment in the dramatic action – the Capulet feast. Candidates needed to know the facts surrounding Romeo's presence at the feast of his father's sworn enemy, what transpires at the feast, and the dramatic significance of the scene.

This was the most popular question of the entire examination attracting responses from 55 per cent of candidates. Many candidates answered (a) and (b) satisfactorily – although far too many confused Mercutio with Benvolio – but lost marks in (c), which required them to say why this scene was dramatically significant.

Teachers and candidates are reminded that questions on Drama will, in one way or the another, test knowledge of dramatic significance.

Question 2

This question required an understanding of what is arguably the most memorable scene in the play.

Surprisingly only 8.2 per cent responded. Many candidates responded well to (a) and (b); but lost marks in (c), which tested their knowledge of dramatic significance.

Romeo and Juliet proved a popular choice (the second most popular text) and, hence, an appropriate text. However, there was quite a bit of film interference. Teachers and candidates are reminded that neither video nor film ought to replace the text, on which questions are set.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' knowledge of the final scene of the play in which the three most important couples are present. It involved identification, description of the test that Petruchio suggests, and the importance of Katherina's closing speech.

Nine per cent of the candidates answered this question and many gained full marks in (a) and (b), but lost marks in (c), which asked them to place Katherina's speech within the context of the entire comedy. There was, however, one perfect score on this question.

Question 4

As in the previous question, this one required candidates to know and understand a particular scene – the wedding day (Act 3, Scene 2). Candidates were asked to respond to Katherina's humiliation and anxiety at Petruchio's deliberate late arrival, to describe the choreographed appearance of a fantastically dressed Petruchio, riding the most lamentable nag/jade, and to comment on the hero's outrageous behaviour.

Only three per cent of the candidates attempted this question and there was no perfect score.

The Taming of the Shrew was not a popular text with candidates and teachers. This is not surprising, since it hardly works as text in 2004. Only the most skilful actors can pull it off on stage.

SAINT JOAN

Question 5

This question required candidates to respond to Dunois's initial appearance on stage. It expresses Dunois's love of art/poetry and his relationship with the heroine.

Only 2 per cent of the candidates chose this question and there was no perfect score. Most candidates did not respond well to part (c).

Question 6

This question tested candidates' understanding of events associated with the introduction of the Inquisition.

As was the case in 2003, Question 6 was again the least popular question of the examination. A mere 1.5 per cent of candidates chose it, and no candidate was able to score full marks.

Saint Joan was the least popular set book.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Question 7

Thirty-seven per cent of the candidates chose this question, which centered on the relationship between the children and Boo Radley, and the majority of scores were between 16 and 21. Candidates generally responded well to (a) and (b), but lost marks in (c). A number of candidates earned full marks in this question.

Question 8

This straightforward question, which focused on Atticus' character and the repercussions of his defence of Tom Robinson, elicited the best overall performance from candidates. Twenty-seven responses earned a perfect score, and the majority of scores were between 16 and 24.

To Kill a Mockingbird proved in the second year of this cycle to be the most popular set text. Its simple, straightforward, linear narrative proved irresistible to 73 per cent of the candidates.

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Question 9

This question on how Antoinette and her husband respond to Dominica elicited responses from eight per cent of the candidates and there were many excellent responses, several of which earned perfect scores. Candidates performed well in part (a) and (b) but experienced difficulty in explaining what the reaction of Antoinette and her husband to Dominica tells the reader about the couple's relationship.

Question 10

This question was more popular than its counterpart, and attracted responses from almost 13 per cent of the candidates. Sections (a) and (b) were well handled, but (c) posed problems, no doubt because it required a synthesis of knowledge and interpretation.

With 20 per cent of the candidates choosing Wide Sargasso Sea, it became the third least popular set text. It is not an easy text at this level.

A WORLD OF PROSE

Questions 11 and 12

Question 11 was a popular question based on "The Two Grandmothers" and it was attempted by 33 per cent of the candidates. There were many excellent answers and a number of candidates earned perfect scores.

Question 12 on "Down Our Way" was much less popular than its counterpart. Both Questions 11 and 12 required a knowledge of only one short story, and this no doubt contributed to the quality of responses, as candidates were able to cope well with the requirements.

Questions 11 and 12 elicited responses from 42 per cent of the candidates, and A World of Prose continues to be an attractive option in Section A.

A WORLD OF POETRY

Questions 13 and 14

In Question 13, most candidates responded well to parts (a) and (b) but had difficulty responding to part (c), the significance of the persona/speaker. In Question 14, (a) and (c) posed problems for many candidates. There was only one perfect score among the responses to these questions.

Approximately 20 per cent of the candidates chose to answer Questions 13 and 14, 11 per cent less than in 2003. Happily, A World of Poetry continues to hold its own among set texts.

Section B – Themes – Questions 15 - 21

Question 15 – Love and Family Relationships

About 29 per cent of the candidates answered Question 15, and there were a fair number of very good responses. Candidates handled (a) more comfortably than (b). Surprisingly there was only one perfect score among the 5 243 responses. Choice of texts either positively or adversely affected performance. Repetition of texts was the downfall of many candidates.

Question 16 – Freedom

Out of the 4 020 candidates who chose to respond to Question 16, approximately 25 per cent scored more than 18 marks. While part (a) posed no real problems, part (b) proved a stiff challenge to candidates who were less comfortable with comparison than with description, as required in part (a). There were two perfect scores.

Question 17 – Heroism

Heroism perennially has been the most popular theme question. This year it proved to be the second most popular question of the entire examination, attracting responses from 39 per cent of the candidates. Candidates generally responded intelligently, but many had difficulty with (b), which demanded an illustration of the effect of heroism on a major character. Scores of 18 marks and over were gained by 22 per cent of the candidates. There were four perfect scores among 6 938 responses.

Question 18 – Power and Authority

This question elicited responses from 22 per cent of the candidates, only one of whom provided a perfect answer. Only 9.2 per cent of the candidates scored 18 or more.

Question 19 – Dreams and Aspirations

This question fell in popularity from 2003; only 28 per cent of candidates attempted it in 2004 compared with 40 per cent in the previous year. It, however, was well handled, and recorded the highest percentage of scores above 18 among the theme questions.

Question 20 – Women in Society

This question fell dramatically in popularity in 2004, in comparison to 2003. This is surprising in this age of feminism, liberation and the fact that the question encouraged candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how and why a female character triumphs in two of the texts studied. This question recorded the worst performance in the entire examination!

Question 21 – Attitudes to the Past

This question proved to be the second least popular theme question behind Question 20, and was attempted by seven per cent of the candidates. Only one candidate achieved a perfect score and as in previous years, (c) gave candidates the most difficulty.

The theme questions (15-21) should prove to be easier than Section A questions, since both themes and texts are known far in advance of the examination. It is difficult to understand why candidates do not perform better on these questions. While it is not wise or educational for teachers to encourage candidates to prepare full answers and regurgitate them on examination day, there is nothing to prevent teachers from ensuring that candidates know precisely how to structure an essay on a theme question. The present examination encourages and invites teachers and candidates to explore options. Since nothing is compulsory on the examination, candidates may choose as many as three questions from Section A. With theme and text(s) known, there is hardly an excuse for inadequate preparation. While teachers cannot vouch for candidates' familiarity with texts, they can and perhaps ought to provide model answers. There are, of course, inherent dangers in such a practice, but the advantages are likely to outweigh the disadvantages. At least candidates can be guided to correlate theme and text(s), since this is so often the key to the quality of response.

General

As mentioned on page 2, overall performance in 2004 remained stable. The drop in performance in Paper 02 was counterbalanced by an improved performance in Paper 01. Though no candidate wrote a perfect answer for either Question 1 or Question 2, 9.08 per cent of those answering Question 1 and 13.2 per cent of those answering Question 2, scored 16 or more.

In the questions on drama, teachers and candidates are reminded that "dramatic importance" is crucial to any proper appreciation of drama. It is really about structure and discovering what a particular scene is doing in its desired place and how this placement affects the play. At this level, the emphasis is more on particular scenes than on the entire play. Beginnings, middles, and endings are always crucial to drama, poetry, and prose fiction, and questions will reflect the truth of this observation.

Teachers are to be reminded that we are surely moving to an approach to literature that understands the three modes as related yet distinct. Questions will reflect in one way or another the need to appreciate how poetry functions as poetry and drama as drama. Questions on novels will reflect the need to understand the organic relationship between character, theme, setting and language.

Reading prose, drama, and especially poetry, aloud with sensitivity can go a long way towards appreciating literature. It can make the difference between merely responding to it and understanding how it works.

Paper 02

General Comments

In 2004, against the norm, there were more responses to the poem (Question 2) than to the prose excerpt (Question 1): 9 294 candidates chose Question 2, while 7 875 candidates responded to Question 1. Performance on Question 2 was marginally better than on Question 1.

There was no perfect total score in Paper 02, but there was a score of 28 in both questions. Thirteen per cent of the candidates scored 16 or higher.

Both passages required an understanding of how writers use language to describe and explore the world of ideas and emotions through imaginative structures.

Although the prose excerpt fictionalized Trinidadian/Caribbean history, both questions demanded of candidates an understanding of Standard English.

Candidates who were adept at applying this knowledge performed best.

More attention needs to be paid to identification and explanation of figures of speech. Candidates were able to recognize similes and metaphors, however few recognized examples of puns and paradoxes. Moreover, while candidates were able to identify the figure of speech, in many instances they were unable to explain how the figure of speech worked in the given context. This area of weakness is one we would like to see improve.

There is still a tendency to extrapolate when responding to a critical piece and candidates need to be reminded that they should confine themselves to responding to the given stimuli, rather than drawing from extra-textual sources. In using the question as a platform to preach, some candidates became sidetracked into irrelevance.

APPENDIX - 1

Question #	Text/Theme	No. of Responses	Percentage of Candidates	Pecentage Scores of 18+	No. of Perfect Scores
1	Romeo and Juliet	9451	55	24.73	8
2		1409	8.21	21.29	9
3	Taming of the Shrew	1615	9.41	22.86	1
4		508	2.96	12.40	0
5	St. Joan	301	1.75	5.65	0
6		254	1.48	12.6	0
7	To Kill a Mockingbird	6415	37.38	47.78	11
8		6598	38.45	59.23	27
9	Wide Sargasso Sea	1330	7.75	44.75	16
10		2186	12.73	35.68	3
11	World of Prose	5740	33.45	24.75	12
12		1439	8.38	30.37	0
13	World of Poetry	830	4.83	9.53	1
14		2561	14.92	19.76	0
THEMES					
15	Love and Family Relationships	5243	30.55	12.13	1
16	Freedom	4020	23.42	24.74	2
17	Heroism	6942	40.45	21.61	4
18	Power and Authority	3544	20.65	9.2	1
19	Dreams and Aspirations	4841	28.21	37.38	5
20	Women in Society	981	5.71	4.79	0
21	Attitude to the Past	1276	7.43	12	1

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JUNE 2005

ENGLISH B

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ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JUNE 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2005, the third and final year of this cycle (2003 - 2005), the overall examination performance was quite consistent with that of 2004. Mark allocations were again indicated for the various parts of each question. This helped candidates to manage their time more efficiently.

Generally, candidates demonstrated an acceptable familiarity with texts and understanding of them, and displayed a satisfactory grasp of the mechanics of writing. Still, avoidable errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation are far too common across the board. Teachers and candidates need to be reminded that there is no such word as "alot" in standard English; and that "all right" is the standard form of the phrase; and that "its" is the possessive form of the pronoun (Every dog must have its day); and that "it's" is an abbreviated form of "it is."

Some candidates demonstrated a commendable ability to organize ideas into logical, well-argued paragraphs; to frame their essays effectively with an introduction and conclusion; and to effect a smooth transition from quotation to discussion. Too many, however, made little effort to structure their responses. It must be emphasized that while the candidate is not penalized for sectionalizing responses, more marks are given for a well-developed essay.

While most candidates performed very well in segments of questions requiring recall, most were not as competent in analysing texts. Questions that asked for a discussion of the dramatic significance, or for comments on poetic devices, for instance, tended to be poorly done.

Candidates need to be taught how to read examination questions carefully, and to respond fully or briefly, as instructed, to all parts. Their attention should be drawn to the meaning of instructional words used in the examination such as "Comment on," "Describe," "Identify," "Compare," and "Discuss." These all require different responses, and "briefly" means just what it says. They should know, too, that proper names should ideally be correctly spelt, and the titles of works underlined.

Far too many candidates still disregard the caution that the same text is not to be used to respond to more than one question, and many continue to use texts that are not on the syllabus. Candidates should be reminded that they will be penalized for not observing these instructions.

Intention of Questions

All questions were designed to test the specific skills listed on Page 8 of the syllabus:

1. Knowledge and Insight (Profile 1)
   - (a) Relevance and adequacy of content
   - (b) Relevance and accuracy of illustration
   - (c) Quality/Clarity of argument
2. Organizing of Response (Profile 2)
   - (a) Organizing (Structure and development of relevant ideas or points into coherent paragraphs)
   - (b) Grammar and mechanics of writing (Sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, diction, etc.)

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 01

Section A tests

(a) description, analysis (that is, the ability to break down and select relevant data), and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form, information drawn from various sections of the text), for the purpose of answering a particular question.

(b) the ability to support an argument based on reference to the text, a response to or opinion about a play, novel, short story.

(c) an elementary awareness of the writer's craft (that is, of the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of the language and the presentation of human character and behaviour).

(d) an ability to recognize and distinguish between qualities of feeling as presented in a particular test.

(e) a grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Section B tests

(a) the same skills as indicated for Section A. However, because of its focus on themes and the comparison of texts, Section B requires an equal measure of analysis but a greater effort at synthesis to answer questions adequately.

(b) an appreciation of the social content and context of literature.

Skills and Aptitude Tested in Paper 02

This paper tests

(a) comprehension.

(b) awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet/dramatist achieves his effect).

These skills require

(a) analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function in the passage.

(b) attention to dramatic devices, for example, stage direction and "props".

(c) awareness of the relationship between action and motive.

(d) awareness of the interaction among characters.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01

Section A – Set Texts – Questions 1 - 14

ROMEO AND JULIET

Question 1

This question required an understanding of a crucial moment that turns around the drama. Candidates were required to know why Romeo flees to Mantua. Most recalled correctly the fatal duel between Tybalt and Mercutio, in which Mercutio is killed. Many stated accurately that Romeo feels responsible through his interference for his friend's death. Very few remembered that it was Friar Laurence who suggested to Romeo that he go to Mantua.

Section (b) elicited a few detailed responses, but in the main responses were too generalized.

The vast majority of responses to (c) omitted the Friar's advice and counsel to Romeo. Everyone mentioned the potion (called "portion" and "position") and its effects. Too many, however, gave information beyond the plan.

Question 2

This question required an understanding of the opening scene of the play. This question was generally well handled; (a) and (b) gave little trouble. Section (c), however, indicated how badly prepared candidates are for

a question on dramatic significance. Only 8.19 per cent of candidates attempted this question.

Romeo and Juliet proved a popular choice (the second most popular text) and, hence, an appropriate text. However, there was quite a bit of film interference. Teachers and candidates are reminded that neither video nor film ought to replace the text, on which questions are set.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' knowledge of Act 1, Scene 1 of The Taming of the Shrew. Sections (a) and (b) were well handled by most, but (c) proved difficult to many. Only 6.30 per cent of candidates chose Question 3.

Question 4

This question required an understanding of the most eagerly awaited moment in The Taming of the Shrew: the initial meeting between Petruchio and Katherina. Sections (a) and (b) were generally competently handled, but (c) proved to be the most difficult section of the question. Again, responses evinced how badly prepared candidates are for questions on dramatic significance. Only 7.80 per cent of candidates chose Question 4.

The Taming of the Shrew was not a popular text with candidates and teachers. This is not surprising, since it hardly works as text in 2005. Only the most skilful actors can pull it off on stage.

SAINT JOAN

Question 5

This straightforward question tested the candidates' knowledge of the relationship between Joan and three (3) other major characters. Neither (a) nor (b) posed any problems for the majority of candidates.

Question 6

This was a more problematic question for candidates. Like its counterpart, it required a knowledge of the relationship between Joan and three (3) major characters. While (a) posed few problems, (b) was not well done.

Saint Joan was in 2005, as it was in 2004, the least popular set book.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Question 7

This question was reasonably well done by the majority of candidates. Only Miss Maudie's criticisms posed any problems.

Question 8

This question was more popular than Question 7 and was well done by the majority of candidates. Candidates were well prepared for (a), (b) and (c).

To Kill a Mockingbird proved in the second year of this cycle to be the most popular set text. Its simple, straightforward, linear narrative proved irresistible to 77.10 per cent of the candidates.

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Question 9

This question required a knowledge of a particular moment at the end of the novel. While (a) was generally well handled, (b) posed some difficulties for candidates. Only 8.18 per cent of candidates answered Question 9.

Question 10

Question 10 was more difficult than Question 9 in that it required a knowledge of the role of two women in Antoinette's life. Many more candidates chose Question 10 than Question 9, and the majority of candidates did both (a) and (b) reasonably well. Approximately 15 per cent of candidates chose Question 10.

A WORLD OF PROSE

Question 11

Although Question 11 required a knowledge of only one short story, (b) and (c) proved to be difficult for the majority of candidates. Both Sections (a) and (b) demanded an understanding of point of view and the significance of Hughes' choice of different points of view.

Question 12

Question 12 was better handled than was Question 11 by the majority of candidates. Sections (a) and (b) were straightforward, but (c) proved difficult for many. Few candidates went beyond the obvious.

Questions 11 and 12 elicited responses from 37 per cent of the candidates, and A World of Prose continues to be an attractive option in Section A.

A WORLD OF POETRY

Questions 13 and 14

Neither Question 13 nor Question 14 was well handled by the majority of candidates. Sections (b) and (c) proved problematic to many candidates as did (c) in Question 14. However, at least 8 candidates scored full marks in Question 13 and Question 14.

Happily, A World of Poetry continues to hold its own among set texts.

Section B – Themes – Questions 15 - 21

Question 15 – Love and Family Relationships

About 29 per cent of the candidates answered Question 15, and there were a fair number of very good responses. Candidates handled (a) more comfortably than (b). Choice of texts either positively or adversely affected performance. Repetition of texts was the downfall of many candidates.

Question 16 – Freedom

Out of the 3 140 candidates who chose to respond to Question 16, approximately 60 per cent scored more than 15 marks. While part (a) posed no real problems, part (b) proved a stiff challenge to candidates who were less comfortable with comparison than with description, as required in part (a). There were at least 4 perfect scores.

Question 17 – Heroism

Heroism perennially has been the most popular theme question. This year it proved to be the second most popular theme question attracting responses from 36 per cent of the candidates.

Candidates showed a fairly good grasp of both types of heroism, although some chose to show how the same kind of heroism is illustrated in both texts. Thirty two per cent of candidates scored 15 or higher, and at least 2 candidates scored 29.

Question 18 – Power and Authority

This question elicited responses from 13 per cent of the candidates, only two of whom scored 28, the highest mark. Thirty three per cent of the candidates scored 15 or more.

Question 19 – Dreams and Aspirations

This question rose in popularity from 2004 to become the most popular theme question. Approximately 46 per cent of candidates responded to Question 19. Over 60 per cent scored 15 or more, and there were 6 perfect scores.

Question 20 – Women in Society

This question fell in popularity in 2005. This is surprising in this age of feminism, liberation and the fact that the question encouraged candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how and why a female character exerts influence in two of the texts studied. There was at least one perfect score, and 39 per cent of candidates scored 15 or more.

Question 21 – Attitudes to the Past

This question, in the past, has always been unpopular. Again in 2005, Question 21 was the least popular theme question. Although there were scores of 29, there was not a perfect score.

The theme questions (15-21) should prove to be easier than Section A questions, since both themes and texts are known far in advance of the examination. It is difficult to understand why candidates do not perform better on these questions. While it is not wise or educational for teachers to encourage candidates to prepare full answers and regurgitate them on examination day, there is nothing to prevent teachers from ensuring that candidates know precisely how to structure an essay on a theme question. The present examination encourages and invites teachers and candidates to explore options. Since nothing is compulsory on the examination, candidates may choose as many as three questions from Section A. With theme and text(s) known, there is hardly an excuse for inadequate preparation. While teachers cannot vouch for candidates' familiarity with texts, they can and perhaps ought to provide model answers. There are, of course, inherent dangers in such a practice, but the advantages are likely to outweigh the disadvantages. At least candidates can be guided to correlate theme and text(s), since this is so often the key to the quality of response.

General

As mentioned on page 2, overall performance in 2005 remained stable. The drop in performance in Paper 02 was counterbalanced by an improved performance in Paper 01. Though no candidate wrote a perfect answer for either Question 1 or Question 2, 9.08 per cent of those answering Question 1 and 13.2 per cent of those answering Question 2, scored 16 or more.

In the questions on drama, teachers and candidates are reminded that "dramatic importance" is crucial to any proper appreciation of drama. It is really about structure and discovering what a particular scene is doing in its desired place and how this placement affects the play. At this level, the emphasis is more on particular scenes than on the entire play. Beginnings, middles, and endings are always crucial to drama, poetry, and prose fiction, and questions will reflect the truth of this observation.

Teachers are to be reminded that we are surely moving to an approach to literature that understands the three modes as related yet distinct. Questions will reflect in one way or another the need to appreciate how poetry functions as poetry and drama as drama. Questions on novels will reflect the need to understand the organic relationship between character, theme, setting and language.

Reading prose, drama, and especially poetry aloud with sensitivity can take one a long way towards appreciating literature. It can make the difference between merely responding to it and understanding how it works.

Paper 02

General Comments

In 2005, there were more responses to the prose extract (Question 2) than to the poem (Question 1): 12 432 candidates chose Question 2, while 6 841 candidates responded to Question 1. It was surprising that so many candidates chose what proved to be the more difficult question.

Six candidates got a perfect score on Question 1, while only one received a perfect score on Question 2.

Both passages required an understanding of how writers use language to describe and explore the world of ideas and emotions through imaginative structures.

More attention needs to be paid to identification and explanation of figures of speech. Candidates were able to recognize similes and metaphors; however, few recognized examples of puns and paradoxes. Moreover, while candidates were able to identify the figure of speech, in many instances they were unable to explain how the figure of speech worked in the given context. This area of weakness is one in which the examiners would like to see an improvement.

There is still a tendency to extrapolate when responding to a critical piece and candidates need to be reminded that they should confine themselves to responding to the given stimuli, rather than drawing from extra-textual sources. In using the question as a platform to preach, some candidates became sidetracked into irrelevance.

APPENDIX – 1

Question #	Text/Theme	No. of Responses	Percentage of Candidates
1	Romeo and Juliet	7418	61.8
2		983	8.19
3	Taming of the Shrew	757	6.30
4		936	7.80
5	St. Joan	162	1.35
6		174	1.45
7	To Kill a Mockingbird	3453	28.70
8		5688	47.40
9	Wide Sargasso Sea	982	8.18
10		1760	14.60
11	World of Prose	2619	14.80
12		2619	21.80
13	World of Poetry	788	6.50
14		1086	9.05
THEMES			
15	Love and Family Relationships	2280	19.00
16	Freedom	3140	26.10
17	Heroism	4365	36.30
18	Power and Authority	1573	13.10
19	Dreams and Aspirations	6416	53.40
20	Women in Society	1193	9.90
21	Attitude to the Past	1052	8.70

N.B. Numbers and percentages are based on 70% of candidate population.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2006

ENGLISH B

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ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JUNE 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2006, the first year of the first cycle of the new syllabus (2006-2008) the overall examination performance declined from that of 2005. In 2006 44.65 per cent of candidates achieved Grades III and above compared with 58.93 per cent in 2005. Mark allocations were indicated for the various parts of the questions on drama and on poetry. Mark allocations were not indicated for the prose questions, so students faced an additional challenge here of structuring the essay without guidance.

Generally, candidates demonstrated an acceptable familiarity with the texts, and there was evidence of an increased personal involvement with the material and an emotional response to the conflicts and struggles being discussed. Avoidable errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation were still too frequent. Teachers should ensure that students can spell words that they will inevitably need when writing on a specific text: Macbeth, for instance, stole the throne (not thrown), he was a valiant soldier (not "solider") and he was misled by the witches' prophecies (not "profisies") or some such variant). The spelling of proper names should be mastered before the examination, and titles of texts should be underlined.

Some candidates demonstrated excellent ability in organising their responses into logical, well-developed paragraphs and used smooth transitions to form those paragraphs into a well-crafted essay, complete with an introduction and a conclusion. They were able to introduce relevant quotations and move from quotation to discussion. Too many candidates, though, wrote sectionalised responses to the different parts of the question (sometimes even on separate pages) **instead of using the question breakdown to shape their responses into a flowing essay.**

Again this year, parts of questions that required simple recall were generally done well, but weaker candidates were not so competent when called on to analyse situations. Sections of questions dealing with dramatic devices or poetic devices were markedly less well done than those that required familiarity with the "story". Since this new syllabus is genre-based, it is important for teachers to guide students to examine dramatic and poetic devices and to be able to discuss their effectiveness. A large number of students simply omitted the part of the question requiring comments on dramatic or poetic devices. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of answering each part of the question, particularly in the prose fiction section where there is no sectionalising to prompt them. Words such as "Comment on", "Identify", "Discuss", "Compare" require different responses, and candidates must be taught how to answer such questions.

Teachers should discuss with students the importance of care in selecting their questions. This year many candidates opted to do questions for which they were unprepared—particularly in the prose fiction section of the paper. The question which dealt with a schooldays experience, for instance, was not suitable if the candidate was prepared to write only on <u>The Pearl</u> and <u>Green Days by the River.</u> Students also need to be taught, to focus on the specific requirements of the question and answer each part as thoroughly as possible with supporting evidence from the text—not to narrate the story, and not to write everything they know whether relevant or not. Teachers are reminded that students may choose only one question from each section. Quite a large number of candidates wrote on both of the plays, wasting time and losing marks in the process.

The following table shows a breakdown of the candidates' choices.

APPENDIX - 1

	Question #	Text	No of Responses	Percentage of Candidates
Drama	1	Macbeth	8161	42.3
	2		5917	30.7
	3	Glass Menagerie	1523	7.9
	4		3714	19.2
Poetry	5	World of Poetry	16246	84.2
	6		2761	14.3
Prose	7	*	9525	49.4
	8		6420	33.3
	9		1271	6.6
	10		1841	9.5

* Students were required to select one West Indian novel and one non-West Indian novel for comparison from the following:

West Indian

Crick Crack Monkey	Merle Hodge
Green Days by the River	Michael Anthony

Non West Indian

A Separate Peace	John Knowles
The Pearl	John Steinbeck

Intention of Questions

All questions are designed to test the specific skills listed on Page 25 of the syllabus:

Understanding

Knowledge of Text and Insight

i) Relevance and adequacy of content

ii) Relevance and accuracy of examples

Expression

Organisation of Response

i) Structure and development of responses

ii) Clear and logical argument

Quality of Language

i) Clarity and appropriateness of expression used

ii) Mechanics of writing (sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling)

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 01

This paper tests

i) comprehension

ii) awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

These skills require

i) analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.

ii) attention to dramatic devices such as stage directions and "props".

iii) awareness of the relationship between action and motive.

iv) awareness of the interaction among characters.

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus)

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living.

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question).

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism.

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses.

v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour. This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02.

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text.

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

General Comments on Student Performance in Paper 01

Because this new syllabus is genre-specific, it will be necessary for teachers to devote more time to dealing with poetic and dramatic devices, and to look more closely at the strategies used by prose writers—setting, characterization, dialogue, and so on. Students have to be sensitised to the undercurrents of mood, conflict and irony in drama, and need to understand how the stage directions function. In poetry, they need to be enabled to recognise when metaphoric language is being used, and not insist on a literal reading.

A few candidates attempted to write in essay format in Paper 1. Students need to be advised that each answer should be written on a separate line. In addition, each genre should start on a new page.

Question 1: Drama

Most candidates responded with compassion to the situation of Annie and Carlton. Many candidates did not understand that Annie wanted a job, but went for limited responses: she needed bread, money or a place to stay. In responding to Question (c) about Jean's entrance, many candidates confused *entrance* with *presence*, and commented on the effect on Annie of Jean's entrance instead of the change of mood that would affect the audience. Few candidates gained full marks on Question (d) which required them to examine the words "gentle irony" (i.e. both gentle and ironic), and some students did not know the meaning of "radiant" and so had difficulty with Question (e). For Question (f) few candidates saw the contrast between Carlton and Jean (e.g. class) and some did not understand the word "impact." A few candidates gained full marks for this last question.

Question 2: Poetry

Question (a), many candidates kept to the literal level, not seeing the sleep/death metaphor in the poem. Others, misreading the poem in another way, maintained that the forest imagery was the literal meaning of the poem, and for Question (e) they discussed "process" using terms like deforestation, evaporation, condensation and photosynthesis. This tendency to hold on to a perceived literal meaning proved the downfall of many candidates.

Question 3: Prose

Candidates evidently found this passage exciting, and responses for the most part were satisfactory. Many, though, did not realise that Jonathan was a seagull. Many did not understand the phrase "terminal velocity" Question (c), and many could not identify examples of poetic language in the passage or explain what was poetic about those examples.

Paper 02

Section A – Drama – Questions 1 - 4

MACBETH

Too many candidates attempted questions on both of the plays. Only one question must be selected from this section.

Question 1

This question required an understanding of Macbeth's guilty fears and his ambitious desires after the killing of Duncan. It also required an understanding of irony as a literary device, and invited the candidate to link Macbeth's illicit rise to power with his tragic downfall, so tracing the justice implicit in the unfolding of events. The section on irony proved difficult for some candidates, and weaker ones tended to provide vague comments on the topic of justice, not providing specific supporting evidence from the play.

Question 2

This question focused on Macduff's motive for revenge and his role in Macbeth's downfall. Many candidates ignored the words "at that time", and wrote about Macbeth's fears of Macduff later in the play. Section (b) was generally adequately done, but section (c) proved challenging. Candidates were sometimes not able to distinguish between Macduff's role and his suitability as an avenger. Most dealt well with the rallying of forces against the tyrant and with Macduff's personal revenge; only the better students understood that Macduff, since he himself was not going to be king, was God's righteous tool in delivering Scotland from the usurper.

Candidates were almost unanimous in describing Macduff as having been born by Caesarean section. Surely, though, "from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd" presents us with a much less sanitised image; presumably he was either cut from his mother after her death or he miraculously survived when his mother's belly was brutally ripped open by invading soldiers.

Candidates need to know that the words "Say whether he is a fit avenger" require more than a yes/no response. Supporting evidence is always required.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Question 3

Candidates were asked to say what could be learnt from the setting as the curtain rises on the play, to relate the sequence of events in the first scene and to outline the major themes that emerge in this scene. Most were able to identify aspects of setting, but did not say what we could learn from them. Most were able to relate the events, though not in the correct order, and some drew on material from outside this scene. The last part of the question tended to be poorly done, with candidates listing the "themes" from the last syllabus (love and family relationships, freedom, power and authority, etc.) without linking them to what they observed in the events and setting of this scene.

Question 4

This question focused on the influence of men on powerful women (Mr Wingfield/Amanda) and oppressed women (Jim/ Laura). The most challenging part of the question was the section in which candidates were required to say how Williams makes Wingfield's influence appear "dramatically striking". Here it became evident that the play's dramatic devices had not been adequately dealt with by teachers. Many candidates correctly identified the life-size photo of Wingfield as an example of a device that is "dramatically striking", but ignored the prompt telling them that 6 marks were available, and failed to expand on the impact of the photo.

Section B – Poetry – Questions 5 - 6

General comments.

Examiners noticed a widespread absence of any evidence that candidates were being taught to read poetry as a genre. Many candidate scored their marks on the (a) and (b) parts of the poetry questions, but were very weak on the (c) part, the part that tests for understanding of the genre. Many candidates had no idea what an image was and gave narrative instead of image in answer to Question 5c. The narrative merely repeated the material in parts (a) or (b), the basic recall and comprehension sections.

Some candidates who were able to correctly select images, did not know what to do with them, so they simply listed or paraphrased the relevant quotations. Others were a bit stronger and were able to say what the effect of the image was, but very few were able to say HOW the image worked to achieve this effect. It is important that students be taught the basic vocabulary of poetry (terms such as 'image' for example cannot be given layman's interpretations), be able to identify and NAME basic figures of speech (e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration), be able to identify basic structural devices (repetition, rhyme) and be able to explain HOW in particular poems these devices work to create certain meanings and effects. This does not mean students are expected to exhibit the sophistication of a CAPE student. But the fact that significant numbers were able to handle Section c of both questions indicates that these requirements are not unrealistic. They are in fact an excellent preparation for CAPE.

Question 5

Students clearly enjoyed these two poems and wrote with conviction. However, they need to be taught the skills of writing a comparative analysis. Many listed the characteristics of one mother and then those of the other instead of finding points of comparison to show the ways in which the two women are similar/are different.

Question 6

Martin Carter's poem proved more accessible to students than Auden's. Candidates were able to identify the oppressors, but were not so sure about what they do. The section requiring candidates to say what makes the oppressors appear mysterious was clearly problematic. Candidates generally wrote fairly well on the horror communicated in each poem. A number of candidates were able to write well on the way Auden uses the sonnet form to achieve his purpose, and many, too, were able to discuss the effect of the oxymorons and other devices that Carter employs.

Section C – Prose Fiction – Questions 7 – 10

General Comments

Candidates need to be reminded that they may select their texts only from the four listed in the syllabus. Texts from the previous syllabus may not be used, nor may plays from either this or the former syllabus. Students must be advised on choosing a question appropriate to the two texts they wish to write on. To choose The Pearl to write about an experience from schooldays was plain foolhardy!

Students must be taught to focus on the requirements of the question and not merely retell the story of the novel. The purpose of the questions in this section is to encourage comparison—whether or not that word is used explicitly in the question, so students need to be taught strategies for structuring their essay to bring out points of similarity and difference.

Since the questions on prose fiction are not sectionalised, candidates need to be guided by teachers on how to structure their essays. Generally each essay will fall into four parts—two parts for each novel. For instance, in Question 7, it was necessary (a) to identify and explain the challenge faced, and then (b) to show the ways in which the major character moved to maturity as he/she faced that challenge. In Question 8, the candidate needed (a) to describe the way that class prejudice expressed itself in the society depicted, and then (b) to show how the major character was affected by that prejudice. Students need to be shown how to read the question, to break it down into its component sections and then to write about each section as fully as possible. A reasonable rule of thumb would be to assume approximately equal marks for each of the four sections.

Generally it was found that candidates had a grasp of the story line, but often had not taken time to probe into the deep conflicts and moral questions beneath the surface. More class discussion of issues presented in the novels seems to be called for.

Question 7

Candidates who did well in this question were those who were able to identify life's challenges and analyse ways in which dealing with those challenges had transformed the major character into a mature person. They were able to "use" the novels to support the points they made and presented their points in a clear, logical manner.

Question 8

Surprisingly few candidates used Crick Crack Monkey to respond to this question, though it would have been eminently suitable, and many used A Separate Peace , which was certainly not the wisest choice. Social class was not always identified. Misreadings abounded: Kino in The Pearl was considered to be "greedy" instead of ambitious, and was accused of "wanting to be like the same whites he despised"; Mr Gidharee in Green Days was seen as an "exploiter/manipulator" rather than as being interested in Shell's welfare. Candidates working with Crick Crack Monkey compared Tantie and Aunt Beatrice instead of addressing the question.

Question 9

Only A Separate Peace and Crick Crack Monkey were suitable choices for this question, and students who chose the other two texts handicapped themselves from the outset. Surprisingly, since it asked for discussion of a schooldays experience, the question was generally not well done. Quite a few candidates moved away from the novels to relate their own schooldays experiences. They need to be reminded that while literature often mirrors our own experiences, all examples supporting points made must be from the literary texts.

Question 10

This question on setting was well done, which suggests that teachers are focusing more on the techniques of the novelist. This is encouraging. Green Days and The Pearl were the popular choices, though A Separate Peace allowed for rich discussion by candidates who had fully understood the symbolism used extensively in this novel.

General

Overall performance in 2006 remained stable. Candidates tended to do better in Paper 1 than in Paper 2. This is probably because students need more help with essay-writing skills. In the poetry questions, particularly, more development of points was required. Narration was a problem in the responses to questions on prose fiction.

Teachers are reminded that this syllabus focuses on the three genres, and candidates will be examined accordingly. For drama, candidates need to be able to consider a given scene in detail and show how its events, mood and placement contribute to the play. For poetry, candidates need to be able to identify and discuss the effectiveness of poetic devices and to move from quotation to analysis. For prose fiction, candidates need to move away from re-telling the story to focusing on the requirements of the question. Aspects of the novel like character, conflict, theme, and language all need to be discussed in the classroom. In all three genres, candidates should be urged to write their answers in well-constructed, logically flowing essays; it is not satisfactory for them to present a sectionalised answer.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON THE CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2007

ENGLISH B

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JUNE 2007

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2007, approximately 19,363 candidates wrote the examination. This examination, the second for the revised syllabus, showed a significant improvement in candidates' performance. In 2006, 44.68 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I - III. This number increased significantly in 2007 with 70.26 per cent achieving Grades I - III.

Generally, candidates demonstrated an acceptable familiarity with the texts, and there was evidence of an increased personal involvement with the material and an emotional response to the conflicts and struggles being discussed.

Again this year, parts of questions that required simple recall were generally done well, but weaker candidates were not so competent when called on to analyse situations. Sections of questions dealing with dramatic devices or poetic devices were markedly less well done than those that required familiarity with the "story". Since this new syllabus is genre-based, it is important for teachers to guide students to examine dramatic and poetic devices and to be able to discuss their effectiveness. A large number of candidates simply omitted the part of the question requiring comments on dramatic or poetic devices.

Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of answering each part of the question, particularly in the prose fiction section where there is no sectionalizing to prompt them. Words such as "Comment on", "Identify", "Discuss", "Compare" require different responses, and "briefly" means just that.

Students need to be taught to focus on the specific requirements of the question and answer each part as thoroughly as possible with supporting evidence from the text – not to narrate the story, and not to write everything they know whether relevant or not.

Teachers are reminded that students may choose only one question from each section.

Intention of Questions

All questions are designed to test the specific skills listed on Page 25 of the syllabus:

Understanding

Knowledge of Text and Insight

(i) relevance and adequacy of content

(ii) relevance and accuracy of examples

Expression

Organization of Response

(i) structure and development of responses

(ii) clear and logical argument

Quality of Language

(i) clarity and appropriateness of expression used

(ii) mechanics of writing (sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling)

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 01

This paper tests

(i) comprehension

(ii) awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

These skills require

(i) analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage

(ii) attention to dramatic devices such as stage directions and "props"

(iii) awareness of the relationship between action and motive

(iv) awareness of the interaction among characters

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus)

(i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make a rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living.

(ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question).

(iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism.

(iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses.

(v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour. This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 2.

(vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text.

(vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Paper 01

Comments on Candidates' Performance

Question 1: Drama

Overwhelmingly, candidates demonstrated their understanding and appreciation of the immediacy of the drama, as they responded energetically to the episode. They recognized the need to infer the feelings of the characters from the stage directions as indicated by the question, and linked the evidence to the feelings of excitement, tension and anxiety. A major contribution of the study of literature is to enable students to name and distinguish emotions and feelings. Some candidates did not get beyond the cliché of 'having the spirit of carnival' or the 'carnival feeling'. Some demonstrated an inability to use evidence to support their estimate of Pa's importance in the household. Conclusions that Pa was the sole breadwinner cannot be supported by 'your father's costume take every cent we had.' Exercises to make inferences from evidence are invaluable in all genres. Thankfully, the vast majority of candidates were able to demonstrate mastery of this skill on this occasion. Determining the conflict in this scene required analysis of the evidence. Most candidates recognized the central point of conflict, and full marks, achieved by many, were awarded for identifying the underlying cause. Most candidates correctly identified excitement and tension as the best description of the atmosphere, but some did not use the evidence from the two main characters to justify their answer. The marks allocated to a question is a useful guide to the fullness of an expected answer, The purpose of Question 1 (e) was to test candidates' appreciation of the extract as a scene to be viewed on stage. A candidate could have scored three marks for any three of the following:

- the music;
- the humorous drunken song at the beginning;
- the quarrel between *Ursula* and *Marilyn* adding tension;
- the suspense wondering whether *Pa* will support *Marilyn* against *Ursula*;
- *Marilyn's* dancing;
- the contrast between the merriment outside and the tension within;
- the suspense wondering what exactly *Pa's* costume is for;
- the suspense wondering if *Marilyn* will get to play mas;
- any other reasonable answer focusing on dramatic qualities (effect on watching audience)

Many candidates had difficulty in distinguishing between the carnival excitement that happens unseen offstage and the anxiety that predominates onstage. Performance on the drama was considerably better than last year. The mean performance increased from 5.77 in 2006 to 10.59 in 2007.

Question 2: Poetry

The responses revealed that most candidates struggled with the experience of the poem this year. While most candidates correctly identified the 'arms' as bayonet-blade, bullet heads and cartridges or their synonyms, some candidates did not recognize this central idea and were therefore handicapped. The speaker was suggesting that the boy should examine the arms and understand the damage they can cause. Many candidates strained reasonable interpretation when they extrapolated that the boy was forced to be a heartless mass murderer. While most candidates were able to identify an example of personification, they were unable to comment adequately on its effectiveness. While some adept abstract-thinking poetry readers indicated courage, endurance and maturity as the things the boy lacks, many restated what was mentioned in the poem but found difficulty in explaining why his lacking them was significant. The use of the language of suggestion was tested in (e) but not many were able to identify appropriate phrases. Candidates could have scored the full two marks for any two of the following:

- His teeth seem for laughing round an apple

- To stroke
- Nuzzle in the hearts of lad - suggests cuddling
- Fingers supple
- Thickness of curls

Question 3: Prose

The delightful prose passage posed some difficulty for candidates. Most candidates were able to earn at least two marks by providing evidence from what they learnt about the narrator from the first three paragraphs. Evidence that the narrator and her sister were from a mixed cultural heritage required mention of both American and Haitian roots, and the passage abounds with evidence of cultural practices, values, beliefs, celebrations and cuisine. The cause of the conflict between Ma and the girls was represented by a specific event, their request to be pall bearers, which heightened the ongoing conflict of values between the generations. Many candidates identified the specific incident but ignored the underlying cause. Most candidates were able to identify cases of Ma's speech without the quotation marks, but the use of italics for emphasis, irony or sarcasm was not widely understood. Generally, candidates' inability to earn the maximum in responding to one way in which the father is significant reflects the need for a greater teaching focus on strategies of close reading of prose extracts, demonstrating knowledge of structure, point of view, contrast of characters, episode and theme elaboration, each of which could be exploited in this case.

Paper 02

General Comments on Candidates' Performance

Since two of the questions on this paper are comparative analyses, it is important for candidates to be trained in the skills of structuring a comparative essay. Candidates need to be instructed on how to read a question carefully, paying attention to each section, and, where applicable, noting the proportion of marks being awarded. **They should be encouraged to use the sections in the questions as a guide to structuring their essays, but should not present their response in segments—and certainly not with each segment on a separate page**. Vocabulary building is necessary; students need not merely to be able to identify an example of a character's typical behaviour or an example of mood shift, but should be able to *name* the character trait or mood that is being illustrated. Names of people and places should be correctly spelt, and problem spellings should be anticipated and prepared for. Correct spelling of words like *throne*, *soldier*, *prophecy*, *heir* can be taught, for example, when preparing candidates to answer a question on *Macbeth*.

For the Poetry section, it is important for candidates not only to identify and give an example of a figure of speech, but also to discuss its effectiveness in that poem.

For the Drama section, it is important for candidates not only to know in detail what takes place in any particular scene, but to be able to connect that scene with the entire play in terms of plot, theme, character revelation, mood and conflict.

Section A - Drama

Questions 1 - 4

Too many candidates attempted questions on both of the plays. Only one question may be selected from this section. Teaching should prepare candidates to discuss the relationship of a particular scene to the total effect of the play. Candidates need not merely to be able to recount the events or describe character; they should be able to comment on dramatic techniques such as contrast, irony, foreshadowing, suspense, etc., and, in modern plays, on the stage setting, use of lighting, music, costumes, and so on.

Candidates should be reminded that the segments in the questions are intended to guide in essay planning. Too many candidates ignore the instruction to write each answer in essay format.

MACBETH

Question 1

This question focused on the mental and moral deterioration of Macbeth during the course of the play. Candidates generally scored well in part (a), which asked for the circumstances and motive in four killings carried out or ordered by Macbeth. In part (b), where they were asked to find evidence of his mental and moral deterioration, some candidates were less confident, and many failed to differentiate between mental, on the one hand, and moral on the other. It was clear that many candidates could easily recall Macbeth's actions, but had not gone to the next stage of evaluating them. The final section tended to be poorly done: candidates knew when they felt admiration or sympathy for the protagonist, but were quite at sea when asked to comment on the effect of Shakespeare's strategy in manipulating our emotions. Time management was also a problem, and candidates need to be aware of the marks available for each section of the question.

Question 2

This was the less popular of the two Macbeth questions, and it was generally handled slightly less competently than Question 1. This may have been because it focused on a small, more specific, portion of the play. Candidates were able to outline the events in the scene identified, but had difficulty naming the various moods created – possibly a matter of limited vocabulary rather than of insensitivity. Most candidates managed to show the contrast between Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff, though weaker candidates did not understand "contrasted", and tried instead to find similarities between the two women. Most candidates were able to connect the events in the scene to Macduff's role as avenger in the final battle.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Question 3

This question focused on Amanda's character and her role in the tragic events in this play. Candidates were mostly able to recall in detail the incident referred to in the prompt quotation. In the second section of the question, they were generally able to illustrate Amanda's character traits, but not to name them. This inability appears to result from limited vocabulary, and, perhaps, non-familiarity with the word "traits". The final section, in which candidates were required to show how Amanda's character traits contribute to the tragedy within her family, was poorly done on the whole. Again, the pattern emerged that candidates were able to handle recall questions, but were weaker when it came to analysis.

Question 4

This question required the candidates to discuss the psychological implications of family relationships in the play. Most candidates were able to give evidence of Laura's inferiority complex. Most were less comfortable applying the comment to Tom – some candidates apparently being thrown off course by the fact that Tom is not present when the comment is made. Certainly detecting a sense of inferiority in Tom takes more insight than detecting the same problem in Laura, and Tom, of course, fights hard to preserve his self-esteem. Predictably, part (c), requiring a comment on "significance and dramatic effect", was poorly answered. Candidates need to step back from the words and actions of any particular scene and ask themselves how the part contributes to the whole; they must be able to discuss the dramatic impact of any specific moment in the play. Terms like *irony, climax, foreshadowing* must be part of the candidate's working vocabulary.

Section B – Poetry

Questions 5 - 6

General comments

There is room for improvement in the teaching of poetry. For Question 6, there were too many scripts in which candidates totally misinterpreted both poems. For Question 5, some candidates submitted opinions based on experiences extraneous to the poems. Many candidates scored their good marks on the (a) and (b) parts of the poetry questions, but were very weak on the (c) part, the part that tests for understanding of the genre.

Candidates tended to be unable to name devices used in the poems, or, if they knew the name of a device, were unable to provide an example of that device. Others named a device and gave an example, but were unable to comment on how the device functioned in that particular poem. Many candidates merely quoted parts of the poem that were particularly striking and commented on them, but were not able to actually name the device being used.

It is important that students be taught the basic vocabulary of poetry, be able to identify and NAME figures of speech (e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration), be able to identify basic structural devices (repetition, rhyme) and be able to explain HOW in particular poems these devices work to create certain meanings and effects.

The classroom experience of a poem should include discussion of point of view, tone, allusion, imagery, irony, contrast, the appropriateness of the title, and other such devices.

Question 5

Candidates clearly enjoyed these two poems and wrote with enthusiasm. However, they need to be taught the skills of writing a comparative analysis. Candidates tended to deal with first one and then the other poem, with little attention to comparison. Some candidates misinterpreted item b) ii (Comment on the effects on the children), and offered a general discussion of the benefits of discipline instead of confining their observations to the content of the poems. The section on poetic devices proved the most challenging.

Question 6

Generally well done. Again, the first two sections of the question, which required recall and comprehension, were handled far better than section c), which asked for a discussion of poetic devices. It is important for candidates to be able to identify devices/techniques used by the poet, and to discuss their effectiveness in the poem being analysed. Fewer candidates attempted this question than did Question 5, but performance in Question 6 was slightly better.

Section C – Prose Fiction

Questions 7-12

The Examining Committee learnt that not all examination centres had distributed the erratum sheet that accompanied this year's examination paper (Paper 2). To deal with this problem, a decision was made to accept answers to any of the six questions (four on the original paper and two on the erratum sheet).

In the comments that follow, the questions on the erratum sheet are re-numbered 11 and 12 to prevent confusion.

General comments

Candidates need to be reminded that they may select their texts only from the four listed in the syllabus. Texts from the previous syllabus may not be used, nor may plays from either this or the former syllabus. Many candidates wrote on the "novels" *Macbeth* and *The Glass Menagerie*.

Candidates must be taught to focus on the requirements of the question and not merely retell the story. They should avoid trying to answer all four questions in one essay.

The purpose of the questions in this section is to encourage comparison—whether or not that word is used explicitly in the question, so students need to be taught strategies for structuring their essay to bring out points of similarity and difference.

Since the questions on prose fiction are not sectionalized, candidates need to be guided by teachers on how to structure their essays. Many candidates also need guidance on correct paragraphing.

Candidates should be encouraged to study all four of the novels on the syllabus, and should be taught to use their reading time to select a question carefully. Story-telling should be avoided, proper names should be correctly spelt, and titles should be underlined.

Question 7

This question allowed candidates to explore the dynamics of relationships. The better candidates understood that the question required them to see the positive and negative elements in ONE relationship, and they handled this well. Weaker candidates tended to discuss one relationship that was "joyous and fulfilling", and a different relationship that was "sorrowful and burdensome"—missing the point of the question.

Question 8

This question focused on the difficulties of growing up as experienced by a major character in both a West Indian and a non-West Indian novel. Some candidates ignored the instruction to focus on a major character, and selected a minor figure instead. The main weaknesses in responses to this question were story-telling instead of analysis and failure to structure the essay as a comparison.

Question 9

There were not many superior responses for this question. Many candidates were able to identify family relationships but could not say how the relationship affected a major character. In fact, many candidates gave confusing answers and failed to focus on the question. Some candidates limited their discussion to a relationship of the major character with only one other family member, and this sometimes negatively affected their scores.

Question 10

Candidates were asked to discuss ways in which a major character in each of the texts selected was affected by the illness or death of someone close to him/her. The more thoughtful responses focused on the psychological effects of dealing with sickness or death of someone close while the weaker responses confined their discussion to physical changes that resulted. In the latter case, essays tended to slide into story-telling instead of analysing the deeper consequences of coping with these difficult experiences.

Question 11

Candidates who understood what was meant by "landscape" tended to do very well on this question; they had evidently been well prepared. Too many candidates simply did not know what the term means, and used it synonymously with physical or social environment – especially those who wrote on *Crick Crack Monkey*. Many candidates wrote about the behaviour of characters rather than about changes in attitude and personality. Some very good responses dealt with the evident symbolism in the landscape in, for instance, *Green Days by the River* and *A Separate Peace*. Responses on *The Pearl* and *Crick Crack Monkey* were not generally very good.

Question 12

This was by far the most popular prose question. The question invited candidates to consider the way a major character copes with a challenge during the course of the novel, but still has more problems to deal with as the novel draws to an end. Misinterpretations of the question abounded, with many candidates dealing with one challenge faced early in the novel and several more towards the end of the novel. Responses that ranged over a series of challenges tended to fall into story-telling. Some candidates selected characters that were inappropriate to the discussion: Leper, Juana, Tantie, for instance. Nevertheless, some of the better candidates came to grips with the requirements of the question, and discussed the fact that, even after dealing with one big challenge, Gene has to go on living with his guilty memories, Kino has to rebuild his life after the loss of his son, Tee has no sense of identity as she migrates to England, and Shell faces many difficulties as he enters married life with Rosalie.

Appendix 1 shows the Analysis of the candidates' responses.

General

Overall performance in 2007 showed a significant improvement over that of 2006. In Paper 01, the drama question was done better than either poetry or prose, which seemed to present equal difficulty to candidates. In Paper 02, candidates performed similarly in each of the three genres.

APPENDIX – 1

Question #	Text	No of Responses	Percentage of Candidates
Drama			
1	Macbeth	11148	57.5
2		2191	11.3
3	Glass Menagerie	1455	7.5
4		4592	23.7
Poetry			
5	World of Poetry	11594	59.8
6		7624	39.3
Prose Fiction	*		
7		4424	22.8
8		4023	20.7
9		981	5.0
10		1185	6.1
11		914	4.7
12		7788	40.2

*Students were required to select one West Indian novel and one non-West Indian novel for comparison from the following:

West Indian

Crick Crack Monkey	Merle Hodge
Green Days by the River	Michael Anthony

Non West Indian

A Separate Peace	John Knowles
The Pearl	John Steinbeck

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON THE CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2008

ENGLISH B

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ENGLISH B

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2008, the final year of the first cycle of the new syllabus (2006-2008) the overall examination performance was slightly below that of 2007. Mark allocations were indicated for the various parts of the questions on drama and on poetry, and candidates were able to respond to the weighting given to each section. Mark allocations were not indicated for the prose questions, so in this Profile candidates were given greater latitude for structuring their responses.

Candidates were generally quite familiar with the texts, and there was pleasing evidence of personal involvement with the material as candidates responded with enthusiasm and emotion to the conflicts and issues raised.

Again this year, parts of questions requiring simple recall were consistently done well, but analysis of situations proved difficult for weaker candidates. Sections of questions dealing with dramatic devices or poetic devices were markedly less well done than those that required familiarity with the "story"; however, a number of superior scripts suggest that students are well able to master these aspects of literary studies once they are carefully taught. It was heartening to note that most candidates can name various devices though they often failed to identify the device in the text. Discussion of the effectiveness of the device in conveying the theme of the work tended to be a challenge for all but the really good candidates. On the whole, candidates tended to score low marks in sections of the questions requiring comments on dramatic or poetic devices.

Although questions are sectionalized, candidates need to be reminded that their responses should be in essay format. Far too many candidates sectionalize their responses—even putting the sections on separate pages in their answer booklets. There is need, too, for students to be taught techniques for producing flowing essays; connectives were noticeably absent, particularly where candidates were attempting comparisons.

Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of answering each part of the question, particularly in the prose fiction section where there is no sectionalizing to prompt them. They should also be guided by the number of marks allotted to each section, ensuring that they provide a full response when several marks are available.

It was evident that many candidates did not understand prompt words such as "Comment on", "Identify", "Explain", "Discuss", "Compare". Students need to be taught to focus on the specific requirements of the question and answer each part as thoroughly as possible with supporting evidence from the text—not to narrate the story, and not to write everything they know whether relevant or not. When the question asks for the candidate's opinion ("Which of the two poems do you find more disturbing?"), the response must be supported by evidence from the text; it is not acceptable in a literature examination for the candidate merely to draw from personal experience.

Teachers are reminded that students may choose only one question from each section.

Intention of Questions

All questions are designed to test the specific skills listed on Page 25 of the syllabus:
Understanding

Knowledge of Text and Insight

(i) relevance and adequacy of content

(ii) relevance and accuracy of examples

Expression

Organization of Response

(i) structure and development of responses

(ii) clear and logical argument

Quality of Language

(i) clarity and appropriateness of expression used

(ii) mechanics of writing (sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling)

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 01

This paper tests

(i) comprehension

(ii) awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

These skills require

(i) analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.

(ii) attention to dramatic devices such as stage directions and "props"

(iii) awareness of the relationship between action and motive

(iv) awareness of the interaction among characters

Skills and Aptitudes Tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus)

(i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living.

(ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question).

(iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism.

(iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses.

(v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour. This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 2.

(vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text.

(vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Comments on Student Performance in Paper 1

When compared with the last two years, the questions on the 2008 Paper 01 reflected a greater focus on understanding literary techniques and their effectiveness in the genre rather than questions testing understanding of concepts embedded in the extracts.

More marks were also allocated to questions that demanded a higher level of interpretation and analysis. *Teachers and candidates should note that this trend in the weighting of marks in Paper 01 will continue.*

Average performance in Drama (6.18) was better than Poetry (5.54) or Prose (5.03) and this surprisingly disappointing performance belied the engagement with the experiences in the extracts which many if not most candidates displayed. Candidates are clearly excited by the extracts. What they need to display now is disciplined thought in response to the questions.

The first two questions on the drama allowed candidates who were most discriminating to gain maximum marks by providing complete details. They recognized that patrons were normally expected in the shop and this earned the third mark as they also mentioned the two named characters. Most candidates earned 2 of the three marks for identifying two named characters. The same gradation occurred in response to (b) with the more discerning candidates who recognized and mentioned Petit Belle Lily's different interest to the love relationship thus earning the full 2 marks.

This trend was even more marked in candidates' responses to (c) and (d) which tested candidates' understanding of the drama as a staged performance. In (c) candidates who included both the 'preparation for' and the 'crowning of' the stick-fighting champion earned the full 2 marks. Candidates were able to earn marks for citing appropriate evidence which is replete in the stage directions as well as in the action of Briscoe and his conversation with Joe. Dramatic techniques and candidates' comments on their effectiveness were the focus of (d), and here only an exceptional few earned total marks. *We cannot overstress that the focus of this paper is to allow students to demonstrate their appreciation and awareness of the literary genres and how they work.* Candidates should avoid the vague generalities and identify specifically how, for example, Briscoe dramatizes his transformation from an inconspicuously dressed customer into the potential king stick fighter in his miming.

The same pattern of focus on the literary qualities of the genre is reflected in the questions on the Poetry and Prose passages. Unfortunately and disappointingly, even when candidates identified similes they were not able to comment competently on their effectiveness. Often, they gave general or vague commentary on outstanding similes. A few exercises in close reading of texts and focused response to the writer's intention and effect would be excellent preparation for the required skills. In the prose passage, several candidates were reluctant to recognize the speaker's flawed perspective and this led to fatal misinterpretations of this

humorous passage. Candidates and teachers are again encouraged to approach Paper 01 with a determination to confidently apply the skills they honed in the study of the set texts in the genres to unseen passages.

General Comments on Student Performance in Paper 02

Once again it was evident that candidates need to be trained in the skills of structuring a comparative essay. They need to be instructed on how to read a question carefully, paying attention to each section, and, where applicable, noting the proportion of marks being awarded. While they are expected to use the sections in the questions as a guide to structuring their essays, candidates should not present their response in segments—and certainly not with each segment on a separate page. Vocabulary building is necessary; students need not merely to be able to identify an example of a character's typical behavior or an example of mood shift, but should be able to *name* the character trait or mood that is being illustrated. Names of people and places should be correctly spelt, and problem spellings should be anticipated and prepared for. Teachers are urged to anticipate and deal with key words that may be needed by the student. Fascinating spellings turned up for words such as *Caucasian, prejudice, Ku Klux Klan, sarcasm, allusion, supremacy, crucifixion, scorpion*—all words that must have been used in class discussions.

It was evident that many candidates were better prepared this year to deal with poetic devices. Three steps are necessary: naming the device; quoting or otherwise clearly identifying the device; and, thirdly, saying what effect that particular device produces in relation to the overall intention of the poem.

For the Drama section, it is important for candidates not only to know in detail what takes place in any particular scene, but to be able to connect that scene with the entire play in terms of plot, theme, character revelation, mood, conflict, and so on. Candidates should understand the symbolic nature of stage props, and be able to relate those visual symbols to the themes of the play.

New Time Limit

With the 2009-2011 syllabus, the time allowed for Paper 2 will be reduced to 2 hours. In view of this, teachers may need to work with students on time management so that all three questions will receive adequate attention.

Section A – Drama

Questions 1 - 4

Some candidates again attempted questions on both of the plays; however, only one question may be selected from this section. Candidates should be aware of the sequencing of events, and should be able to discuss the relationship of a particular scene to the total effect of the play. It is not sufficient for candidates merely to recount the events or describe character; they should be able to comment on dramatic techniques such as contrast, irony, foreshadowing, suspense, etc., and, in modern plays, on the stage setting, use of lighting, music, costumes, and so on.

MACBETH

Question 1

This question focused on the conflict within Macbeth's mind as he contemplates the act of regicide, on the ways in which Shakespeare evokes our sympathy as we watch this struggle, and on the play's insistence that killing the King is a most reprehensible act. Quite a number of candidates misinterpreted part (a) of the question, which asked for a description of Macbeth's conflicting thoughts and feelings as he "contemplates the murder" of Duncan. They read this as "looks at the scene of the murder". In part (b), candidates were asked to write about how Shakespeare evokes sympathy for Macbeth, and in part (c), to explain how

Shakespeare makes it very clear that regicide is a most horrible crime. All three sections were fairly well done, but candidates need to be aware of the time sequence referred to. Time markers like *"In the period leading up to Duncan's murder", "during this period"* and *"later"* were sometimes ignored by candidates, with unfortunate consequences.

Question 2

This was the more popular of the two Macbeth questions. Many candidates referred to movie versions of the play rather than to the text itself. As in question 1, many candidates were not alert to time markers: "*as she prays*", *"in the hours that follow"* and *"at this stage"*. Those who failed to observe the time frame required by the question tended to ramble through the play, producing evidence randomly. Section (a) tended to be poorly done, chiefly because candidates responded too briefly to gain the 9 marks available, but sections (b) and (c) were dealt with more competently.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Question 3

This question focused on Amanda's destructive parenting methods. Some candidates seemed not to have realized that Amanda, though perhaps well meaning, causes psychological damage to her children—particularly to Laura. While some candidates handled the dynamics of this domestic tragedy fairly well, many floundered and were unable to relate to the tensions underlying the action.
Perhaps because the very concept of "destructive behaviour" was unclear to many candidates, they were also unable to discuss the connection between the setting/the music and the impact on her children of Amanda's conversation and behaviour.

Question 4

This question proved challenging for many candidates. While candidates were able to list Tom's leisure time activities, some were unable to move from there to comment on what we can learn about him from his choice of activities. Section (b), too, proved difficult, with candidates failing to adequately justify their claim that Tom either was, or was not, selfish. Most importantly, though, candidates were generally unable to properly discuss Tom's function in the play as narrator—and consequently as the one who most wins our sympathy and whose point of view influences the opinion of the audience. Nor were most candidates able to show that Tom's actions drive the plot to its climax.

Section B – Poetry

Questions 5 – 6

General Comments

It was evident from a large number of scripts that teachers have been paying more attention to poetic devices, and have been showing students how to discuss their effectiveness. There were still many cases of candidates being able to name a device but not identify an example correctly, or, alternatively, to name the device and identify an example, but then to be unable to proceed to discuss the effectiveness of that device. In most cases, any such discussion was very brief, and this led to poor marks when up to 4 marks were allotted for identification and discussion of one device.

As in previous years, many candidates, when asked for their opinion, offered material extraneous to the poem instead of searching the poem itself for supporting evidence.

Many candidates were unable to identify the speaker in the poem, merely identifying him as "the persona" instead of as "a schoolboy who experiences racial prejudice in the classroom" or, in the other example, as "an adult who is talking to his/her son about the hypocrisy rampant in society". Further, few candidates were able to comment on the effectiveness of the choice of speaker.

The classroom experience of a poem should include discussion of point of view, tone, allusion, imagery, irony, contrast, the appropriateness of the title, the effectiveness of the choice of speaker and other such devices.

It was encouraging to note that candidates generally were very familiar with the poems they chose to write about, and that they had done research into the historical moment in which the poem was produced. Another pleasing observation is that candidates responded with strong emotions to injustices presented in the poems. This enthusiasm is commendable, but it needs to be channeled into disciplined discussion of poetic devices that evoked such strong emotions.

Question 5

Some of the scripts responding to this question were outstanding, but generally it was not well done. Quite a number of candidates wrote about poems other than the two identified in the question. Generally candidates did well on Section (a), describing the kind of prejudice (race/class) in the poems, and were able to find examples of that prejudice at work. Section (b) required identification and discussion of two poetic devices in each poem. This section was tackled less confidently than Section (a) that required only recall and not analysis. It was extremely pleasing, though, to note that quite a few scripts dealt very sensitively with the use of allusion in the two poems—to fairy tale and folklore in the one, and to the Crucifixion in the other. Section (c) asked the candidate to compare the two poems, showing (with reasons) which was more disturbing. In a question of this sort, candidates should comment on the disturbing features of EACH poem and then conclude with a decision on which is MORE disturbing. Candidates who only dealt with one poem at this point lost a few marks. More important, though, is that many candidates relied too heavily on material extraneous to the poem as reasons for their choice. Candidates need to understand that in a literature examination, most supporting evidence for statements made must come from the work under consideration.

Question 6

Candidates were generally able to identify the speaker in the poems (though some persisted in referring vaguely to "the persona"), but only the better candidates were able to say why the choice of speaker was effective. Section (b) was fairly well done, with candidates competently identifying aspects of society with which the speakers were not happy, and somewhat less competently identifying aspects of themselves with which the speakers were not happy. Section (c) was where most candidates did not earn marks. Having correctly identified and illustrated a poetic device, they were most often unable to say very much about how that particular device contributed to the overall impact of the poem. The intense emotional identification of candidates with the two speakers' concerns (racism and hypocrisy in society) was very pleasing.

Section C – Prose Fiction

Questions 7 - 12

General comments

Candidates need to be reminded that they may select their texts only from the four listed in the syllabus. Texts from the previous syllabus may not be used, nor may plays from either this or the former syllabus. Many candidates wrote on the "novels" *Macbeth* and *The Glass Menagerie!*

Quite a number of candidates lost marks for writing on two West Indian novels or on two non-West Indian novels. The questions clearly indicate that one West Indian and one non-West Indian novel should be used.

Story-telling was once again the main weakness in responses to questions in this Profile of the paper. Candidates should focus on the requirements of the question and not merely retell the story. Generally speaking, candidates managed to deal with the part of the question that required recall, but fell down on the part that required analysis.

The purpose of the questions in this section is to encourage comparison—whether or not that word is used explicitly in the question, so students need to be taught strategies for structuring their essay to bring out points of similarity and difference.

Since the questions on prose fiction are not sectionalized, candidates need to be guided by teachers on how to structure their essays. Many candidates also need guidance on correct paragraphing.

Candidates should be encouraged to study all four of the novels on the syllabus so that they will have a greater choice among the questions in this section. Next year, when the time for the exam is reduced to 2 hours, candidates may well need help in planning their essays in such a way that they focus on the requirements of the question instead of resorting to story-telling. Proper names should be correctly spelt, and titles of novels should be underlined.

Generally candidates managed better with the novels *Green Days by the River* and *The Pearl* than they did with *Crick Crack Monkey* and *A Separate Peace.* This last novel proved particularly challenging for most candidates.

Question 7

This question invited candidates to consider *conflict* experienced by a major character in each of two novels and to comment on one issue that the writer wants readers to understand from that conflict. While candidates were fairly confident while writing about the conflict, they were less sure of themselves when moving from that recall activity to discussing the *themes* of the novels they had selected.

Question 8

For this question the candidate needed to compare and contrast the situation in which a major character is affected by the power of a person, group or society. Responses that used *A Separate Peace* were particularly disappointing, with candidates making little use of the fact that the boys' lives are so devastatingly affected by the war. Responses using the other three texts were fairly well done.

Question 9

This question asked candidates to examine the assertion that painful experiences in life help people to understand themselves and others better. Most candidates were able to identify painful experiences undergone by a major character in each text. Showing just what had or had not been learnt from those experiences proved rather more difficult. Better responses managed to weave together painful experience and lessons learned from that experience.

Question 10

In this question candidates were asked to choose novels in which the main character suffers loss. The responses here showed a serious absence of structure, with candidates listing every single "loss" experienced by the main character instead of selecting the two or three main examples in order to produce a focused essay. It was encouraging to see that some candidates, writing on *The Pearl*, were able to move beyond the obvious loss of Coyotito and of the pearl itself and to explain how Kino had lost out in terms of his relationship with Juana and his personal morality. Candidates who opted to use *Crick Crack Monkey* and *A Separate Peace* tended to have difficulty identifying the "loss" experienced by the main character, though quite a number of candidates responded very sensitively to the loss of identity suffered by Tee as she tries to adjust to life with Aunt Beatrice.

General

Overall performance in 2008 was somewhat less impressive than in 2007. Paper 2, in particular, was handled better than Paper 1. It was evident that candidates who had been well prepared for the poetry questions on Paper 2 did exceptionally well, but that there were many candidates who seemed not to have been prepared at all for this Profile; indeed, those candidates who attempted only two questions rather than three almost always omitted the poetry question. There was less story telling in the Prose section, but many candidates lacked the skills to read the question carefully and interpret its requirements. For the Drama question,
teachers need to deal with specifically genre-related devices (stage setting, conflict, stage directions, etc.), but they should also alert candidates to the time frame of events in the play: instructions limiting the response to a specific time period were often ignored.

APPENDIX – 1

Question #	Text	No of Responses	Mean mark on question
Drama			
1	Macbeth		
2			
3	Glass Menagerie		
4			
Poetry			
5	World of Poetry		
6			
Prose Fiction	*		
7			
8			
9			
10			

*Students were required to select one West Indian novel and one non-West Indian novel for comparison from the following:

West Indian

Crick Crack Monkey	Merle Hodge
Green Days by the River	Michael Anthony

Non West Indian

A Separate Peace	John Knowles
The Pearl	John Steinbeck

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION MAY/JUNE 2009

ENGLISH B

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ENGLISH B

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

JUNE 2009

GENERAL COMMENTS

The CSEC examination in English B consists of two papers.

Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions one from each mode of writing – Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question candidates are required to give approximately three to five short answers.

Fifteen marks are allocated for each question for a total of 45 marks. Paper 01 contributes 30 per cent to the whole examination.

Paper 02 consists of 10 optional extended essay questions which are arranged under three sections which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Section A, Drama, consists of four Type A questions, two on each text. These questions require knowledge and study of one text. Candidates must answer one question.

Section B, Poetry, consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison that require knowledge and study of two texts. Candidates must answer one question.

Section C, Prose Fiction, consists of four Type B questions. Candidates are required to study West Indian novels as well as other novels in English from the prescribed list. Candidates must answer one question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 70 per cent to the whole examination.

Paper 01 – Short Answer Questions

The disappointing results of this year's performance in Paper 01 reveal quite clearly that most candidates and their teachers are still under the mistaken belief that this paper is a comprehension exercise. It is not. This paper requires candidates to apply the core skills they develop in studying the writer's craft through their focus on the set texts. They are to demonstrate how well they can apply these skills to the unseen drama extract, poem and prose extract.

The genre-based focus of the syllabus and examination since 2006 should have signaled a major shift in teaching and learning of literary appreciation. Instead of a focus on the content of the texts and the themes explored, teaching and learning in English B should now focus on how the artist (dramatist, poet and prose writer) shapes his/her work to affect the minds and hearts of the readers or audience. Previous schools' reports have emphasized that the questions will remain essentially the same, but the unseen passages will change. The syllabus outlines that the objectives are meant to cover the techniques the artist uses to manipulate how the reader will most likely think and feel about what the artist produces. Teachers who faithfully follow the philosophy and intent of the syllabus

will produce students who are critical thinkers, who will be able to read between the lines and see strategies of persuasion at work and so become less gullible and less easily manipulated. Performance in Paper 01 indicates that greater emphasis needs to be placed on preparation for responding appropriately to the questions on the paper.

The mean mark out of 15 for Drama (7.04), Poetry (4.9) and Prose Fiction (8.43) charted a slight improvement in Drama and Prose Fiction from last year, but performance in Poetry fell below last year's. Teachers are urged to adopt a developmental approach in preparing candidates for success in this examination, and especially for this paper, where what is required is the application of skills they are expected to have honed in the study of their set text.

Paper 02 – Extended Essay Questions

The 2009 examination was the first testing of the new cycle of texts in the 2009-11 syllabus. Following on from requests from teachers' associations and teachers all questions in Section C, the prose section, could be answered using any of the four texts. (It should be noted that this represents a significant difference from the 2012-14 examination, in which all questions will be text specific). The 2009 examination also introduced a new approach to Question 6, the second of the poetry questions. This was a general question that allowed candidates to choose the poems they wished to discuss, based on a specified rubric or theme. The aim of this question was to allow greater latitude for candidates to show their knowledge of a wide range of poems on the syllabus.

Candidates seemed to have approached the examination with enthusiasm and a high level of reader response, often showing passionate engagement with the characters and issues discussed, especially in poetry and drama. Most candidates knew the texts well. However, as in former years, some used drama and poetry texts to answer prose questions (Section C); in Section A, some relied on film versions of *The Merchant of Venice* instead of the text; and in Section B, some displayed inadequate knowledge of the poems. Some candidates appeared to have been well taught and put to good use the socio-historical contexts of the texts, including poems. Some, however, appeared to lack this knowledge even where it was necessary.

Overall, most candidates performed well on the parts of questions requiring knowledge of the texts. The analytical aspects of the questions, that is, those that required candidates to show knowledge of the writer's craft, allowed well-prepared candidates to display their skills and elicited some excellent essays. However, these aspects continued to pose a major challenge for less well prepared candidates. Candidates showed familiarity with the vocabulary of literature, but many were unable to do much more than mention the names of devices. The problem was particularly apparent in their response to the poetry questions. It appeared least in the responses to the prose questions, but for a negative reason: too many candidates seemed unaware that prose writers also use devices, and tended to respond to prose with reference only to events. The better prepared candidates included discussion of literary features and devices such as setting, contrast, irony and symbols in their responses. Many candidates were unaware that phrases such as 'how the writer shows…' require some attention to literary devices, and that words such as 'discuss' and 'comment on' call for analysis, not narration. Even so, there was a pleasing improvement in the attempts to focus on the demands of the questions rather than simply narrate.

With regard to language and organization, most candidates wrote in essay format and paragraph organization and use of English were generally satisfactory. Many who wrote in essay format attempted introductions and conclusions, and there was improvement in the attempt to make comparisons between the texts in particular questions. Some candidates produced excellent introductions that utilized all the key terms in the various sections of the questions. The better candidates also made transitions between paragraphs, using appropriate words, sentences and phrases such as 'however', 'in contrast', 'both', 'in the same way' to link the thoughts from one paragraph to the next.

However, some problems persist. In answering the structured questions, many candidates continue to write in itemized sections instead of essay format. Some even wrote each part of the question on a different page or separated by spaces from the preceding part. In some cases, all or most of the candidates from particular schools wrote in this way. Many who wrote in this format produced confused, repetitive responses because they did not conceptualize the essay as a whole. Material used in answer to one section was repeated in subsequent sections, as candidates seem to have read and answered one segment of the question, then gone on to read and answer the next segment, as in a short answer response. Students need to be taught to write in essay format, regardless of whether the question is structured or not. Instruction should also be provided on how to organize responses to non-structured questions, such as those in Section C. Candidates also need to be taught to conceptualize the question as a whole, and to frame their introductions with both texts in mind, in the case of questions requiring a response to two texts.

Students should be reminded to underline the titles of novels and plays, to place the titles of poems in quotation marks, and to use capital letters to begin all the words in titles, except for function words.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short-Answer Questions

Drama

Candidates experienced few problems in dealing with comprehension-type parts of the questions such as Part (b) which asked candidates to identify two stage props and Part (e) where they were asked to identify two different feelings the extract evokes in the audience. However, where candidates lost marks were in the parts of the questions which required that they show how the writer manipulated the dramatic techniques to achieve his purpose. For example, Part (b) also asked the candidates to state the importance of each stage direction identified. Part (c), which asked candidates to state two dramatic functions of the customers and the crowd, was poorly done. Teachers need to focus more on the elements of the genre and how the writer uses these elements to create meaning.

Poetry

This question was badly done as the mean indicates. Of the 19,247 candidates who answered it 279 or 1.5 per cent scored zero and only six candidates scored full marks. Part (a), which was worth one mark and merely asked the candidate to identify who "they" referred to, was not well done. Part (d) which asked candidates to identify the mood in specified lines also was not well done. These are questions which required comprehension of the poem. It was obvious from the responses to these questions that many of the candidates did not understand the meaning created in the poem. Hence, the poor performance in the other parts of the questions which required analysis of different aspects of the poetic techniques used by the writer to create meaning.

Prose

While candidates performed better on this question than on the poetry question, performance was not as good as expected. Candidates were able to answer quite well Parts (a), (b) (i), and (e). However, Parts (b) (ii), (c) and (d) proved to be challenging to many candidates.

Paper 02 – Extended Essay Questions

Intention of Questions

All questions were designed to test the specific skills listed on page 23 of the syllabus.

Drama

Questions 1 and 2: William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

As expected, most responses (a total of 71 per cent) in the drama section were on Questions 1 and 2 combined. However, Question 1 was by far the more popular, accounting for approximately 63 percent of total responses in the drama section. Question 2 accounted for a little over 8 per cent. Most candidates performed well on Question 1.

Question 1

The overwhelming popularity of Question 1 can be attributed to the fact that it focused on the courtroom scene, the dramatic final showdown in the play. The problem of being carried away by film versions rather than focusing on the text was particularly apparent with this question. Both questions elicited high levels of reader response as candidates took sides with 'the underdog' along both racial/ethnic (Shylock) and gender lines (Portia) or took sides on more 'universal' moral lines, arguing that Shylock was immoral to want to commit murder, or that Portia was guilty of dishonesty, regardless of whether or not it was for a good cause. Many candidates had been taught the historical contexts of the play as well as the rules of argumentation and put these to good use in framing their arguments. However, as many candidates argued one-sidedly, ignoring factors such as the treatment meted out to Shylock and Jews generally, seeing the Venetians as all good, and Shylock as all bad. This seemed attributable as much to poor textual analysis as to lack of knowledge of the historical context. For example, Antonio's treatment of Shylock was often ignored.

Candidates scored well on Part (a), which required an outline of the legal issues being addressed in the courtroom.

The least well-handled part of the question was Part (b) which required candidates to explain the punishment and mercy that Shylock received. Many candidates had no idea how to structure their response to this part. Instead of pointing out which parts of their responses had to do with punishment and which to do with mercy, candidates often merely listed the things done to Shylock, with no attempt to develop the points. Part (c), which required candidates to discuss ironic aspects of the scene, elicited some very interesting and acute discussions, and some candidates focused on dramatic irony. This part proved challenging for weaker candidates as they were either not familiar with 'irony' or were unable to explain it properly. Some who were familiar with the device did not present both sides of the situation they considered ironic. Instead of fully outlined situations of irony, candidates gave hints through one-sided statements.

Question 2

This question addressed the issue of morality in the play. This was not as well done as Question 1. Some candidates either did not understand what is meant by 'moral' or ignored it completely. Part (a), which required candidates to discuss two moral lessons learnt by specified characters, sometimes elicited unfocused plot summaries involving these characters as candidates sought to display their knowledge of the play rather than to respond to the question. Part (c) required candidates to discuss how Shakespeare showed that Portia had moral weaknesses. Candidates interpreted this to mean any form of 'weakness.' Some, especially those unfamiliar with the historical context, spoke about Portia's 'foolish' obedience to her dead father.

Questions 3 and 4: August Wilson's *Fences*

Approximately 8 per cent of the candidates attempted Question 3 and approximately 19 per cent attempted Question 4. Most candidates had a sound knowledge of the text and performed well on both questions. Candidates identified with the characters in the text and seemed to have enjoyed writing their responses. Better prepared candidates addressed dramatic devices and strategies used by the playwright as required in Parts (a) and (b) of Question 3 and Part (c) of Question 4.

Question 3

Question 3 required candidates to outline the final scene of the play and to show how the playwright heightened the audience's feelings of sadness and regret while suggesting feelings of compassion and hope among Troy's family members. Candidates who did not know the play well introduced details outside of the scene and gave vague outlines of the scene itself.

Question 4 required candidates to discuss how Wilson presents Troy's performance as a parent, comparing his performance with his father's as well as with Cory's assessment of him. Candidates were able to perform well on this question as the same information used in Part (a) could be used to answer Parts (b) and (c) with different commentary. Weaker candidates gave repetitive or story-telling answers as they re-presented details without commentary directed at the specific parts of the question.

Poetry

Questions 5 and 6

Approximately two-thirds (67 per cent) of the candidates who attempted Section B answered Question 5. This question required candidates to respond comparatively to two poems about death: 'To an Athlete Dying Young' and 'The Lynching.' However, the fact that one-third of candidates attempted the general question, Question 6, indicates that while the majority of candidates preferred the structured question, the new format for Question 6 has significant appeal.

Candidates produced some excellent responses to both questions, and many candidates obtained satisfactory scores. Surprisingly and pleasingly, many candidates obtained their best scores on these questions. However, too many scored most of their marks on the recall and interpretation aspects. The most important skill being tested is the ability to show how poetic devices are used to highlight themes and achieve particular effects. Most candidates seemed to have been exposed to the discussion of poetic devices and could name devices used. However, discussion of how the devices actually worked, and how they were linked to the overall meaning or theme being discussed, was often vague, rambling and confused. Some candidates gave the names of devices but could identify no example of the device in the poem. Most candidates who referred to puns and oxymoron had no idea what these terms meant. The difference in meaning among crucially important terms such 'poet', 'persona/speaker' and 'character' were often not known. Candidates confused the speaker with the poet, or identified a character in the poem as the speaker. The latter problem arose frequently with regard to 'God's Work', a popular poem in answering Question 6. Mr Edwards was often identified as the speaker, possibly because he spoke a line of narrative in the poem. Often candidates did not know the poems well, and concocted their own versions of what the poems were about. Many candidates did not link the discussion of devices to the rest of the question.

Question 5

In answering Question 5, many candidates confused Dennis Scott's 'Epitaph' with 'The Lynching', and far too many candidates wrote without any apparent awareness of the historical context in which lynching took place. As a result, many held the erroneous idea that the lynched man was a slave, and some wrote without reference to the racial issue involved. Some candidates who did not know the poem well wrote that the crowd was both black and white. The poems, like the novels and plays, are set texts; thus, wherever necessary, the historical context should be taught.

Question 6

Question 6 required candidates to compare two poems that deal with the issue of power. The question had the advantage of being able to be answered with reference to almost all the poems on the syllabus. Although the question was less well handled than Question 5, candidates produced some fascinating, original and creative discussions and insights into the nature of power. Popular choices in answering the question were 'Richard Cory', 'God's Work', 'God's Grandeur', 'Colonial Girls' School', 'Sonnets from China', 'The Emigrants' and 'This is the Dark Time, My Love.' 'Sonnets from China' was often misread, but pleasingly, some candidates showed knowledge of the sonnet form and were able to comment on the relation between its structure and the poem's meaning. The same types of problems that arose for Question 5 also arose for Question 6. Many candidates compared the devices instead of showing how the devices highlighted the issue of power. Many did not know the historical context of 'This Is the Dark Time, My Love' and wrote that the poet was depicting war in Guyana.

One recurrent problem was the use of 'invented' quotations. Candidates should be encouraged to give good paraphrases if they cannot remember the exact quotations.

Prose Fiction

Question 7

This question, which asked candidates to discuss the writers' presentation of ways in which the traditions and values upheld by society may or may not be in conflict with an individual's potential, was attempted by 19 per cent of candidates who attempted Section C. Candidates addressed the term 'traditions' in pleasingly diverse ways, including 'folklore', 'customs and practices', and 'communal beliefs.' Some candidates addressed only traditions, while others addressed only values, but overall the question was well done. This question again highlighted the need for candidates to be taught the historical context of set texts. The absence of this type of knowledge was especially apparent in the case of *Beka Lamb*. Many candidates attempting to use the political situation in Belize as part of their argument had difficulty as they were completely unfamiliar with the historical situation. As with the other prose questions, weaker, less well prepared candidates engaged in story telling instead of organizing their responses around comment statements related directly to the question.

Question 8

This was the least popular of the prose questions, eliciting under 8 per cent of the responses. The question required candidates to discuss how writers use the natural environment to represent concepts or feelings. Its lack of popularity could be attributable either to candidates not knowing what is meant by 'natural environment' or to the fact that they have not been taught the symbolism of nature as setting. Nature as an aspect of setting plays an important part in all four novels, especially *The Hummingbird Tree* and *A Kestrel for a Knave.* Setting, in all its aspects (natural, social, geographical), is an important aspect of the study of prose fiction. Candidates should be prepared for questions on this feature. Overall, candidates did not do well on this question.

Question 9

This question required candidates to discuss how being different from others affected a major character in two novels, and to comment on one strategy used by each writer in presenting this difference. Approximately 24 per cent of the candidates who attempted the Prose Section chose this question. Many ignored the part of the question that required analysis of the writer's strategy. Some candidates used drama or poetry texts and so could not score any marks.

Question 10

This question, which asked candidates to discuss the influence of family relationships on the development of major characters, was by far the most popular of the prose questions. It was attempted by approximately 51 per cent of the candidates. The question elicited some very good responses, but about 40 per cent of the candidates engaged in storytelling instead of directing their responses to the specific question. While all the texts were appropriate, candidates often did not choose appropriate characters for analysis, or were unable to present arguments even where the character was appropriate. This was particularly evident with regard to all the major female characters (Jaillin, Sophie, Toycie) except Beka. Candidates may have studied the texts with an overarching focus on protagonists, neglecting the other significant characters.

Conclusions

Candidates seem to have become more comfortable with the genre-specific direction of the syllabus. More teachers appear to be teaching poetry successfully in a serious way, and more attention appears to be paid to the skills of language use and organization. However, more needs to be done to help students explain HOW devices work to achieve their effects, and to use specific, concrete language (sight, sound, taste, etc) when discussing images and effects. Students need to be given adequate exercises in identifying and explaining puns, oxymorons, irony, and distinguishing between the speaker's voice and the voice of characters in narrative poems. More attention needs to be given to the writers' craft in prose fiction, and students should be guided to discuss not only main characters (protagonists) but other major characters as well. Skills in organizing essays need to be strengthened. Students need to write introductions and conclusions that focus on the question and help to minimize 'mere narration.' In writing the body of the essay, they should be trained to use opening and closing sentences that keep the essay focused on the question asked.

Recommendations to Teachers

- Give students practice in answering examination-type questions that are structured and 'unstructured.' Guiding students to see structured questions as a whole, will help eliminate repetitions. 'Unstructured questions' also have an inbuilt structure or logic of sequence that students can be guided to identify for themselves.

- Teach students the historical contexts of the set texts. Lack of knowledge of this context is especially a problem with regard to Shakespeare, Beka Lamb and the poems highlighted in the previous section of the report.

- With reference to *The Merchant of Venice*: students should know that Jews in Europe were the victims of unequal laws: for example, confined to areas referred to as ghettos; forced to wear distinctive symbols that identified them as 'other'; disallowed from owning real estate (Shylock's property would not have included land) and in most cases permitted only one form of occupation: usury. They should be aware that Shylock was the 16th century equivalent of our modern day banker and that the Rialto, where Antonio and the other merchants also gathered, was a financial centre. Students should be guided to recognize that both Antonio and Shylock were merchants, except that one sold money and the other sold goods, both for profit. Even though external research material is available, students can be guided to pay attention to the evidence of the facts above within the play itself.

- The gender-specific ironies in the play can be brought out by reference to the fact that in Shakespeare's day women were treated as 'second class' and would not have had professions as lawyers, and that on the Shakespearean stage Portia's role would have been played by a boy actor.

- Dramatic irony should be given specific attention as a form of irony associated with the genre.

- Re the poems: Provide information on the history of lynching as a phenomenon of post-slavery America. Explain that lynching is an illegal act (a particular form of murder), so the term could not have been applied to a slave master killing his own slave since slaves were considered chattel (legal property), not humans.

- Provide information on the context to which 'This is the Dark Time' speaks- colonial Britain's attempt to stop the independence movement in Guyana in 1953, by suspending the constitution, declaring a state of emergency and bringing in soldiers to maintain control. Emphasize that no 'war' took place.

- While students at this level should not be 'bogged down' with excessive contextual information, some brief knowledge about the poets might help their class discussions –for example, they might find it helpful to know that Caribbean-born poet James Berry has lived in the USA and resides in Britain and that Olive Senior is a Caribbean poet who, like Berry, grew up in the colonial period; that 'Dreaming Black Boy' and 'Colonial Girls School' reflect experiences in their different locations. Students could be encouraged to do their own internet and library searches.

- Guide students to understand the following concepts: speaker, poet, character and narrator.

- Encourage students to use literary vocabulary in writing essays on prose, not just on poetry or drama. Teach texts from several angles: characterization; setting; symbols; themes.

- Make use of good student-centred texts available on the teaching of the syllabus, such as *Carlong English B for CXC* (Text with DVD). Keith Noel, Sheila Garcia-Bisnott and Carol Hunter-Clarke.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2010

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately three to five short answers. Fifteen marks are allocated for each question for a total of 45 marks. Paper 01 contributes 30 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 10 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section A

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section B

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section C

Prose Fiction consists of four Type B questions. Candidates are required to study two West Indian and two non-West Indian novels in English specified in the syllabus. Candidates must answer one question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 70 per cent to the examination.

The 2010 examination was the second testing of the new cycle of texts. There was a noticeable increase in appreciation, application and overall results in both Papers 01 and 02.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension

ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

There was a dramatic improvement in the performance of candidates on this paper this year.

The mean scores for Paper 01 for the period 2008–2010 in the table below show the improvement in performance.

Mean Scores for the Period 2008–2010

Paper 01	2008	2009	2010
DRAMA	6.18	7.02	11.00
POETRY	5.54	4.9	10.49
PROSE	5.03	8.43	7.47

Candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of the principles of literary appreciation and added their personal and heartfelt responses to the excerpts/texts in the three genres. Even with the Prose Profile, where the mean mark recorded a disappointing 7.47, most candidates displayed their imaginative flair and creative interpretations, although these were ponderously misapplied to the comic passage which required light treatment.

The personal involvement from candidates was evident in their responses. It is clear that teachers have taken the advice from previous reports and the sensitization sessions on the revised syllabus and added new life to the study of Literature.

Question 1

For Question 1, Drama, most candidates earned one of the two marks for Part (a). Although they were able to identify the marriage as the main concern of the scene, and which gave them 1 mark, many candidates did not mention the tension or disagreement among the women. This question required candidates to form a total picture of not just the event but also the conflict of the scene.

However, for Part (b), which assessed candidates understanding of the use of stage directions, the majority of candidates were able to earn full marks. Candidates were able to competently demonstrate what the stage directions revealed about the characters feelings and provided the relevant supporting evidence to earn full marks.

The majority of candidates earned the total score for Parts (c), (d) and (e). Part (c) required candidates to quote a line which showed tension in the scene and to explain the tension. Part (d) was a question on characterization which focused on Mama. Candidates had to support their answer with one speech and one stage direction. This question was mastered.

Part (e) was another characterization question which focused on the character, Jenny. Again, candidates handled the question quite competently.

Question 2

For Question 2, Poetry, most candidates were able to earn full marks for Parts (a), (c) and (e), but only a few achieved the total score in (b) and (d).

Part (a) asked candidates to identify three aspects of the poem that would appeal to a Caribbean person. Candidates were able to competently respond to this question. In Part (c) candidates were asked to identify in what way stanza four was different from the first three stanzas. In previous years, candidates had experienced difficulty when responding to questions which assessed their ability to recognize difference or contrast. This was not the case with this question. For Part (e), candidates were able to identify the images of sound and were able to indicate what impressions of the sea were created by the images.

However, candidates' responses to Parts (b) and (d) reinforce the view that figurative devices and their effectiveness continue to be challenging to students. Teachers need to find innovative ways of showing students how writers use the different figurative devices to create the effect they want in their work.

Question 3

The overall mean for Question 3 indicated that Prose Fiction was not well done. While most candidates were able to score full marks in several parts of Questions 1 and 2, most candidates did not score full marks on any of the parts of Question 3. Part (c) proved most challenging. Candidates could not effectively identify and discuss the comical element in the passage. Expected responses were *exaggeration (the gestures and costumes); contrast as for instance, the big, strong woman and the seemingly small, old, frail man; the diction and pantomime.* A more careful reading of the passage would have assisted candidates in responding to the comic elements of the passage. Candidates did not seem to be able to picture this woman who looked like a German warrior.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described. In the case of this year's prose passage, the vast majority of candidates were unable to discern the comic element that dominated the extract. It appears that candidates conceive Literature as a ponderous study of only deep and serious concerns. Teachers need to help students expand that notion to embrace the more immediately pleasurable elements of the comic in Literature and life.

While in this paper no marks are formally awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect responses that students offer to the questions. Too often, candidates' admissible responses to questions are inaccessible to those who do not share knowledge of their dialect. We therefore recommend that teachers give students the feedback on the Standard English translation of their correct responses to the questions.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of Literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus):

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

v) The awareness of the writer's crafts (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour. This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – The Merchant of Venice

Question 1

The Shakespeare questions yielded almost two-thirds of the total responses for the drama section. For Question 1, candidates demonstrated knowledge of the casket scenes. However, except for Portia's response to Bassanio, they appeared somewhat vague about Portia's response to the other suitors. There was also some amount of confusion, about the inscriptions on the caskets. Part (c), (How does Shakespeare show us that the casket scene with Bassanio is important to the play as a whole?) was by far the most challenging area of the question. Acceptable responses dealt with the dramatic effect such as *the tension; the building of suspense;* and *the contrast with the other scenes portraying Morocco and Arragon, by way of its romantic element.* Candidates were also expected to make the link to the entire plot, that is, *by guessing right, Bassanio is now able to marry Portia and as a result gets involved in Antonio's case.* Connections could have been made to the *ring plot* as well. This portion of the question aimed to assess candidates' understanding of the significance of Bassanio's victory to the development of the play, thematically, structurally and dramatically. The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays and while no one scored full marks (35), seven candidates were able to score 34. The mean for this question was 16.31.

Question 2

There was a certain element of comfort and ease in terms of responding to the details required in Question 2. Candidates were able to describe the money lending scene with Antonio and Shylock, Part (a). However, Part (b) which asked for two techniques which make the scene exciting proved to be more challenging. Candidates experienced some amount of difficulty in identifying the techniques and further, to link these to **how** they made the scene exciting. By merely relating the scene, candidates generally did not spend enough time discussing or showing **how** language for instance was used (for example, irony, pun) or how argument was used, or even the

presentation of Shylock (his slow, methodical, and deliberate language that aggravates Antonio) and Antonio. Part (c), which asked candidates to *comment on how the scene brings out one issue or theme in the play* might have been better handled if candidates had demonstrated understanding of the word *issue* and *theme*. Many responses simply regurgitated the plot and others did not effectively link the scene to the play as a whole. Candidates who mentioned race, religion, prejudice, the bond, values, did not often provide enough textual evidence.

This question performed slightly better than Question 1. Eight candidates scored full marks. The mean for the question was 17.70.

Fences

Question 3

Question 3 was fairly well done. Part (a), Troy's confession and Rose's response to it which was required was quite familiar to candidates. On the whole, the candidates handled this part of the question very well, although the tendency was to re-tell the plot. For Part (b), even though candidates were asked to discuss three ways in which the relationship changed, some responses strayed from the Troy/Rose relationship. The final part of the question was well done by most candidates who attempted this question. They often explored wider implications with finesse. There were some though, who summarized the plot instead of, for instance, discussing one of the symbolic meanings of the fence; that is, *keeping family in*, which underscores the issue of faithfulness.

Two candidates scored full marks on this question. This question also had the highest mean for the section. The mean for this question was 18.14.

Question 4

Candidates were able to describe the chosen relationship very well. They were not, however, so effective in commenting on one dramatic device used to present the relationship, Part (b). Devices that could have been used are as follows: *the symbolism of the fence and its ironic function (of keeping in and keeping out, and the self-destructive nature of the relationship between Troy and Rose); contrast; irony; imagery as in the garden image, and the game.* Part (c) was handled reasonably well as candidates were able to identify and discuss issues/themes such as infidelity, communication and sexuality quite competently.

No candidates scored full marks on this question. However, one candidate scored 34 and 13 scored 33. The mean for this question was 16.54.

Poetry

Question 5

Candidates' performance on this question was fair. The named poems in Question 5 were "A Contemplation Upon Flowers" and "God's Grandeur". Part (a) asked candidates to explain two lessons learned by the speaker by looking at Nature. The better able candidates performed remarkably well on this question. However, the weaker candidates deviated quite a bit from the lessons learnt. There was also some amount of confusion with the poems specified in the question and others listed in the syllabus. Candidates made reference to poems such as, "God's Work" confusing it with "God's Grandeur", and "Travelling Through the Dark" instead of "A Contemplation Upon Flowers". In instances when it appeared that some candidates could not relate the title of the poems to Nature which was required for Part (b), they repeated the material used in Part (a). Some candidates missed opportunities to discuss the impact of words in the titles and what they evoke, such as *contemplation, flowers* and *grandeur*. Many failed to make the significant connection to the **importance** of Nature.

Although "God's Grandeur" does not mention Nature, it mentions God. Nature is important only because of God; it is God's glory that is manifested in Nature and renews it. It was heartening to see that some candidates argued along this vein.

Candidates were expected to focus either on diction or devices to answer Part (c). The word *illustrate* might have caused some amount of uncertainty in responses. Generally, there were some verbose explanations about nature as a whole, omitting obvious responses such as trans for "A Contemplation Upon Flowers"– "God's Grandeur" personification, rhyme, diction and for similes, comparison, repetition, internal rhyme Too often, responses identified the choice of word but without textual support or did not indicate the speaker's **feeling.**

Eleven candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 15.83.

Question 6

Question 6 is the general question and candidates are required to choose two suitable poems from the prescribed list to answer the question set. Candidates seemed to have a strong preference for this kind of question as it yielded almost two-thirds of the responses. The storytelling element resonated well with candidates who sensibly and sensitively chose appropriate poems for discussion. Popular choices were "Coolie Mother", "For my Mother", and "Richard Cory". Part (a) was well handled as candidates were able to outline the storyline in selected poems. It must be noted that candidates were not penalized for choosing lyrical poems such as "God's Grandeur" as the burden was on the explanation. For example, the response could suggest how the speaker is looking around him and thinking about how Nature tells its own story of how humans fail to understand the meaning of Nature.

Responding to why each poet finds it important to tell that particular story, Part (b), candidates demonstrated some level of analysis and carved out spaces for personal inputs, but weaker candidates repeated material already used in Part (a), returning as it were, to storytelling. Part (c), proved to be the most challenging as candidates were asked to discuss one device each poet used to make the story enjoyable. Some candidates indentified devices but could not show **how** these made the poems enjoyable. In some instances, devices were merely explained or defined and not **applied** to the question.

Like Question 5, eleven candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 18.41.

Prose Fiction

Question 7

This was a very popular question; approximately, one-third of the candidates attempted it. What some candidates missed was the fact that it was not an absolute statement. The question asked for the **extent** to which the statement was true. Superior responses tied the authors' technique with the thematic issue and made allowances for the view that friendship might not always heal. Common selections were Beka and Toysie and Billy and Kes.

Thirty-one candidates scored full marks for this question. The mean for the question was 18.68

Question 8

Question 8 required a comparison of the authors' portrayal of hope. This was not a popular choice. This may have been because in making the comparison explicit, the question asked for more than mere discussion or narration. Weaker attempts focused only on hope, with little or no knowledge of tragedy. Again, candidates who

chose *Beka Lamb* and *A Kestrel for a Knave* had strong arguments that provided fruitful discussions either via characters or writer's craft or a combination of both.

While this question was not popular, many of the candidates who attempted it provided some well-developed and superior essays. This question produced the highest mean for the entire examination, that of 19.22. Two candidates scored full marks.

Question 9

This was the least popular question in this section. The question specifically focused on narrative techniques (signalled by "Show how the writer presents …"). Candidates, for the most part, resorted to storytelling of instances of injustice in selected texts. However, superior and good responses focused on the use of *contrast as in race, class and gender; symbols such as the church, school, the teacher, David's father; tone as in the satirical ways in which fanaticism is explored in The Chrysalids,* for instance, and setting in the texts, to indicate instances of injustice.

Questions 8 and 9 had direct reference to writer's craft and is may be why they were not popular among candidates.

This mean for Question 9 was 15.00. No candidate scored full marks (35) or even 34. Four candidates achieved a score of 33.

Question 10

Question 10 was one of the more popular choices; approximately one third of the candidates attempted it. The question focused on the difficulties faced by a major character in search of personal freedom. Narration was popular but stronger responses acknowledged the *political context of colonialism* in *Beka Lamb* for instance, and *its impact on the personal*. Those who selected *The Hummingbird Tree* discussed for instance, *the stranglehold of class, race and gender*. Responses for *The Chrysalids* discussed *David's struggle to be free from his tyrannical and fanatical father. Billy's entrapment in his social class and dysfunctional home environment and low expectations from society,* were common responses for those who selected *A Kestrel for a Knave*.

Two candidates achieved the maximum score on this question. The mean for this question was 16.64.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

1. Text selection and text choice must be given serious consideration. Sometimes poor textual choice limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

2. Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this a genre-specific examination.

3. The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

4. Teachers are encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students such as

    - exercises which target introductory paragraphs
    - finding textual evidence to develop one point.

5. Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the movie version, for instance).

6. Students should know the skills required when they are asked to *define, discuss, describe, determine, comment on,* or *show*. Teachers must prepare students in this area.

7. While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to *describe, explain* and *analyse* with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

8. Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what is sometimes captured in superior scripts.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2011

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The historic first January sitting of the English B examination exposed a diverse range of responses from a population of candidates that ranged from 11–59 years. Candidates' responses suggested that they enjoyed the encounter with set texts and responded with the range of organizational thinking styles which they either naturally developed or were schooled into.

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately three to five short answers. Fifteen marks are allocated for each question for a total of 45 marks. Paper 01 contributes 30 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of ten optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section A

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section B

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates must choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section C

Prose Fiction consists of four Type B questions. Candidates are required to study two West Indian and two non-West Indian novels in English. These texts are specified in the syllabus. Candidates must answer one question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 70 per cent to the examination.

The overall performance in the January 2011 English B examination was quite satisfactory and it is envisaged that performance will improve even further as candidates' performance on Profile 2 — Poetry — improves.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension

ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

Candidates' performance in Paper 01 was good. Overall, the mean performance in Profile 1, Drama, was 29.25; in Profile 2, Poetry, 20.29; and Profile 3, Prose Fiction, 22.98. The weakest performance was in Poetry.

Candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of the principles of literary appreciation and added their personal and heartfelt responses to the excerpts/texts in the three genres. The personal involvement from candidates was evident in their responses which seemed to range from precocious to a mature analysis of the texts and the questions.

Question 1

Overall the question was handled well and quite a few candidates earned full marks. Generally, the more able candidates were able to access marks which ranged from 11 to 15 (15 marks being the maximum). Those who did not achieve maximum score either misinterpreted the question or did not give full enough responses. Candidates are encouraged to read extracts in their entirety instead of focusing on one or two words to base their responses.

Most of the candidates were able to earn one of the two marks allocated to Part (a). This question assessed candidates' comprehension of the incident taking place. There was some misinterpretation. Some candidates saw the event as a political rally or a protest (making reference to words like 'minister' and 'commissioner'). Others chose to highlight and interpret the word 'gay' as having homosexual connotations or that there was just a march, missing the carnival-like event.

Part (b), which assessed candidates understanding of the use of dramatic techniques, produced some very good responses. However, like Part (a), there was evidence of misinterpretation. For example, Brock's statement about getting an exorcist or using bullets was taken to mean that he was not in favour of the tramping. Some candidates gave only one and not two ways in which the playwright showed that Brock does not share the view of the others. Others missed the dramatic technique of the stage device. They indicated, for example, that Brock leaves the stage. There were some candidates who merely quoted lines from the extract instead of using the lines to show the manifestation.

Part (c) (i) required candidates to use the words 'how undignified' to show what they revealed about Stickwell's attitude. This part of the question was not well done. Some candidates responded to the behaviour of Stickwell to the marchers instead of using Stickwell's words to evaluate or assess his attitude to the festivity of the marchers. Others tried to define the word 'undignified'. The better prepared candidates were awarded full marks for accurately indicating that Stickwell was being condescending, snobbish and was generally disgusted by the

actions of the Tramping Man and his supporters. The second part of this question, (c) (ii), was reasonably well done, although there was evidence of misinterpretation, possibly because candidates did not understand the word 'imply'. The expected response for this question required candidates to capture the fact that Stickwell did not trust Brock and that he was not surprised by his action. There was some confusion in the assumption candidates made that he was making reference to the Minister, when he was actually speaking about Brock. Some candidates made statements like, 'He told the Minister not to go to the dance, but he would not listen.' In a few instances, candidates felt that Brock was the same person as the minister.

Part (d) (i) required candidates to state one difference between the government officials and the Tramping Man and his supporters. Generally, responses should have suggested that the government officials seemed stiff and unmoved by the music, whereas the Tramping Man and his supporters seemed alive and energetic. One of the major areas of misinterpretation for Part (d) (i) was that instead of showing the difference between the government officials and the Tramping Man, candidates looked at differences among the government officials and their positions. Part (d) (ii) required candidates to show how the playwright emphasizes the difference identified in Part (d) (i). Expected responses should have mentioned the dynamics between the on-stage versus off-stage activities (the stiff irrational abuse by officialdom versus the offstage energized, joyous, natural movement led or influenced by the Tramping Man). Many candidates repeated material mentioned in Part (d) (i) instead of looking at the importance of saying **how** or looking at the playwright's method (technique) of differentiating between both groups and were therefore unable to access the marks awarded for this question.

Part (e) was a reader-response item. The onus was on the candidates to take a position then provide textual evidence to support the position taken. Many candidates scored full marks as they were able to support their claim. However, some candidates did not understand the meaning of the word 'justified' and proceeded to contradict themselves. For example, they said the reasons for the arrest were justified yet they showed why it was not right for the Tramping Man to be arrested. Others restated lines to support the position taken.

Question 2

For Question 2, Poetry, candidates seemed to identify with the issue of aging. Part (a) was fairly well done as most candidates understood the image being portrayed. Many candidates saw the image of the old man but few went further to see other things, for example, alone, quiet, hunched.

Part (b), which assessed poetic technique, required candidates to identify the literary device and comment on the effectiveness of it. Some candidates discussed the effectiveness of the device without identifying it and so could not be awarded full marks. Additionally, although the explanatory note said what ***Guardian*** was, some candidates creatively inferred it was a person. Effective responses identified the device as either metaphor or personification and suggested how the 'drooling' captured the image of the newspaper slipping from Pa's grasp and the ways in which the falling newspaper and Pa's drooling are similar.

Part (c) though not literary, posed some amount of difficulty for some candidates who merely connected Pa's 'silent rage' to his quiet surroundings or the fact that he is old. However, insightful responses made reference to line 5 'how seldom he laughed in those days' suggesting that Pa is angry now as he reflects that when he was young he did not really enjoy himself; Pa resents his own physical helplessness (evidence — his hands are no longer steady); 'Pa can no longer control his thoughts'(line 14), among others.

Most candidates managed reasonable responses to Part (d) (i), which asked for two impressions of Pa. Some of the responses which were awarded full marks included: Pa was a role model; one who portrays positive attributes; other descriptors such as unflinching, solid, dependable, loyal, focused, and faithful. Part (d) (ii), however, posed a challenge for candidates who, instead of giving two words or phrases to support the impressions in (d) (i),

quoted entire sentences. Ideal responses mentioned 'steady hands'; 'vices he declined' for phrases and 'sacrifice', and 'anchored' for words to support their claim.

Part (e) was a reader-response item which proved challenging for those who said that the title was inappropriate. A few candidates did not commit but their responses pointed to either a positive or negative leaning. Candidates should be trained to take a position and to defend such a position.

Question 3

Overall, candidates' responses indicated that they found the passage was manageable and interesting and within their experience. Part (a), which required candidates to provide two reasons why the narrator was upset was well done and candidates who did not earn full marks tended to ignore the instructions to confine their responses to paragraph one. It is important that candidates read the questions carefully to ensure that they provide the requirements of the question and so improve their ability to earn full marks.

For Part (b), candidates were required to identify the literary device in a given phrase and comment on the effectiveness of it. Some candidates did not name a device (in this case, metaphor) and others named incorrect devices and so did not earn the one mark for this part of the question. Additionally, some only attempted an explanation of the phrase and many did not know what 'jellyfish' was. Those candidates who did justice to the question mentioned the mother's helpless shaking as she laughs and how the narrator feels like her mother is stinging her by not paying her any attention.

Part (c), which assessed candidates' knowledge of irony was not well done. Many candidates did not identify the irony (located within the four lines given) or explain it. A complete response would have entailed the candidates explaining the nature of the contrast, that is, what was expected by the narrator (comfort, love, affection) versus what was received (being ignored by her mother) when she went home.

Part (d) was fairly well handled. Candidates were required to indicate how the narrator felt after her mother confirmed she had eaten breadfruit and to support the response given. Once candidates identified the feelings, for example, that the narrator felt betrayed by her mother/ was distrustful of her mother/ was repulsed by her mother, they were able to supply the necessary evidence and were able to earn full marks. Responses which captured the crocodile image; the mother's laughter; or the mother being half in and half out the door got full marks. On the other hand, some candidates had difficulty providing supporting evidence. Some candidates identified the feeling **before** and not **after** as indicated in the question. Others did not identify the feelings but gave supporting quotations.

Although Part (e) provided for reader response and allowed candidates to express their views, some were not clear about what they agreed or disagreed with. Quotations were cited but not enough to support a full and clear response to the question. Such responses did not allow candidates to earn full marks.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

1. Teachers/instructors should continue to provide opportunities for candidates to be exposed to literature.

2. Discussing literary devices must be continued. It is not good enough to merely identify or define devices.

3. Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

4. While in this paper no marks are formally awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect responses that students offer to the questions. Too often, candidates' admissible responses to questions are inaccessible to those who do not share knowledge of their dialect. We therefore recommend that teachers give students the feedback on the Standard English translation of their correct responses to the questions.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus):

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense, in a new form, information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

v) The awareness of the writer's crafts (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – The Merchant of Venice

Question 1

Questions about the casket scenes tend to yield good responses. For this the first January sitting of the English B examination, five times as many candidates attempted Question 1 as against Question 2. For Part (a), which required candidates to describe the test set for Portia's suitors and the consequences of their choosing wrongly, most candidates were able to describe the test, the types and inscriptions on the caskets. Many, however, were not as accurate in describing the consequences of the suitor's incorrect choice.

Part (b) required some analysis of the correct selection of the caskets, that is, how the test would ensure that Portia married someone who truly loved her. Candidates were expected to suggest how the test was designed to sift the suitors by exposing those who were concerned with outward appearance, glamour and glitter as well as those who were arrogant and vain. This sifting would identify the one who was willing to countenance dire consequences (of a single life). Only the one who would be willing to look beyond the outward appearance (base lead) to inner qualities would be considered worthy. Although candidates mentioned Portia's physical attributes, many failed to mention the qualities of the suitors who would take such a risk. For the most part, the tendency in this part of the question was for candidates to gloss over the issue of outward appearance.

Part (c) was the most challenging to candidates. Some claimed that not enough information was given in the text about Shylock as a father, therefore they could not discuss him. Other candidates adopted a one-sided approach and did not see anything positive about Shylock. Many candidates missed the comparative element that was required. However, insightful responses mentioned that at heart, both fathers wanted what was best for their daughters (seeing that they married well) even though their methods were different. The fathers' attitude to wealth is the most obvious point of departure. Portia's father provides lavishly for her, whereas Shylock hoards his money; Portia's father puts her above money whereas Shylock would prefer to have Jessica dead and his jewels restored to him.

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays and three (0.56%) of 539 candidates who attempted this question achieved the total score of 35. The mean for this question was 19.51.

Question 2

Although the mercy speech is well known, this question was not a popular choice. Few candidates outlined the details of the speech: Shylock would be blessed if he is merciful; mercy is a mark of greatness; justice alone cannot lead to salvation; that if we want to be shown mercy, we must be merciful. Many candidates had difficulty remembering what Portia said about mercy. However, there were some insightful responses about the mercy shown to Shylock. Many candidates were au fait with the 'theatrics' of the scene — the sharpened knife and Shylock's thirst for blood.

The irony of the 'merciful' Christians was not lost to the insightful candidates, but the details of Part (b) were lacking to a large extent. Gratiano's behaviour (his taunting of Shylock by telling him that soon he will not have enough money to buy cord to hang himself) and Shylock's reminder that these Christians were themselves slaveholders who treated their slaves like asses and dogs simply because they owned them, were some examples.

Part (c), which required that candidates comment on the mercy shown to Shylock, proved to be challenging to many candidates. This part of the question assessed the writer's technique and required analytical strength from the candidates. If Part (b) were handled well, as in identifying the irony and inconsistencies of the Christians, candidates should have moved logically to Part (c). Weaker candidates merely repeated information used to respond to Part (b). Ideally, the use of dramatic irony and an interrogation of 'mercy' (which is bitter-sweet) would have been sufficient for Part (c). This part of the question is essentially reader response and candidates must be confident in expressing their informed judgment.

While none of the 99 (12%) candidates who attempted this question scored full marks, one candidate scored 34. The mean for this question was 12.61.

Fences

Question 3

Almost an equal distribution of candidates attempted the questions set on *Fences*. The text is widely known, and for Question 3, so were the ways in which Troy wronged his family. Although candidates were quite competent in discussing the ways in which he wronged Rose and Cory, some candidates were not able to discuss the ways in which Troy wronged Gabriel. Expected responses for the ways in which Cory wronged Gabriel included how he used Gabriel's disability money to fix his home; how he forced Gabriel to live with Miss Pearl and how he signed the committal papers to get some of his money.

For Part (b), candidates were required to show how forgiveness and hope are presented dramatically in the final scene of the play. Most candidates demonstrated awareness of forgiveness and hope, but too many could not discuss how this was **dramatically** presented. Among the expected responses were: what Raynell represents (as

the new generation); Raynell's garden and the attendant symbolism; Raynell and Cory singing the blues; the presence of all whom Troy offended at the funeral; Gabriel's dance, among many others.

Approximately 99 (11%) candidates attempted this question. The highest score achieved in this question was 32. The mean for this question was 17.86.

Question 4

Part (a) required candidates to discuss how Rose nurtured Troy, Cory and Raynell. Candidates' responses revealed that they were knowledgeable about Rose, and the ways in which she nurtured Troy, Cory and Raynell. Part (b) of the question was not handled as well. Candidates were required to show how Rose was both hurt and blessed in her relationship with Troy. Candidates' treatment of the subject was one-sided. Many were able to show how Rose was hurt, but were not able to do a similar treatment on how she was blessed. Candidates could have presented her as being 'blessed' in the following ways: Troy gave her a roof over her head; he brought home his salary; seemed to have been faithful for a while; and was affectionate to her.

Candidates, who adopt a dualistic interpretation of characters and situations as good or bad, black or white, generally see less subtlety and complexity than their open-minded peers.

Poetry

Question 5

Slightly over one-third of the candidates attempted Question 5 as against Question 6. Part (a) required candidates to describe two poems in which Nature and technology are in conflict. While candidates were able to describe the details in some degree, there was not enough about the conflict between Nature and technology. A few candidates were more accurate in their description by pointing to the contrast. Merely mentioning the deer on the winding road in "Travelling through the Dark" or the presence of the Spaniards in the natives' territory in "From the Emigrants", did not point sufficiently to the conflict between Nature and technology. This portion of the question demanded knowledge of the texts and it would appear that this pre-selection was not advantageous to candidates as many seemed to be more conversant with "Travelling through the Dark" than "From the Emigrants."

Part (b), which required candidates to identify a poetic device in each poem used to comment on the impact of Nature and technology and comment on the effectiveness proved to be challenging to the candidates. Even when devices were correctly identified, candidates failed to link them to the question (in this case the impact of technology on Nature) or comment on their effectiveness.

Part (c) was for the most part, reader response. However, the 'message' each poet is presenting through the portrayal of Nature and technology should be grounded in textual evidence. The deer in "Travelling through the Dark" is supposed to be in its habitat and it is man's incursion that puts both deer and people in danger. The fate of the fawn is at the mercy or whim of man. Painful decisions are necessary for survival. Columbus' sojourn to the West Indies in "From the Emigrants" had disastrous consequences. His encounter with the natives was an unequal one. Pitted against the bullets, spears and sea power, the natives did not stand a chance. Technology might win.

This question was not well done. The highest mark earned was 28 and the mean mark was 9.33. Two hundred and forty-four candidates attempted this question.

Question 6

This question required candidates to identify two poems by name and discuss the theme of death. Part (a) asked candidates for a description of the situation that caused the speaker to think about death and Part (b), the reaction of each speaker to the encounter with death. For Part (b), many candidates confused the speaker and the poet. Part (b) was an opportunity for comparison of speakers, for instance, in terms of how the encounter with death is treated. All poems on the syllabus could have been used, although some clearly provided more 'mileage' than others. Part (c) was as usual the most challenging as most candidates were not able to discuss the effectiveness of the poetic device even when correctly identified. The tendency was to explain and not analyse. Further, in the discussion, there was the tendency to divorce the effectiveness of the device from the theme of death, indicated in the stem of the question.

Three of the 542 candidates who attempted Question 6 earned 33 of the 35 marks. While this question did better than Question 5 with a mean of 14.71, a better performance in the Poetry Profile is desired.

Prose Fiction

The comparative questions on West Indian and non-West Indian novels offer candidates the opportunity to explore themes, concepts and narrative techniques which can often allow them to see levels of meaning and understanding while they are discussing the question. The outstanding candidates demonstrate these flashes of insight as they approach the question from unique angles, interpreting power, or dreams and aspirations, or friendship in less obvious, but perceptive ways and using the comparison, whether stated or implied, to call attention to fresh ways of understanding. Competent scripts generally take the safe, literal, concrete interpretation of the question and the text and often merely demonstrate an accurate and appropriate reading of the storyline. Candidates will find greater enjoyment and fascination with the novels if they are encouraged to see the connotative and symbolic implications of the texts, a character like Beka or David or Billy or Alan as symbolic of a group or age or nation. That leap in understanding could make the most concrete, basic reader of a text offer exceptionally creative interpretations to these questions. There were several examples in this cohort where these gems were revealed.

On the other hand, inappropriate use of texts resulted in reduction of marks. Some candidates were not conversant with the current texts or with the details necessary to answer the questions. In some instances, they lost marks (many times 50% of the content) because they used drama texts such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *Fences* to answer questions which are clearly genre-specific. Some candidates used popular fiction such as *Harry Potter*. In other instances, texts not on the prescribed list for Prose Fiction, such as *A Cow Called Boy* or old CSEC texts such as *Green Days by the River* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* were used. It was not unusual to find instances where candidates used their creativity to write their own life stories to answer the questions. In the latter case, no marks were awarded for that effort.

Far too often the comparative nature was missing from the discussion. Many candidates merely narrated the texts, disregarding the question.

Question 7

Approximately 212 (26%) of the candidates attempted this question. Candidates were required to discuss how a major character in one West Indian and one non-West Indian novel is oppressed by the power of another person or institution and struggles against oppression in a bid for freedom. Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of the characters who wielded power, but those who were powerless proved somewhat troublesome. Additionally, the second part of the question which focused on the struggles in the bid for freedom was often left undone. Candidates must ensure that they respond to all the areas of the task in order to access the marks.

While no candidate earned full marks for this question, one candidate scored 34. The mean mark for this question was 17.42. This was the highest mean in the section.

Question 8

Question 8 was the most popular question for Prose Fiction. Approximately, 365 (45%) of the candidates attempted this question. Candidates were required to select a major character in a West Indian and and non-West Indian text who dreams of a better life and discuss the struggles that character goes through in attempting to make those dreams come through. Whereas candidates were proficient in articulating the dream of the major characters, they were not so sure-footed about the struggles. Similar to Question 7, candidates must ensure that they can competently address all aspects of the question before selecting it.

While no candidate earned full marks for this question, one candidate scored 33. The mean mark for this question was 14.99, approximately, the same as Question 7.

Question 9

Approximately 135 (17%) of the candidates attempted this question. Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which the statement 'A good friend is better than money' applies to a major character in one West Indian and one non-West Indian novel. This question clearly demonstrated that candidates are quite knowledgeable of the content of the texts. They, however, displayed very little knowledge in critical analysis of the text and the question.

Admirably, two candidates were able to earn the highest score of 35. The mean for this question was 15.16.

Question 10

This was the least popular question in this section. It was attempted by approximately 95 (11%) of the candidates. The focus of this question was explicitly the writers' craft and many shied away from it. Some candidates who attempted it were able to make connections to the titles and texts; many simply narrated the stories or reconstructed the lives of the major characters. The writers' craft was not addressed and in many instances misunderstood.

One candidate earned the highest mark of 35. The mean for this question was 10.25. It was the lowest mean for the section.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

1. Candidates need to be conscious of the demands of the comparative essay, as in Paper 02, Questions 5 and 6 (Poetry) and Questions 7–10 (Prose Fiction).

2. Candidates need to know that 2011 is the final year of the cycle for the May/June examinations and January 2012, for the January examinations. Knowledge of the revised syllabus is necessary. Candidates need to select the appropriate texts from the revised syllabus to study for the May/June 2012 Examination for English B.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2011

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately three to five short answers. Fifteen marks are allocated for each question for a total of 45 marks. Paper 01 contributes 30 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 10 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the other question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of four Type B questions. Candidates are required to study two West Indian and two non-West Indian novels in English specified in the syllabus. Candidates must answer one question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 70 per cent to the examination.

The 2011 examination was the final May/June sitting of this cycle of texts. The January 2012 English B examination will see the completion of this cycle.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension

ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

There was a slight decline in the performance of candidates on this paper this year.

The mean scores for Paper 01 for the period 2009–2011 in the table below show the trends in performance.

Mean Scores for the Period 2009–2011

Paper 01	2009	2010	2011
DRAMA	7.02	11.00	10.22
POETRY	4.9	10.49	8.32
PROSE FICTION	8.43	7.47	8.09

It is noted that while performance declined when compared with that of 2010, performance was still better than that of 2009 for Drama and Poetry and consistent for Prose Fiction.

Question 1: Drama

Nine hundred and fifty-five (4.90 per cent) of the candidates scored full marks on this question. This question tested knowledge of the difference between mere comprehension of the extract and awareness of genre and craft in the shaping of the extract. Teachers may consider the impact when, in preparation for the examination, students are not encouraged to master the art of answering questions in full sentences to ensure that they can get to the heart of the answer easier and to ensure that all parts of the question are addressed.

Most candidates were able to score the full marks for Part (a), which indicates, happily, that teachers are paying closer attention to the structural elements of the genre. Responses to Parts (b), (d) and (e) indicate that some candidates are experiencing difficulty in drawing reasonable and supportable inferences from onstage events and character actions and motives. This central skill in literary study should be emphasized by teachers. A few candidates in their responses to Part (b) interpreted 'relationship' as marital, ignoring the literary use of the term. Some candidates erroneously felt that they had to use words from the text to describe Harold's tone. One disappointing aspect of the response to Part(c) which focused on how Erma builds up suspense was that less than one third of the candidates provided an explanation; many candidates merely offered a summary of Erma's actions. The candidates who offered an explanation were oftentimes able to score full marks.

More than one third of the candidates earned full marks for Part (e) which required them to suggest a title for the extract. Candidates displayed their creative imagination in the wide and varied offering of titles and their rationales, based on a sensitive reading and response to the events in the extract.

The mean score was 10.32 out of 15.

Question 2: Poetry

Thirty-six (0.18 per cent) candidates scored full marks on this question. Most candidates earned full marks for Part (a), as they were able to identify the two signs, from the specified lines, which showed that someone had died. Most candidates were able to identify one image from the lines specified to answer Part (b), but had problems commenting on the effectiveness, as only approximately 25 per cent of the candidates gained full marks for this part of the question. For Part (c) (i), some candidates instead of making the connection with a minister of religion, inappropriately associated the 'minister' with a politician. Other candidates ignored the clues of the minister as presented in the poem and superimposed their expectations of his role as 'provider of comfort,' which, unfortunately, was not evident in the poem.

Candidates provided the evidence of something 'horrible taking place' for Part (c) (ii), but did not explain the horror. Approximately 25 per cent of the candidates gained full marks for this question. Responses to Part (d) indicate that teachers are prioritizing poetry as an oral medium, meant to be spoken and heard. Unfortunately, candidates had problems spelling words like 'rhyme' and 'rhythm'.

Many candidates misinterpreted Part (e) as they sought to explain the lines specified in the question, rather than identifying and commenting on the speaker's feeling in those lines. Less than a third of the candidates earned full marks for Part (e), and few captured the cynicism, disbelief or irony that emerge from a sensitive reading of the poem, without the interference of the cultural experience of the reader.

Teachers should guide students to focus attention on the poem itself, notwithstanding the need to draw on personal experience to frame an introduction to the experience of the poem. Ultimately, the poem itself may offer a different experience than what is expected, and students should be encouraged to confront that reality. Examiners suggest that teachers will continue to improve their students' competence in poetry appreciation by:

- Allowing students to hear and recite poems and respond orally to what makes them appreciate the poem.
- Teaching students how devices are used in poetry, beyond their ability to identify the devices.
- Expanding students' vocabulary of feeling words — for tone, mood and characters' emotions which are inferred.
- Helping students to gauge the extent of content required for an answer by the marks allocated.

The mean score was 8.32 out of 15.

Question 3: Prose Fiction

Two hundred and eight (1.07 per cent) candidates scored full marks on this question. Most candidates were able to identify the mood for Part (a), but less than half of them indicated how the writer created the mood. Approximately the same number of candidates was able to earn full marks in Part (b) which required them to explain how the sentence, *I had not expected to see him* introduced a shift in the mood of the passage. Most candidates were able to identify the dialect as the feature which suggested that the passage was set in the Caribbean as required for Part (c), but for Part (d), candidates found it increasingly difficult to earn the four marks for explaining two ways in which the writer builds tension. Approximately 15 per cent of the candidates earned the maximum mark for Part (d). For Part (e), approximately 50 per cent of the candidates were able to earn one mark for a reason the narrator's response to Mr Johnson was different from that of his friend. Responses to Part (e) (ii) demonstrated that only one-third of the candidates were able to capture and explain how Mr Johnson's behaviour made the passage humorous because of his careful entanglement of the boys in their own tale.

It is instructive that Question 1, Part (c), Question 2, Part (c) ii and Question 3, Part (d), which all test candidates' ability to explain the writer's technique, demonstrate a similar distribution or spread of marks. Teachers who are able to have students master the concept of the author deliberately manipulating the language and form of the genre to influence the feelings and thoughts of the reader or audience can be assured of excellent results. If teachers take this approach to the study of the set texts, candidates of the examination will have been prepared for the demands of Paper 01 where they can display their application of these competencies.

The mean score was 8.09 out of 15.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage or poem as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described. Teachers need to help students expand that notion to embrace the more immediately pleasurable elements of the comic in literature and life.

While in this paper no marks are formally awarded for the use of language, teachers/instructors are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions, to the dialect responses that students offer to the questions.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions, is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on page 23 of the syllabus):

(i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

(ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

(iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

(iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

(v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

(vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

(vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *The Merchant of Venice*

Question 1

The Shakespeare questions yielded 65 per cent of the total responses for the drama section. Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the text but some could not apply this knowledge to the question. For Part (a), candidates were asked to describe the love relationship of one pair of three pairs given. The most popular choice was Portia and Bassanio. Some candidates did not describe the relationship but gave summaries of the encounters between these couples. A few candidates ignored the instruction and discussed all three couples. Part (b) required a discussion of the obstacles encountered by the lovers in this relationship but candidates tended to identify the obstacles only and not show how these affected the relationship. Candidates did better in discussing the *suspense* and *disguise* in Part (c). Here is a brief excerpt of a response that addresses Part (c), dealing with the element of disguise:

The element of disguise is employed by Shakespeare to help overcome an obstacle but is also conveyed as an obstacle. Even Jessica's conversion to Christianity can be seen as a 'disguise'. She must hide her true identity for the sake of love. Although Lorenzo's love is boundless, she must alter some characteristics for their relationship. This shows that true love always has some form of difficulty.

There were a few candidates who confused *irony* and *dramatic irony*.

Twenty-one candidates scored full marks for this question. The mean for this question was 16.07 out of 35.

Question 2

This was the least popular drama question as only 290 candidates attempted it (1.48 per cent). This question focused on the minor characters Solanio and Salarino and their role in the play. Candidates readily accounted for the events in this scene and enjoyed relating its comic elements, as was required for Part (a), but Part (b) which asked for a discussion of the *dramatic effect* of this scene was not adequately handled. Expected responses included *the humour created by the boys trailing Shylock; prophetic irony in Solanio's remark that Antonio might suffer if he fails to keep his bond; the tension and suspense generated by their vivid descriptions/recounting and how these characters functioned as the play's 'newspaper' in dispensing the gossip*. Part (c) required a connection of this scene to the play as a whole and suggested responses included *the ways in which Solanio and Salarino contributed to the economy of the drama since they reported on offstage events; their newspaper role (giving news on the Rialto); their support for Antonio and how they advanced the theme of money*, a crucial theme in this play.

One observation worth mentioning is that a few candidates confused the named scene with Act 3, Scene 1, in which Shylock appears onstage and questions Solanio and Salarino. This scene comes shortly after the one indicated in the question.

No candidate scored full marks on this question. The mean for the question was 13.19 out of 35.

Fences

Question 3

Twice as many candidates did Question 3 than Question 4. Writer's craft is important in appreciating Wilson's (the playwright) expectations of the audience through the ways in which the feelings and thoughts about Troy are portrayed. Although candidates relished discussing Troy, many of them confused the *thoughts* with the *feelings* in Part (a) of the question. It was heartening though to see that candidates were aware that this head/heart dilemma could yield answers that were for, against or just ambivalent. Popular responses about *the audience's feelings about Troy* showed how *he was presented at the beginning of the play as likeable, witty, engaging, romantic, and how Bono saw him as a leader (for the positive slant) and how he was presented as selfish/self-centred, as in his infidelity and treatment of Cory and Gabriel (for the negative slant)*. An ambivalent position saw Troy's portrayal as one that evoked *both* sympathy and contempt from the audience. Responses about the audience's thoughts about Troy would demonstrate how *information about him is sequenced in the play (the good things first); how the audience learns about his difficult past; and having learned all of this, how do we now judge him*? Part (b), being reader-response (giving their final opinion of Troy, with justification), yielded very good responses. Here is an example:

Troy is very unjust in his decision with not allowing Cory to go to college and live out his dream of playing football. Troy, however, uses his past failures to prevent his own son's dream from happening. This was seen as selfish as he built a fence around Cory to keep society out and in the end it actually locked Cory out of his home. Troy is hardworking and is not pleased that he could not complete purchasing his house if it was not for money that was given to his brother Gabriel who was injured in the war. I don't however blame Troy to some extent because he had a rough childhood. He was not given the emotional love as a child so he finds it hard to give this type of love to his son. His being locked up for fifteen years also shows how black men were unjustly treated and this has helped to drive an arrow of bitterness in Troy's heart.

Four candidates (0.09 per cent) scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 18.40 out of 35.

Question 4

Part (a) required knowledge of the pasts of Troy, Bono and Lyons. Candidates were very familiar with Troy's past but had difficulty finding textual evidence for Bono and Lyons. Consequently, many of them lapsed into narration. Part (b) required discussion on *one* of these characters and demonstration of how Wilson shows the effect of the past on this character throughout the play. Some candidates discussed all three characters. Part (c), which asked for the issues about black men that Wilson was highlighting, caused much uncertainty as candidates seemed to have problems with the word/concept *issues*. However, some candidates offered acceptable responses such as *their roles in the family (as in husband/wife relationship, parent/child relationship); role in the community; how they perceive manliness, their attitude to and involvement in sports, and their attitude to racism*.

Four candidates (0.18 per cent) scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 18.97 out of 35, the highest mean for the drama section.

Poetry

Question 5

This question dealt with the portrayal of death in the poems "Traveling Through the Dark" and "Epitaph". Part (a) asked candidates to describe what happens in each poem. Although most candidates were able to describe the events, in many instances key details were omitted, and, in some instances, candidates 'invented' details to fill the textual gap (as in the speaker hitting the deer or the white folks cheering the hanging body). On the whole, candidates were more comfortable with "Traveling Through the Dark" than "Epitaph" and it was quite common to have candidates confusing another poem on the syllabus, "The Lynching" with "Epitaph."

Part (b) required a discussion of the speaker's attitude in each poem. Some candidates were cognizant of the complexity of the speaker's attitude in "Traveling Through the Dark" as he is sensitive to the unborn fawn but practical in terms of adopting a philosophical attitude about death as he remains unswerving in his journey (which could also be a fitting metaphor for the road of life). The speaker's attitude in "Epitaph" allows for more than one reading and insightful candidates argued either for one of anger or that of detachment.

For Part (c), candidates were expected to identify and discuss one poetic device that each poet uses to capture the reader's attention or create an emotional response in the reader. Many candidates identified a device but failed to provide textual evidence to support the submission. It was common to have devices selected at random that could not be connected to the poems. Some candidates were unable to show how the device evoked a particular response. Generally, it proved quite challenging for some candidates to discuss the devices and link this discussion to reader-response. This example infuses the device and the effect:

The poetic device of personification is used greatly to create an emotional response in the reader. The poet gives nature human qualities to gain sympathy from the reader and also to create suspense. When the reader sees the phrase, "nature listened", we are made to feel the importance of the decision and the weight that must have been upon the persona. That the "car aimed its headlights" shows that technology, represented by the car, was ready to move on and move ahead.

Two candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 14.80 out of 35.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose two suitable poems from the prescribed list to answer the question set. Candidates seemed to have a strong preference for this kind of question as it yielded 67 per cent of the responses. Model answers named two appropriate poems and described who/what is admired for Part (a). Popular choices were "Richard Cory", "Coolie Mother" and "For My Mother (May I Inherit Half Her Strength)". Part (b) asked for an identification and discussion of a poetic device in each poem showing this admiration. Discussion of the device was not a strong point for average candidates. The reader-response aspect of the question, Part (c), required candidates to supply textual support for a position as to which presentation of admiration is more appealing of the two poems. Some candidates merely repeated lines from the chosen poem to validate their claim.

For this response, an encouraging number of candidates dealt well with Part (b) which asked them to show how the poet used a technique to present admiration. Many candidates were able to identify appropriate devices and explain how they were used by the poet to convey a sense of admiration. References to repetition in Goodison's "For My Mother (May I Inherit Half Her Strength)" and McDonald's "God's Work" and personification in King's "A Contemplation Upon Flowers" were well handled by candidates. Average candidates were only able to identify the devices and provide a limited explanation of the connection between the devices identified and the poet's message. Weaker candidates for the most part only referred to the device without illustrating its relevance to a clearer understanding of admiration.

Many candidates were able to give qualified justification regarding why they found one poem more appealing in its presentation of admiration than the other as required for Part (c). It was a delight to see many candidates drawing on their own experiences, and those issues in their society, such as strong mothers who sacrifice much for their children, to bolster their arguments for why an issue resonates with them. Weaker responses to this section were from candidates who appeared to lack the skills of argument and did not know the poems well.

Twenty-three candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 17.57 out of 35.

Prose Fiction

Question 7

This question on empathy gave candidate the opportunity to be objective and to evaluate through analysis, the phrase *to what extent*. The word *encourage* also suggests the ability of the writer to persuade the reader through his/her narrative technique. This question also asked the reader to personalize the experience of the major character in the texts chosen. Overall, some level of synthesis was expected in order for candidates to do well. Only 24 per cent of the candidates attempted this question and many ignored *to what extent* and gave very general submissions which did not fully integrate the content, writer's style or their own personal responses. Many candidates did not concentrate on major characters and far too many used 'sympathy' and 'empathy' interchangeably.

Teachers need to concentrate a bit more on teaching point of view.

Ten candidates scored full marks for this question. The mean for the question was 16.15 out of 35.

Question 8

This question asked candidates to identify from each text, a major character and to show how the exposure to love changed him/her or impacted him/her positively or negatively. Many candidates had challenges in saying *how* love changed the character. There was a heavy concentration on romantic love as against other types, for example, parental love and love between friends. Those who chose *A Kestrel for a Knave* spoke mainly about Billy and the hawk and very few about Billy and Mr Farthing. Some candidates had problems navigating the race/class dimension of the relationships in *The Hummingbird Tree*. Although traditionally love is a popular choice, only 23 per cent of the candidates attempted this question.

No candidate scored full marks. The mean for this question was 16.10 out of 35.

Question 9

This question, which focused on the roles of mothers, proved to be the most popular question in the prose section, with almost 37 per cent of the candidates attempting it. Appropriate coverage of this question would have included *the mothers' actions and influence, and how this influence shapes the characters and events*. How the mothers' role contributes to any theme/issue in the texts and how the writers' technique help to show the mothers' role would also constitute part of the discussion. Far too many responses merely listed the litany of woes about Billy's mother, for example, or in other instances, discussed the behaviour of the women in the texts.

The responses to this question were also affected by candidates' poor choice of characters in the texts as some characters were never developed enough for students to write much about their roles. Another concern is the perennial one of candidates not mindful that they are comparing and contrasting. While it is expected that candidates will focus on the issues in the question for each text above anything else, it is also good practice for them to demonstrate an awareness of how the novelists treat similar issues and to use the language that indicates this awareness. The very good responses not only showed a grasp of both issues of the mothers' role and their influence on others but drew attention to the similarities or differences in the treatment of such issues.

Teachers are being asked to pay attention to having students adduce support for points they make as far too many of them make points without giving adequate support from the text. Good responses for this question clearly identified the issues, supported them well from the text, argued coherently and demonstrated an awareness of the comparative nature of the question. Weaker responses, for the most part, narrated without paying much attention to the skills demanded.

Five candidates scored full marks. The mean for this question was 15.86 out of 35.

Question 10

This was the least popular question, with only approximately 15 per cent of the candidates attempting it. To examine *enclosed spaces* is to see whether the characters are freed or shackled in the process. Many candidates did not consider the longing for freedom on the part of the entrapped. Flexible interpretations of entrapment went beyond the literal. Average responses were limited to physical spaces but there were superior responses that saw entrapment from a metaphorical perspective and explored the psychological, social and racial spaces.

Seven candidates achieved the maximum score on this question. The mean for this question was 20.05 out of 35, the highest for the prose section.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

- Text selection and text choice must be given serious consideration. Sometimes poor textual choice limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

- Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres, for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this a genre-specific examination.

- The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

- Teachers are encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students such as
  - exercises which target introductory paragraphs
  - finding textual evidence to develop one point.

- Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the movie version, for instance).

- Students should know the skills required when they are asked to *define, discuss, describe, determine, comment on,* or *show*. Teachers must prepare students in this area.

- While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and/or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to *describe, explain* and *analyse* with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

- Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgements and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what is sometimes captured in superior scripts.

- Candidates need to be reminded that 2011 was the final cycle of the May/June examinations and January 2012, for the January (re-sit) examinations. Knowledge of the new syllabus (and by extension the new cycle) is necessary, especially in relation to text selection.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2012

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The English B examination consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately three to five short answers. Fifteen marks are allocated for each question for a total of 45 marks. Paper 01 contributes 30 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of ten optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Section A, Drama, consists of four Type-A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section. Section B, Poetry, consists of two Type-B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates must choose two appropriate poems from those they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section. Section C, Prose Fiction, consists of four Type-B questions. Candidates are required to study two West Indian and two non-West Indian novels in English. These texts are specified in the syllabus. Candidates must answer one question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 70 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

Candidates' performance on Paper 01 was below that of 2011. Overall, the mean performance in Profile 1, Drama, was 8.95; in Profile 2, Poetry, 8.97; and Profile 3, Prose Fiction, 7.34. The weakest performance was in Prose Fiction.

Question 1

The more able candidates (47.6%) were able to access marks which ranged from 10 to 15 (15 marks being the maximum). The extract seemed to have resonated with candidates and many were able to appreciate the humour.

Most of the candidates were able to earn the full marks allocated to Part (a). This question asked candidates to identify the "important day" in the extract. Part (b), comprising two parts, probed Celsus's view of himself as being "ca-coa". Whereas candidates could identify two other images such as *being a dead man* or *being tied up*, many of them could not explain what these images suggest about Celsus's condition. Acceptable responses included *the feeling of hopelessness; the feeling of having no future; the feeling of unhappiness (going to a funeral) and the feeling of having his freedom taken away*. Some candidates merely repeated the idea that Celsus feels he was bewitched.

Part (c) asked for textual support for the two different attitudes to marriage presented in the extract. Candidates rightly understood that the comparison lay between Celsus and Mr Jack but many could not name the attitude, for example, *pride,* on Mr Jack's part (his early marriage and defense of his wife's good name) and Celsus's *fear* and even *resentment* since he thinks that his wedding day is more in keeping with going to a funeral.

Candidates were spot on in identifying one comic incident in Part d (i) but they were not as sure-footed on the dramatic functions of Helen's exit and entrance in Part (d) (ii). Many candidates could not move beyond the literal. Very few saw that Helen's exit (to get the drink) was a means of clearing the stage to allow Celsus and Mr Jack to become the focus of attention (taking centre stage). When she enters with the drink, the men are fighting so Helen's presence could be that she is the one to break up the fight and ease the tension onstage.

Part (e) was a reader-response item (suggesting a title and justifying the selection). The onus was on candidates to take a position then provide textual evidence to support the position taken. Many candidates scored full marks as they were able to support their claim. However, some candidates moved outside of the text. Candidates need to remember that reader-response items are always text-based.

Question 2

Candidates performed best on Question 2, Poetry, with more candidates earning full marks, as against Drama and Prose Fiction. For Part (a), candidates were able to identify two activities in the first stanza, as they were attuned to the crab-catching event and the reactions of the speaker and his sister Ruby.

Part (b) asked candidates to state one difference between stanza 1 and 2 using evidence from the text. Some candidates confused stanzas with line numbering. Acceptable responses *indicated the differences in time (past and present, as in Ma was alive in the first stanza but dead in the second stanza); the geographical location is also different (the savannah versus America and England); and the difference in mood (light-hearted innocence and fun as against the dislocation, decay and fear)*.

Part (c) assessed poetic technique and required candidates to identify one literary device and comment on its effectiveness. Although candidates were provided the prompts (the lines as well as phrases for discussion were listed) many of them ignored the instruction and discussed all three devices, instead of choosing one. Many candidates were unable to name the device in "squelching through mud" and even though some of the responses captured the sound of bare feet treading through the mud, many did not mention onomatopoeia. Many candidates identified the personification in "Death long catch Ma" but were short on commenting on the personification of death. Responses discussing the inevitability of death and

the passage of time were acceptable. Another personification was seen in "the house boarded up/breeding wasps". Although many candidates pointed to the decay and disuse, better responses discussed *the absence of warmth/human presence and the fact that destructive insects have now inhabited the house*.

Candidates had a fair sense of the feelings of the speaker (*he is afraid to return home; his feelings of guilt; and his reluctance to face the past*) and Part (d) asked candidates to suggest two such feelings.

Part (e) (i), which asked candidates to comment on the poet's use of the crab image, was the most challenging task. Responses were vague. It would appear that the word *image* was not easily understood. Acceptable responses could have included any of the following: *the crab as a source of food; representing communal living; the mother is compared to a crab; and the idea of doubleness (mating/family) and singleness (absence of family).*

Part (e) (ii) was a reader-response item which only proved challenging for those who did not have 'strong' justification for providing another title for the poem.

Question 3

Candidates' responses to both sections of Part (a) demonstrated that they understood why Aunt Lissy slapped the boy and that they could identify an expression that showed the intensity of the slap. Most candidates could select a suitable image to present the relationship between Aunt Lissy and the pickaninnies such as *herd of pickaninnies* or *a stork among the chicks scurrying behind Aunt Lissy* in Part (b) but could neither determine the relationship nor comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses that commented on the effectiveness of the image of "herd of pickaninnies" captured the idea of Aunt Lissy as leader who will whip the other animals into submission, and "herd" reinforcing the animal imagery. The image of "a stork" is effective as the maturing boy is seen as a maturing stork to be separated from the other chicks which are dependent on Aunt Lissy. Also captured here is the bird image through the movement of the children (scurrying) and the contrast in height and demeanour of the boy and the other children. Other candidates described the relationship but failed to identify the image. Some candidates looked at the relationship between Aunt Lissy and the boy and ignored the other children.

Part (c) required candidates to give two impressions of the boy which are created and textual support for these impressions. Some candidates lost marks because they did not treat the question in its entirety. Some candidates mentioned the *impressions* but did not provide textual support while others cited lines/phrases from the passage but did not provide the impressions. The following are acceptable responses: *the boy is defiant or determined because he thought of the word [Damballah] in his mind/ he refused to cry; the boy is independent because he thought of a time when he will be rid of Aunt Lissy when he is no longer under her control or his thinking of a time when he will be doing manly things.*

While most candidates were able to identify what was "heathen talk" in Part (d) and were able to comment on Aunt Lissy's value system to some extent, they missed the point that she rejected her own roots, and was embracing instead only what was American in a bid to wipe out all references to her past.

For Part (e), candidates were required to identify the literary device in a given phrase and comment on the effectiveness of it. Some candidates identified the device (in this case, metaphor) but were unable to assess its effectiveness. Others commented on the effectiveness but did not name the device. The metaphor in this instance *compares the confusion caused by Aunt Lissy's instructions, warnings and admonitions to the cacophonous cackle of chickens. This reinforces the imagery of the hen with the brood of chickens. The animal imagery reinforces the fact that he does not see Aunt Lissy's protectiveness as welcoming (seeing her cackle as noise in his head*).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

- Teachers/instructors should continue to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to literature.

- Discussing the effectiveness of literary devices must be the focus of continued analysis of style. It is not good enough to merely identify or define devices. Some devices such as onomatopoeia proved problematic to many candidates.

- Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

- Candidates are encouraged to watch live and recorded plays so that they are better able to appreciate the *performance* element of the genre.

- Teachers could assist students to dramatize sections of plays in class, for example, dramatize scenes and to summarize scenes to encourage recall.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus):

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense, in a new form, information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

- The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – The Merchant of Venice

Question 1

Part (a) required candidates to describe what happens in Act V, Scene I in which Portia and Nerissa quarrel with their husbands about the missing rings. Most candidates focused on the ring episode only, with no mention of others who were not directly involved in the couples' quarrel. Other details in this scene include the romantic moonlight setting with Lorenzo and Jessica, who were left in charge of Portia's house and Lancelot's announcement of Portia's pending arrival. Some candidates concentrated only on what happened after the wives' confrontation. Generally, it would appear that since this is a 'minor' scene, candidates were not sufficiently familiar with it.

For Part (b), candidates did a fairly good job of identifying a theme emanating from this scene). However, some of them could not sustain the discussion to treat this theme in light of this scene. However insightful candidates discussed themes such as love, friendship/loyalty, money, appearance versus reality, power, the role of women, fidelity, and commitment.

Part (c) asked for a discussion of two techniques Shakespeare used to entertain the audience. Appropriate responses would include *dramatic irony* (*as in disguise in the courtroom scene and the ring episodes*); *pun (Gratianio's threat to mar the young clerk's 'pen'); suspense (casket and courtroom scenes*). Candidates need to be more sensitive to dramatic techniques as distinctive features of this genre.

The total score of 35 was not achieved by any candidate. However, one candidate scored 33. The mean for this question was 10.42.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to describe the events in Act III Scene IV, when Portia tells Nerissa, "We'll see our husbands before they think of us," for Part (a). Apart from mentioning that Portia tells Nerrissa that they would be disguised as men and travel to Venice to meet their husbands, candidates were very short on details in this section of the question. Very few of them mentioned *the role Lorenzo plays in this scene, impressing on Portia how fine a gentleman Antonio was; that he was left in charge of Belmont while Portia takes her journey and the plans Portia sets in motion by sending her servant to her cousin Bellario, seeking his notes and garments*.

Part (b) required discussion of how disguise is used in one scene or instance in the play. Most candidates relished in the courtroom scene for the discussion of disguise. A few candidates mentioned how *Jessica disguised herself as a boy and escaped her father's house to marry Lorenzo*.

Commenting on the dramatic significance of disguise, (Part c), proved to be challenging to some candidates, who merely repeated information from Part (b). This section was open to the play as a whole, giving candidates full scope for discussion. Responses could have included: *dramatic irony in that the wives (and the audience of course) know their husbands during the courtroom scene but they did not; Portia uses her disguise to save her husband's friend's life; disguise (men's clothing) as a symbol of power; the advancement of the plot and development of themes; humour and entertainment*.

The following recommendations will enable candidates to better appreciate Shakespearean texts (and drama as a whole):

- Find creative ways to get students to summarize scenes (even the minor scenes).
- Dramatize scenes to aid recall.
- Identify dramatic techniques in live dramatizations and discussion of scenes/excerpts.
- Use technology (such as DVDs) to demonstrate how dramatic techniques work.
- Prepare worksheets with questions/tasks that focus on dramatic techniques.

Like Question 1, no candidate achieved the total score but one scored 33. The mean for this question was 13.80.

Fences

Question 3

Almost twice as many candidates attempted the questions set on *The Merchant of Venice* as against *Fences*. For Question 3, Parts (a) and (b) required knowledge of what led to the specific events of Act II Scene IV, when Cory retorts, "You ain't never give me nothing!" Candidates did not handle this question well. Events leading up to his outburst include *Troy's refusal to sign the permission papers for Cory which would have enabled him to be recruited to play college football; Troy's poor parenting skills and lack of fatherly affection, even though he provides for his son materially; Cory's deepening disrespect for Troy when he had Gabriel committed; when he had the affair with Alberta and was physically abusive to Ruth*.

Knowledge of the scene was important in answering Part (b) in terms of what the audience learns, such as the following: *Rose is continuing to care for Raynell even though she is estranged from Troy; Troy is promoted at work and is driving but appears to be lonely as he is not so close to Bono anymore; Cory is hurt by his father's unfaithfulness and exploitation of Gabriel*.

The greatest challenge was noted in Part (c) which dealt with dramatic significance. Candidates seemed to simply resort to telling what happened in the cited scene instead of focusing on how this scene impacts the play as a whole. The dramatic significance of this scene can be noted in these ways: *Troy is at his worst here, in terms of all his relationships and this scene anticipates the hopefulness at the end of the play and the ways in which he will be redeemed; the culmination of the tension between father and son; the high energy in this scene is a fitting contrast to other quieter, humorous or even romantic scenes; ironically Troy is advancing at his workplace but things could not be worse at home; Cory being evicted is contrasted to earlier scenes when he is happily off to playing football or in the later scene, when he returns, smart and self-assured in his military uniform*.

The mean for this question was 11.74. The highest mark obtained for this question was 30.

Question 4

Parts (a) and (b) were not as problematic as the final part of Question 4. Part (a) required candidates to show what Rose wants Cory to understand by her statement, "Your daddy wanted you to be everything he wasn't…" Candidates were expected to mention some of the many instances when Troy's behaviour and action suggested that he wanted his son to be more successful than he. *Troy wanted better for Cory and that was why he bullied him so much; he did not want Cory to be affected as he did by racism so he discouraged him from football and encouraged him to further his education; he wanted Cory to be strong, independent and honest*.

In seeking to respond to how Rose influences the audience's feelings about Troy in the end, Part (b) dealt with Rose's ability to affect the reaction of the audience in responding to Troy. *Her reception of the family and Bono into the home gives the image of a reunited family. Rose's response to Cory's initial refusal to attend Troy's funeral (her view that it was unthinkable that a boy could disrespect his daddy in this way) shows the audience that with all his faults, Troy is to be honoured and respected. Even though Troy had hurt people, Rose is in support of his memory and the audience believes her when she notes that even though Troy wasn't always right, his intentions were good.*

Like Question 3, the highest score for this question, obtained by one candidate, was 30. The mean for this question was 9.08.

Poetry

Question 5

Slightly under 50 per cent of the candidates attempted Question 5 as against Question 6. Part (a) required candidates to describe the situation which caused the speaker's dream not to be fulfilled in "The Carpenter's Complaint" and "Dreaming Black Boy". For the most part, candidates were able to describe the situation in both poems although some responses were vague in that the former poem, the speaker's anger at being deprived of the chance of making his friend's casket and the latter, the racist society in which the speaker lived, were glossed over.

Part (b) was reader response in that candidates were to use textual references to discuss which speaker in the two poems was more appealing. Candidates tended to find the boy in "Dreaming Black Boy" more appealing (arguing that the adult carpenter in the other poem faced a different and less damaging kind of discrimination) but could not, in some instances, justify their position.

Part (c) proved to be challenging and here candidates were asked to identify and comment on one poetic device used to explore the idea of unfulfilled dreams. For "The Carpenter's Complaint", the most common submission was the simile *stand up straight as a plumb-line* but there are others that could be mentioned and discussed. The use of repetition (repeated use of the "I"; "big-belly", "big-shot", "it hot me", "it burn me") reinforces and enhances the simmering anger and resentment which boils over into rage. Contrast also is used to allow the reader to appreciate the passion of the carpenter, as insights are gained about his dead friend and the extent of the snub (depriving him of participating in the final ritual). Therefore, the living and the dead; the burning anger of the speaker against the recollected memory of his friend's cool demeanour ("walk/Home cool, cool, cool") and the one-voiced ranting of the carpenter versus the 'silence' of his audience in the rum bar are other examples of contrast. Irony is also used in this poem when the carpenter mentions "Mr Belnavis." Clearly, the speaker is ridiculing this more socially acceptable gentleman.

Repetition (especially of "I wish") is also used in "Dreaming Black Boy" and candidates made references to this. This refrain highlighted the speaker's alienation and isolation, dreams and fears. And this wishing deepens the pathos. Contrast could be mentioned in that the poem presents a series of contrasts between the boy's dreams and the reality of his situation. This serves to heighten the intense pain and anxiety of a boy whose dreams will never be realized in this racist society. Allusions are also used in this poem and apart from Paul Robeson, all other allusions are negative — the "powers", "hotel keepers", "torch throwers" and "plotters." These negative allusions provide a contrast to the boy's dreams and reinforce the level of bigotry in the society.

The mean for this question was 8.80. The highest score achieved for this question, by one candidate, was 34.

Question 6

This question required candidates to identify two poems by name and discuss the theme of conflict. Part (a) asked candidates for an explanation of the conflict and Part (b), the reaction of each speaker to the conflict. All poems on the syllabus could have been used, but it was evident that some candidates were unprepared in their selection. Part (c) was, as usual, the most challenging as most candidates were not able to discuss the effectiveness of the poetic device even when correctly identified. The tendency was to explain and not analyse. Further, in some instances only one device was identified. If this is to be acceptable, the candidates must show its effectiveness (textually) in **both** poems. Sometimes there was the tendency to divorce the effectiveness of the device from the portrayal of conflict.

This question was the only question where the total score was achieved. The mean for this question was 12.11.

Prose Fiction

The comparative questions on West Indian and non-West Indian novels offer candidates the opportunity to explore themes, concepts and narrative techniques which can often allow them to see levels of meaning and understanding while they are discussing the question.

On the other hand, inappropriate use of texts resulted in reduction of marks. Some candidates were not conversant with the current texts or with the details necessary to answer the questions. In some instances, they lost marks (many times 50 per cent of the content) because they used drama texts such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *Fences* to answer questions which were clearly genre specific. It was not unusual to find instances where candidates used their creativity to write their own life stories to answer the questions. In the latter case, no marks were awarded for that effort.

Far too often the comparative nature was missing from the discussion. Many candidates merely narrated the texts, disregarding the question.

Question 7

Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which the statement the desire for freedom is universal is applicable to a major character in one West Indian and one non-West Indian novel. Generally, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the question. However, candidates tended to write generally on the idea of freedom, making historical references without textual support, in some instances. The highest score obtained was 28. The mean for this question was 11.63.

Question 8

This was the most popular question for Prose Fiction. Approximately, 50 per cent of the candidates attempted this question. Candidates were required to select a major character in a West Indian and non-West Indian text who experiences challenges. For each novel, candidates had to discuss the challenges faced by the character. Candidates displayed their ability to identify and elaborate on a range of challenges from the characters' experiences and showed their engagement with the texts they selected. Some of them even selected texts which were on previous and upcoming cycles.

The highest score obtained was 34. The mean for this question was 14.35.

Question 9

This was the least popular prose question as less than 80 candidates attempted it. Candidates were asked to discuss how the writers help readers to sympathize with a child or young adult in one West Indian and one non-West Indian novel. They, however, displayed very little knowledge in critical analysis of the texts and the question. Many responses yielded inappropriate texts (the use of poems and plays) and this affected candidates' overall marks.

The mean for this question was 13.37. The highest score obtained was 34.

Question 10

This question focused on prompting candidates to appreciate the writers' craft and many shied away from it. Some candidates who attempted it did not go much beyond discussions on the women generally and a few ventured to discuss the role of women in the texts.

The mean for this question is 6.14. The highest score obtained was 26.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

- Candidates need to be conscious of the demands of the comparative essay, as in Paper 02, Questions 5 and 6 (Poetry) and Questions 7–10 (Prose Fiction).

- A genre-specific approach is suggested so that candidates can better appreciate the discrete nature of the genres and not use them inappropriately in their responses.

- Teachers must continue to teach drama from a technical perspective and not as prose. The teaching and reinforcing of dramatic techniques must remain important.

- Modelling responses and more sustained practice are needed for candidates to sharpen their essay-writing skills.

- The use of technology is suggested to enhance and reinforce learning and appreciation of texts, for example, using websites to enrich the learning experience.

- Attention must be paid to **all** parts of questions.

- Special attention should be paid to the section of the questions addressing the devices and effectiveness as candidates continue to underperform in this area.

- An unusually large proportion of candidates did not attempt all three questions required in Paper 02, largely because they were caught in the difference between the cycles of the syllabus. They were prepared for the June 2012 paper, but were entered for the January 2012 examination, the last of its cycle. This accounts for the significant decline in performance in this cycle's results. Teachers are strongly advised to note the difference in focus especially in the Prose section, the changes in the Drama texts and the alterations in the selected poems. The change in set texts will seriously handicap candidates who are not prepared.

- **Candidates need to know that June 2012 is the beginning of the new cycle. Knowledge of the revised syllabus is necessary. For the Prose section in Paper 02, the only comparative questions will be those set on the Short Stories. All other prose questions will be on single texts. Candidates need to select the appropriate texts from the revised syllabus to study for the May/June 2012 examination for English B.**

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2012

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparisons. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

The 2012 examination was the beginning of the new cycle of texts. There was also a change in the ratio of the weighting of the Papers and the addition of the short story in Paper 02. Additionally, the question type in the Prose Fiction section was changed from Type B to Type A. Generally, performance this year using the revised syllabus was quite satisfactory and it is envisaged that performance will improve in the next sitting.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension

ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.

- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

There was a decline in the performance of candidates on this paper this year. This is the first year in which each question was worth a maximum of 20 instead of the usual 15 marks.

The table below shows mean scores as a percentage of the maximum score for Paper 01 for the period 2010–2012:

Percentages of Mean Scores for the Period 2010–2012

Paper 01	2010	2011	2012
DRAMA	73.33%	68.13%	60.30%
POETRY	69.93%	55.46%	53.70%
PROSE	49.80%	53.93%	50.60%

Candidate's performance on Drama continues to be better than performance on the other genres. Efforts to improve performance in the other two genres must be undertaken in the various countries which register candidates for the subject.

Question 1: Drama

Overall, 132 (0.68%) of the 19,502 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) (i) of the question tested candidates' ability to identify setting and Part (a) (ii) tested on-stage characters as opposed to characters off stage. These were very basic questions on the genre; however, some candidates mistakenly identified the setting as a lunchroom or some kind of eating establishment, instead of *the police station.* Students must be taught that setting could also include time (as in midday or lunch time). For the second part of the question, most candidates were able to identify the characters on stage (as against the off-stage Mrs Stevenson).

Most candidates were able to score full marks for Part (b), which asked for two details of the impending murder. Part (c) posed a challenge to candidates in terms of explaining the dramatic effect of Duffy's casual manner and Mrs Stevenson's anxiety. Instead of focusing on the dramatic effects created, many candidates discussed the behaviour of the characters without saying what effect it had on the characters. Acceptable responses included *the heightened tension created in the urgency to respond to Mrs Stevenson's report*; *the contrast also evoked humour, in that Duffy's action did not match the seriousness of the situation which Mrs Stevenson was reporting*; *the contrast also underscored the two characters—Duffy's calm and measured tone against Mrs Stevenson's agitated and flustered speech*. Full marks were awarded to candidates who moved from mere explanation of contrast to commenting on the effect on the audience.

For Part (d) candidates were required to say how the stage directions contributed to characterization OR plot OR mood. This was fairly well done by some of the candidates. Some, however, merely defined stage directions and did not use the excerpt to answer the question. Acceptable responses included, for example, *the instance when Duffy 'double-takes' when he heard that Mrs Stevenson wanted to report a murder (this showed his professionalism and care because he thought it was a 'real' murder); the audience experienced a brief moment of anxiety, then relief at the ironic interplay between Duffy and Mrs Stevenson.*

Part (e)(i), which required candidates to identify one instance when Mrs Stevenson's tone of voice changed and the second part, a reason for this, did not pose too much of a challenge for candidates. Most of them cued in to the stage directions 'trying to impress him'; 'relieved' and 'impatiently' and supplied reasonable text-based responses to support their claims.

Responses to Part (f), which required candidates to state what Mrs Stevenson was beginning to realize in lines 41–43, proved that they were able to deduce correctly, as many scored full marks for this part. Most candidates indicated that *Mrs Stevenson is realizing that the details of the planned murder are closely connected to the details of her situation and therefore she may be in danger*.

Candidates displayed creativity and imagination in their responses to Part (g), which required them to suggest a title for the scene and to justify their choices. Their suggestions were varied and their justifications based on a careful and sensitive reading of the extract.

Two thousand eight hundred and eighty-five (14.75%) of the 19,502 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15–20. Only 132 (0.68%) earned the full mark of 20. The total mean for this question was 12.06 out of 20. This was the highest mean achieved of the three genres tested.

Question 2

Seventy-six (0.39 %) of the 19,495 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. For this question the more challenging parts for the candidates, based on their responses, were Parts (c) and (f).

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in indicating that *the aim of the poet was to describe/celebrate the birth and achievement of Pele, the great Brazilian footballer* and were able to earn the full 2 marks.

Part (b) required candidates to comment on the effectiveness of line 3. Many candidates were able to see the dramatic impact of the 'scoring', through the magnifying of the one word, and the overall joyous reaction to the victory and so earn full marks. It was disappointing to note, however, that some candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

Part (c) required candidates to explain what was suggested in lines 4–5. Acceptable responses acknowledged the pun (sun/son) and captured the role this boy would play in his mother's life and the world at large. Many candidates focussed on the 'sun' and not the 'son'.

Part (d) required candidates to identify and comment on the figurative device in line 10 of the poem. For the most part, candidates identified the simile in Part (d) but the commentary was lacking. An acceptable response was *the simile is effective in that it captures the fluid and graceful movement of Pele and this image reinforces his skill*. This weakness in candidates' responses in addressing the effectiveness of the poet's use of a device is highlighted in most of the subject reports. Efforts to address this weakness in the classroom must be undertaken.

For Part (e), candidates were asked to explain the image in lines 4–11. Here we see the image of nature (sun, moon, stars) and the celestial elements playing a part in honing his talent in preparing him for greatness. Candidates' responses indicated that they understood the image, the challenge was in expressing their ideas.

Instead of comparing the first and last three lines in the poem, as was required for Part (f), many candidates explained the lines and paid little attention to similarities and differences. Acceptable responses included *the scoring (the physical birth and the celebratory scoring); both are seen as heavenly accomplishments and earth shattering events; one suggests a loud deafening reaction and the other suggests stunned silence*.

Most candidates did exceptionally well on Part (g), both in providing another title for the poem and using text-based evidence to justify their choice.

Two thousand two hundred and forty (11.49%) of the 19,495 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15–20. Seventy-six (0.39%) earned the full mark of 20. The mean for this question was 10.74 out of 20.

Question 3

The means for Question 3 in the table above indicate that Prose Fiction posed the most difficulty to candidates over the three-year period.

While candidates were able to score full marks in several parts of Questions 1 and 2, most candidates did not score full marks on many of the parts of Question 3. Part (d) proved most challenging. Candidates had difficulty understanding the word 'effect' and some ended up paraphrasing the two phrases they selected from the three provided. Acceptable responses for 'the river moved swiftly…' included the reinforcement of danger; 'clothes fanning out…' included the sense of freedom, though short-lived, of floating/the look of the clothes buoyed by water; 'shot to the surface', the sudden ejection/the power of the release.

Candidates responded well to Part (a), which required them to identify where the incident was taking place and support their answer with evidence. Candidates also responded fairly well to Parts (b) and (c). However, these parts of the question accounted for only six (30%) of the marks.

Of note is that some candidates stopped at Part (e) and did not turn the page (even though the instruction was there in capital letters) to view the remaining Parts (f) and (g) and consequently lost seven marks. This was an error as most of the candidates' responses to the question up to this point showed that they were doing reasonably well. This is indicative of poor test-taking strategies and teachers are reminded that they should incorporate such strategies into their teaching of the subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described. Teachers need to help students expand that notion to embrace the more immediately pleasurable elements of the comic in Literature and life.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers/instructors are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect responses that students offer to the questions.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of Literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 22 of the syllabus):

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

v) The awareness of the writer's crafts (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour. This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

Questions 1 and 2, which are set on the Shakespeare text *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, yielded almost one-half of the total responses for the drama section. Question 1 was far more popular than Question 2. Almost four times as many candidates attempted Question 1as against Question 2.

This question sought to elicit from candidates, facts about any two sets of minor characters (from the three sets given); it further required them to identify and show dramatic situation(s) in which the two selected sets come together and finally, discuss the dramatic function of one set of the characters they described in Part (a). Answers from candidates showed extremely diverse interpretations, with the identification and discussion of the dramatic situation being the most challenging. This particular portion of the question encouraged a certain amount of latitude and candidates' responses embraced the approach of either looking at one situation which featured both sets of characters or two separate situations in which each pair is featured.

Acceptable responses to Part (c) mentioned, for the characters Theseus and Hippolyta, how the court of Theseus and Hippolyta provided the setting for the conflict; how Theseus introduced the theme of love; that the pair introduced the motif of sleep and the symbol of the moon; that they represented sobriety and order; and that their union provided a contrast to the younger/immature couples. A discussion of the dramatic function of the fairies could include the idea that they represent the magical, the dreamlike; their intervention in the love affairs of some of the characters advance the plot; they create comedy. The actors/clowns provide humour through their handling of classic tragedies and their own dramatic production.

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays and 138 (1.2%) of the 7,059 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Nine (0.13%) of these candidates earned full marks (35). The mean for this question was 17.55.

Question 2

Part (a) of Question 2 asked the candidates to describe two ways in which the elements of dream were used in the play; Part (b) to discuss the appropriateness of the title of the play; and finally, Part (c), to discuss the dramatic functions of dreams in the play. Part (a) tested the candidates' knowledge, understanding, interpretation and analysis of the concept of dreams in the play. Candidates were expected to link the relevance of the title to the play itself. While it was clear that some candidates knew the play and interpreted the question well, several had scant knowledge of the text. For those candidates, Part (a) lent itself to much narration and Parts (b) and (c) were handled superficially. Acceptable responses to Part (c), the most challenging part of the question, included that dreams are the medium by which characters are made to perform actions which contribute to the action of the play; dreams are linked to enchantment and they propel the action (Puck enchants Lysander and the events that follow); dreams become the explanation for strange happenings.

Fifty-seven (3.06 %) of the 1,865 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Sixteen (0.86%) of these candidates earned full marks. It was noted, however, that more candidates scored zero on this question than the others in this section. The mean for the question was 15.18.

Old Story Time

Question 3

Question 3 was the most popular question in the drama section, with slightly over one-third of the candidates attempting this question. Part (a) of the question asked for a description of the relationship between Miss Aggy and Len (Len the child, not the adult); Part (b), a discussion of Miss Aggy and how her character illustrated the challenges of single parenting; and finally Part (c), how the playwright's dramatic presentation of Miss Aggy evoked different feelings from the audience. Some candidates concentrated mainly on Miss Aggy's relationship with Len with little or no reference to Len's relationship with her. Others concentrated on Len, the adult. There was also a tendency to generalize on the struggles of single parenting, without much textual reference. Some candidates introduced their own narratives of childhood experiences. Part (c) was the most challenging. Some candidates omitted this section and others tended to describe how Miss Aggy's behaviour made the audience feel. Acceptable responses to Part (c) included emotional responses such as, admiration (a single-mother who singlehandedly raised her son; a shrewd businesswoman; she sacrificed her life for her boy; she was self-made, independent; resentment (the way she manipulates Len; her self-hate; the way she fawned on Pastor Greaves, his daughter and 'light-skinned' people) and other responses such as anger, exasperation. The answer lends itself to positive and negative emotions.

One hundred and thirty-three (1.37%) of the 9,723 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Two (0.02%) candidates earned full marks on this question (35). This question had the second highest mean for the section. The mean for this question was 18.11.

Question 4

For Part (a) of the question, candidates were asked to state the different (opposing) views about beauty; to discuss how the playwright used characterization to illustrate those opposing views for Part (b), and sought from the candidates their impressions of this presentation (of inner and outer beauty) for Part (c). Most candidates seemed to have grasped the concept of beauty explored in the play through the use of characterization. Although some were able to expound on the presentation of inner and outer beauty,

many were unable to give their final impressions on the play as a whole. Acceptable responses for Part (c) covered how the playwright explored some of the assumptions about blackness and inverted some of these assumptions to reinforce the idea that outside appearance could be deceiving.

Thirty-two (3.93%) of the 814 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. No candidate earned full marks on this question. However, this question seemed to have resonated well with candidates. It had the fewest zeros for the drama section and boasted the highest mean of 18.39.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were "Forgive My Guilt" and "Epitaph". This question reversed the trend in that, for this year it attracted about two-thirds of the responses. Part (a) required candidates to describe what happened in each poem as it related to death and memory; Part (b) to say how the speaker in each poem reacted to the memory of death; and for Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which effectively portrayed the speaker's reaction to the death. Part (a) assessed candidates' knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall, assess and summarise the information. Most candidates responded well to this section. For Part (b), candidates were better able to discuss how the speaker reacted to the death in "Forgive My Guilt" (grief, contrition, remorse) than in "Epitaph." In the latter, candidates misinterpreted the anger as indifference, not realizing that even if the death did not evoke public outrage at the time, now in the re-telling of the tale; the speaker could experience a kind of displaced anger ('brutal sentences').

Part (c) which focused on devices (writer's craft) posed a challenge. Both poems were replete with similes, metaphors, personification, and imagery. Acceptable responses included appropriate identification of devices and such devices should make connections to the reaction to the death. These responses showed how each device deepened the remorse; heightened the pain and suffering; contained the rage; and sustained the storytelling imagery.

Two hundred and twenty-three (1.79%) of the 12,485 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Sixteen (0.13%) of these candidates earned full marks (35). The mean for this question was 15.32.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose two suitable poems from the prescribed list to answer the question set. The question asked candidates to select two appropriate poems that focused on the theme of love. Part (a) required candidates to describe who or what is loved; Part (b) to discuss the effects of this love and finally, Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which is used to portray this love. Part (a) was handled well for the most part, although candidates sometimes did not always choose poems that they knew equally well. In this part of the question, candidates were expected to name the poems selected, and sometimes they did not quote titles correctly. For Part (b), candidates were expected to show how this love reflected, reinforced or questioned the love portrayed. Superior discussions mentioned whether this emotional response was wholesome and whether the overall effect was positive or negative.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen to the portrayal of love. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices.

Ninety-five (1.44%) of the 6,616 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Ten candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 15.57.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

The questions on the novels in this the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions which require close individual study of each text and not the comparative treatment of two novels as in former years. *Songs of Silence* did not seem to be a very popular text. The low popularity could be attributed to it being a relatively new text on the market with very little critical material available for teachers and students.

Questions 7 and 8 combined were answered by fewer than 8 per cent of candidates who attempted the Prose Fiction section. The candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated for the most part, interesting insights. Question 7 asked for a description of the father-child relationships in the chapters, "A Story with No Name" and "Travellers, or Fathers, or Little Fool-Fool," for Part (a); a description of the relationship between Cudjoe Man and his daughter for Part (b); and for Part (c), a commentary on what was suggested by the way the writer presented father-child relationships. Essentially, candidates focused on the characteristics/qualities of the relationships portrayed by the narrator Marlene and her father and for Part (b), a description of the relationship of Cudjoe Man and his daughter; essentially the gentle, caring and protective ways in which he 'mothered' his mentally handicapped child.

Part (c) dealt with the narrative techniques of the writer (cued by the word 'presents'). Again, this was the most challenging part of the question. Acceptable responses dealt with the two chapters and included, among others, the ways in which the writer, through Marlene's reflections, explores issues such as parental infidelity, single parenting, the ways in which the 'silenced' in society (the most vulnerable) are treated, the role of fathers in the home, gossip and folklore, the innocent point of view of the young narrator, contrasted with the 'knowledge' of the reader, the contrast presented by the naïve Marlene and the adult reflecting.

Ninety-five (8.53%) of the 1,114 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Eight (0.72%) of the candidates scored full marks on the question. The mean for the question was 19.71.

Question 8

Parts (a) and (b) asked candidates for a description of what Marlene found strange or confusing in the chapters "The Idiot" and "Morris Hole." Details included Marlene's memory of her mother's cautionary tale about pride (Pa Brown and the river); boys and their inability to spell; her experience with Ezekiel; the river and her experiences there; her sexuality (her budding breasts and Miss Retinella's insinuation); her confused head ("sometimes my head weave stories…").

Part (c) required candidates to discuss two narrative techniques used to heighten the adolescent's confusion. The narrative techniques include the use of flashbacks, the contrast presented with the innocent narrator juxtaposed with the occasional adult interjections/communal voices; use of symbols, imagery and elements of song.

Nineteen (5.57%) of the 341candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Three (0.88%) candidates scored full marks. The mean for this question was 15.70.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Part (a) sought candidates' response to their analysis of the relationship between Bolo and Bee; Bolo as a leader (one who cared for the people) and using Bolo (through characterization as a technique) to develop the story. For Part (a), some candidates described the characters rather than focused on the analysis of the relationship. However, some were insightful in mentioning how both empowered the villagers in different ways—Bolo through warrior-hood and Bee, through faith or spirituality. For Part (b), candidates tended to concentrate on instances of Bolo's interaction with the people rather than Bee's thoughts on Bolo and how he must have 'read' Bolo's actions as ones which were intended to force the villagers to reclaim their manhood.

While most candidates accepted that Bolo was the central character by their responses to Part (c), many did not treat this aspect of technique well and as such, resorted to narration. Acceptable responses should include Bolo's centrality to the novel and what he symbolizes (the traditional way of life); his centrality to the internal conflict in the church when he insists on the elimination of Prince; his contribution to the excitement and tension with the standoff with the kidnapping of Primus' daughters; his links with the major and minor characters and the status he shares with Bee.

One hundred and five (1.33%) of the 7,902 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Five (0.06%) of the candidates scored full marks (35). The mean for this question was 15.14.

Question 10

Only 30 per cent of those candidates who attempted questions on this text chose Question 10. Candidates did not manage this question well and generally seemed to have a problem with the word "ritual" in Part (c). Part (a) required candidates to make the connection that the steelband and the church (in this instance the Spiritual Baptist) have the same bond, the retention of African customs. They make use of music, singing and movement. Candidates handled Part (b) very well. They were able to grasp the reasons for Eva believing that the spirit has deserted the church. Part (c), which required candidates to deal with the significance of religious ritual in the novel was done fairly well. Some of the rituals in the novel include the rituals associated with the worship—the singing, shouting, dancing, bell-ringing, 'catching the spirit'.

Seven (0.32%) of the 2,180 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. One candidate (0.05%) achieved the maximum score on this question. The mean for this question was 14.24.

Short Story

Question 11

The Short Story section was included in the revised syllabus for this cycle of examinations. This section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question and for the other question candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 are, "The Day the World Almost Came to an End" and "Mom Luby and the Social Worker." Almost 60 per cent of the candidates who attempted the short story questions did this question. Candidates were asked to describe one humorous incident in each story for Part (a); indicate which story they found more interesting, with justification for Part (b); and for Part (c), show how the writer creates humour in the telling of these stories. Candidates found Part (a) reasonably

straightforward as they were able to describe a humorous event in each story. A few candidates related incidents that were not necessarily humorous. Part (b) sought a comparison with the cue word, 'more' and some candidates did not earn full marks for this part of the question because in the discussion, they ignored or failed to acknowledge the other story. Part (c) posed a challenge in that candidates tended to provide evidence of humour without showing how the humour was created. Candidates are expected to discuss the writers' craft, for instance, the development of the plot with the rising crescendo and twist, which explained the narrator's exaggerated response to the booming aircraft in the first story and the use of satire to comment on the American welfare system in the other story.

One hundred and ninety-one (3.46%) of the 5,523 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Thirteen (0.24%) candidates earned full marks. The mean for this question was 19.37.

Question 12

This question concentrated on setting and its contribution to the development of the storyline. Candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list. In candidates' description of the setting in Part (a), many limited their responses to the physical space. However, there were some excellent responses, especially from stories such as "Blackout" and "To Da-Duh, in Memoriam." In responding to Part (b), which asked for the significance of the setting to the development of the story, many candidates concentrated on the setting and not much on how the setting impacts each story. Part (c) was not handled well, perhaps because candidates were not as sure about the term "narrative element". Acceptable responses discussed elements such as irony, flashback, comparisons, suspense, and dialogue.

Forty-two (0.09%) of the 2,174 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30–35. Two (0.09%) candidates earned full marks for this question. The mean for this question was 16.48.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

1. Text selection and text choice must be given serious consideration. Sometimes poor textual choice limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

2. Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.

3. The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

4. Teachers are encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

5. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as 'dramatic function' and 'writer's craft'. Candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

6. Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the movie version, for instance).

7. Students should know the skills required when they are asked to *define, discuss, describe, determine, comment on,* or *show*. Teachers must prepare students in this area.

8. While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to *describe, explain* and *analyse* with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

9. Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what is sometimes captured in superior scripts.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2013

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The English B examination consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately five to eight short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question for a total of 60 marks.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates must choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105.

Overall, performance improved compared with that of January 2012. This was the second sitting of examinations using the new cycle of texts. It was apparent that candidates were prepared for the examination using the appropriate texts and so performance showed considerable improvement.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

Compared to last year, candidates' performance on Paper 01 showed improvement in all genres. Overall, the mean performance in Profile 1, Drama, was 12.35; in Profile 2, Poetry, 9.29; and Profile 3, Prose Fiction, 7.74. The weakest performance was in Prose.

Question 1

This question had the highest mean. The overall mean was 12.35 out of 20. Overall, 3 (0.33 per cent) of the 916 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. No candidate scored zero. The extract elicited involvement from the candidates and such resonation was demonstrated in their responses to the items.

Part (a) asked candidates for a description of what was happening in lines 1–8, essentially seeking a response which covered the persons, place and main event (the stick-fighting competition). This was well done. Part (b), however, was not as well done. Although, candidates were aided by the explanatory notes, some could not find two pieces of evidence to support the claim that Inez was a "mature coquette". Acceptable responses included all the evidence which supported how well versed Inez was in manipulating men to get what she wants. For instance, she speaks charmingly to Joe to "ease up" on Swifty ("Give him a chance, Joe"); she gets Swifty to obey her to "clean up the place." In fact, her attempt to charm Joe is so effective that instead of getting him annoyed, he praises her for "[taking] over the business already."

Part (c) did not present a challenge for most candidates, but some failed to mention that Swifty's leaving the bar unattended contributed significantly to Joe's ire. In response to Part (d), regarding Inez's two roles, many candidates mentioned her role as mother/nurturer based on Swifty's response to her. However, other responses included her being peacemaker/mediator and a 'boss' of sorts.

By far, Part (e) was the most challenging as candidates could not explain the *dramatic function* of Briscoe's question. Acceptable responses included *to change the subject; to diffuse the tension; and to divert Joe's attention from further conflict with Swifty*.

For Part (f), most candidates identified the simile as the figurative device, but as usual floundered in commenting on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses captured the comparison of the *swiftness of the stick-fighter, who moved so quickly that this opponent was not aware of the coming blow until he felt it*.

Part (g) allowed candidates to demonstrate their creativity in suggesting the title and justifying it. A few however, presented titles without textual evidence, and thus lost marks. Candidates need to remember that reader-response items are always text based.

Question 2

Overall, 4 (0.44 per cent) of the 916 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. Two candidates (0.22 per cent) scored zero. The overall mean for this question was 9.29.

Part (a) asked candidates to identify the main event (*concert/contest/talent show*) and its location (*school*). Most candidates were able to score full marks on this question. Although Part (b) was handled reasonably well, some candidates identified the incorrect stanza. Candidates were asked to select a line or phrase from the first stanza which describes Brother Kinsley's outstanding quality and comment on its effectiveness. Phrases included: "*swiftest legs"; "like sharpened blades"; "cutting through the finishing tape lines"*. All these emphasized his prowess, his superior quality; in essence, how quickly, gracefully and efficiently he could run races.

Part (c) required candidates to describe the speaker's attitude to Brother Kingsley and to support their response with evidence from lines 9 to12. Many candidates merely mentioned admiration for his dancing and many failed to manipulate textual evidence to earn maximum marks. Acceptable responses included *the way in which his graceful, effortless movements connected earth and air*.

Some candidates hinted at but did not give full treatment to responses in Part (d), which asked for an example of contrast and a comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses included: *Brother Kingsley's dancing versus the girl's singing (effective because of the stark difference between Kingsley's talents and popularity against the girl's grating, despised rendition which emphasized the unfairness of the judge); the entire school versus Miss Stirling's judgment OR the symbol of the school versus repression OR the booing by all versus Miss Stirling's single voice*. Any variation of these is effective because the contrast underscores the unfair and undemocratic nature of the judging.

For Part (e), candidates were required to comment on one of the three quotations given. Some candidates disregarded the rubric and responded to all three, instead of commenting on one of the three given. Any of the following responses would have earned full marks:

- "he affected a clutching movement" is used to suggest that Brother Kingley's action was not willful but merely imitative;
- "dull unburnished memory gem" is used to suggest that the girl's performance lacked spectacle, it was ordinary;
- "a drooping slipper-satin/christian-quattie dress" suggests ill-fitting, ordinary, cheap and boringly correct attire.

For Part (f) (i), candidates were required to identify the line where the persona's tone changed. Most candidates were able to understand the change in tone though some failed to identify the correct line. Part (f) (ii) required candidates to explain how the tone changes. Many candidates who attempted the second part of the question gave why the tone changed, rather than how the tone changed. The latter was required in order to earn full marks. Acceptable responses for the change in tone, Part (a), were line 16, *"till he affected a clutching movement",* and line 18*, "Miss Stirling judged that move"*. For Part (b), an acceptable response is: *the tone changed from celebration/admiration to disappointment/a sense of grievance*.

Part (g) required candidates to comment on the appropriateness of the title. Some candidates did not appear to interpret this question well and presented instead, their own title for the poem. Candidates were expected to use textual evidence and respond to the key word *concert* as in celebration of talent but in this instance sarcastically entitled because of the outcome OR a communal condemnation, as in the students acting as one to expose Miss Stirling's judgement. Essentially, candidates were expected to respond to the effectiveness of the word, in light of the poem.

Question 3

Overall, the prose question generated the lowest mean (7.74). Candidates did not, for the most part, demonstrate a convincing understanding of the passage, especially in areas which required higher order comprehension skills. Candidates must attempt all the parts of the question so as to score the highest marks possible. In this section, in particular, some candidates did not do all the parts. No candidate scored full marks in this section and three (0.33 per cent) of the 916 candidates scored zero.

Part (a) which asked for a description of the setting was done well. Most candidates were able to earn two of the three marks for this question. Acceptable responses included a description of the street/lane, rum bar, sea and twilight.

Part (b) required candidates to use evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3 to describe the relationship between Leila and Millie. While candidates were able to mention the girls were friends, many did not refer to the evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3 in their responses. Evidence from these paragraphs point to, *the girls support/trust each other; Millie is the more aggressive/Leila is the more timid.*

For Part (c), candidates were required to comment on one of the quotations given. Some attempted the two, instead of one. Again, there was the tendency to explain or paraphrase. Acceptable responses for "in the distance the sun slipped…" included those that paid attention *to lonely and cold as these words seemed to define the relationship; the reinforcement of the relationship/situation through pathetic fallacy; the suddenness of night*. For "the smoky noises…", acceptable responses included *the almost muted sounds from inside, merged with the smoke, seeped outside; the heightened contrast of inside/outside; the animal-like atmosphere of the inside is contrasted with the colder/cleaner environment occupied by the females.*

For Part (d) (i), candidates were required to identify one instance when either Millie or Bradeth was sarcastic. Part (d) (ii) required candidates to explain how the example shows sarcasm. Although candidates were able to identify the sarcasm in Part (d) (i), the explanation for Part (d) (ii) fell short. Some candidates ignored the instructions and supplied responses for both Bradeth and Millie, instead of Bradeth or Millie. An acceptable response for Bradeth included: "check out what a bit of peace and quiet feel like, but it's not looking like we going to finish the test*"*. This is a sideswipe/veiled statement that the women were a nuisance, preventing the men from enjoying their rest. Another sarcastic remark was Bradeth's "a long time now*"* and by repeating it, he is in fact 'throwing words' at Millie, suggesting slyly, that she is the cause of his headache.

Acceptable responses for Millie included: *"*You both have a nice sleep, then*?"* in tone which is suggesting, the very opposite. Her use of "nice" is mocking; she hopes they had rotten sleep, and further, she disapproves of their sleeping in the first place. Her other remark, "well now that the testing done*"* is sarcastic in that her pseudo-polite phrasing ("maybe you don't mind*"*) is really a kind of cover for the violence of "*testing your backside up to Sandy Bay"*.

Part (e), which asked candidates to suggest two impressions of the men and use evidence to support these impressions, was fairly well done. However, like many of the questions candidates scored better in one part of the question. Candidates scored in mentioning that the men were friends/drinking buddies but many did not use the evidence which would allow them to score full marks. Acceptable responses included *details which supported the fact that they seem to prefer their own company to that of the ladies (their controlling/nagging girlfriends); they were unreliable, having stood up the ladies*.

Part (f) was not well done. Candidates were required to suggest one reason why Aunt Toosie may want to talk to Bradeth and to justify their response. Candidates missed the inference and could not find supporting evidence. Some thought that Bradeth had done a literal test or felt that Aunt Toosie had not seen him for a very long time. Acceptable responses included: *Aunt Toosie wanted to ask Bradeth about his intentions towards her niece; Bradeth may have a different view about the relationship and may be hesitant to commit to it; or Bradeth may not be as focused on the relationship as Millie*. Marks were also awarded if candidates mentioned that Aunt Toosie wanted to talk to him about the drinking.

Candidates did not appear to be very confident in responding to Part (g). This part of the question required candidates to list the sequential points of tension and explain how each point causes the tension to rise. Some candidates merely mentioned a point or two with no mention of how each contributed to the other. Acceptable responses included: *the girls walking purposefully to an unfamiliar street; seeing their men lying drunken from a distance; tension building as Leila feels uncomfortable for having encouraged Millie to waste time waiting for the men; Millie's forceful action of pushing Bradeth away from her; her*

posture, aggression and sarcasm which heighten the tension, plus Bradeth's pointed rejoinders, his stance ("hind legs first"), like an animal at bay climaxes the tension.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

- Teachers/instructors should continue to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to literature.
- Discussing the effectiveness of literary devices must be the focus of continued analysis of style. It is not good enough to merely identify or define devices.
- Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.
- Candidates are encouraged to watch live and recorded plays so that they are better able to appreciate the 'performance' element of the genre.
- Teachers could assist students to dramatize sections of plays in class — dramatize scenes and summarize scenes to encourage recall.
- Teachers are encouraged to assist students in understanding the rubric of examinations and ensure that they do only what is asked.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus):

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgements, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living
- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense, in a new form, information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)
- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgements in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism
- The ability to produce balanced critical analyses
- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02
- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text
- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Of the 12 questions in Paper 02, 6 (50 per cent) had candidates earning full marks. Less than 20 per cent of the candidates attempted Questions 4, 8, 10 and 12. Question 4, one of the questions on drama achieved the highest mean (19.17); the second highest mean was also from the drama questions: Question 2 with a mean of 18.18. The lowest mean came from Prose Fiction, Question 7, with a mean of 12.03. Question 9 on *The Wine of Astonishment* was the most popular question, with more than 50 per cent of candidates attempting it.

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

For Question 1, candidates were required to use evidence from Act 2 Scene1 to support the description that (a) Puck was a "shrewd and knavish sprite"; (b) describe how his actions cause confusion in the magic wood and (c) discuss Puck's dramatic function in the play. For Part (a), some candidates had difficulty recalling the scene. Acceptable responses included details which captured *Puck's delight in doing mischief to humans and animals (frightening village maidens; skimming off the cream from the milk; tricking stallions/colts into thinking there is a filly nearby to name a few*). Although some candidates listed/mentioned some of Puck's actions in the magic wood, responses to Part (b) lacked development. Acceptable responses included: *he mistakenly enchants Lysander instead of Demetrius and Lysander awakes madly in love with Helena and scornful of Hermia; Oberon orders him to make matters right and he enchants Demetrius and this causes both men to declare their love for Helena, much to Hermia's consternation and anger. That same night Puck puts the ass' head on Bottom, causing the mechanicals to panic and scamper away*.

Part (c) which required a discussion of Puck's dramatic function was not handled well. Acceptable responses included: *the comic humour by his words and actions; his intentional creation of comedy (under Oberon's orders) of Titania falling in love with an ass; he links the three worlds of the play; he closes the play by reminding the audience that they did but slumber and so reinforces the idea that the play is an illusion; thus returns the audience to reality*.

The mean for this question is 17.86 out of a total of 35 marks.

Question 2

Four couples were listed for candidates to choose one and for Part (a), to describe the personality differences between the male and female; Part (b) to describe one situation in which these differences were demonstrated and finally, Part (c) to discuss the way in which Shakespeare dramatizes these differences. Candidates managed Part (a) reasonably well, in that they were able to grasp that the men appeared to be domineering, authoritative, selfish and abusive; whereas the women tended to be passionate, accepting, headstrong, gentle and capable of love. Part (b), however, proved somewhat challenging in that candidates sometimes were not able to relate the characteristics of the characters with the situations.

Acceptable responses for Part (c) included Shakespeare's use of *conflict situations* as a means of dramatizing the differences or contrasts. The use of enchantment (physical and psychological transformations as male partners struggle to retain or obtain power over females) and props (for example, Bottom's ass' head as part of Oberon's attempt to dominate Titania).

The mean for this question was 18.18 out of a total of 35 marks.

The following are some recommendations that will enable candidates to better appreciate Shakespearean texts and drama as a whole:

- Teachers/instructors should find creative ways to get students to summarize scenes (even minor ones).
- Candidates should dramatize scenes to aid recall.
- Teachers/instructors should identify dramatic techniques in live dramatizations and discussion of scenes/excerpts.

- Candidates should practise Part (c) of drama questions, which target the language and application of drama.
- Teachers/instructors should use technology (such as DVDs) to demonstrate how dramatic techniques work.
- Teachers/instructors should prepare worksheets with questions/tasks that focus on dramatic techniques.

Old Story Time

Question 3

For Part (a), candidates were asked to describe what was happening in Act 1 Scene 1; for Part (b) to discuss Miss Aggy's understanding of *ambition* and *advancement* and finally, for Part (c) to show how Rhone explores the ideas of ambition and advancement in the play. Although candidates were asked to give the details of the first scene in the play, many had challenges recalling the major incident (Len's beating because he was caught playing with Pearl by the river, and not at home studying) and a few candidates did not correctly identify Miss Aggy's relationship to Len. Acceptable responses for Part (b) covered Miss Aggy's self-hate and her dream of the light-skinned Margaret as the ultimate prize for her son (the epitome of advancement and ambition).

Part (c), which focused on the writer's craft proved challenging for many candidates. Acceptable responses for Part (c) included the ways in which *Rhone allows his audience to see a more balanced view of ambition and advancement than what Miss Aggy offers by using Pa Ben as storyteller and character to comment on and draw attention to Miss Aggy's actions; Pa Ben's role as mentor and confidante in fostering the relationship between Len and Lois ("the pretty black girl"); using Len and Lois as another alternative to Miss Aggy's bias, showing that ambition and advancement can come through the black middle class; using dramatic irony, contrast and flashback to interrogate Miss Aggy's anti-black stance*. Costuming, props and visual imagery are also used to explore the idea of ambition and advancement.

The mean for this question was 17.97 out of a total of 35.

Question 4

This question registered the highest mean for Paper 02 (19.17). Using the stem, *Rhone's presentation of his characters is what makes this story worth telling*, this question asked candidates for Part (a), to describe two characters they find appealing; for Part (b), to show how one of these characters has his/her story to tell and Part (c), to discuss how the character named in Part (b) contributes to suspense in the play. Candidates managed Parts (a) and (b) reasonably well, perhaps because these parts were 'open' enough for personal interaction. The suspense aspect of the question posed a challenge. Acceptable responses included a discussion on how the character selected impacted the drama/story through tension, resolution of the conflict, enhancement of the theme(s), and advancement of the plot.

Poetry

Question 5

Part (a) required candidates to describe what was taking place in *A Stone's Throw* and *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her son* in terms of how women are treated. Candidates had reasonable knowledge of the poems (although a few mentioned, wrongly, that the woman was raped by the mob in the first poem). Part (b) required candidates to discuss the speaker's attitude to the woman in each poem. In articulating the speaker's attitude acceptable responses for *A Stone's Throw* included the *self-righteous,*

smug, haughty and narrow-mindedness of the speakers (men) in their behaviour to exact judgment. The speaker in *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her Son* is voiced through the concerns of a mother in the third-person narrative, who appears to be at the mercy of the don. She, however, has other and inner powers to draw on for strength and support as she faces the daunting task of her son's imminent violent end.

Part (c) continues to be challenging to candidates. Candidates were asked to identify and comment on one poetic device used to explore the treatment of women. Acceptable responses included *the use of biblical allusions, metaphor, irony, sarcasm, contrast*, among others. Many candidates did not lose sight of the significance of the biblical allusions in the poems. In *A Stone's Throw* references to "*guru"*, "*God-merchant*", and the title ("he that is without sin, cast the first stone") invoke ideas of supernatural intervention on the woman's behalf, as the rescuer stands alone against a blood-thirsty mob; hypocrisy exposed as no one could stone the woman and generally, the fate of women and their unequal status in terms of sexual indiscretion. In *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her Son* references to Judas Iscariot's mother, the father giving gifts (Jesus' parable), and the thief on the cross all allude to relationships in families, betrayal and death, sin and consequences.

The treatment of women is seen also through the use of contrast: the mob versus the guru; the scared woman versus the blood-thirsty men; the woman versus the man who employed her son. These all demonstrate the imbalance of power.

The mean for this question was 15.28 out of a total of 35 marks.

Question 6

This question required candidates to identify two poems by name that focus on a significant experience or event. Part (a) asked candidates to describe the experience or event; Part (b), to discuss the speaker's attitude to this experience or event and Part (c), to discuss one device that is used to present this experience or event.

All poems on the syllabus could have been used. Part (c) was as usual, the most challenging as most candidates were not able to discuss the effectiveness of the poetic device to present this experience or event (even when correctly identified). The tendency was to explain and not analyse. Further, in some instances only one device was identified. If this is to be acceptable, candidates must show its effectiveness (textually) in both poems. In order to gain full marks, candidates must correctly identify each device, show how it is used to portray the event or experience and make a statement of comparison between the two poems.

Here is an example from a candidate who did a fairly good job of showing the effectiveness of a device by tying it to the experience/event (in this instance discrimination/racism in the poem "Dreaming Black Boy"):

> *The constant repetition of 'I wish' illustrates the longing and desire the persona has for oppression and blatant discrimination to stop. It is a symbol of grief as he feels helpless to the fact that he is oppressed by the white society. The phrase 'I wish' is far-fetched and may not happen. Therefore, it is evident he thinks discrimination against African-Americans would not stop. By extension the phrase 'I wish' reminds us of the famous speech made by civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr which entailed the phrase 'I have a dream.'*

The mean for this question was 17.69 out of a total of 35 marks.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

This was not a popular choice among candidates as less than 4 per cent of the 916 candidates attempted this question. The stem read: *Songs of Silence is held together by the sure and simple voice of a child but interspersed with the voices of adult reflection*. Candidates were asked for Part (a), to describe two incidents that Marlene the child observes OR experiences in the chapter *Effita*; for Part (b), to discuss how that chapter highlights that the story is being told from a child's point of view and finally, for Part (c), to discuss how Forbes mixes childhood and adult voices in the novel. Many candidates could not recall the details of the chapter and many confused Auntie Sare and Effita. Acceptable responses for Part (a) included how *Auntie Sare was sustained by the community; Marlene's Sunday ritual of taking food to her and enduring her long and personal prayers; Effie, the community wailer and the incident in which she made the wrong pronouncement*.

Acceptable responses to Part (b) included the fact that *the narrator declared that she was nine years old; her childish fascination with Auntie Sare's prayers; declaring that Auntie Sare was "older than forever"; the childish wonder in which Effie's actions are captured; repeating phrases from her mother and her constant questioning of the inadequacy of her mother's responses and generally, her living in 'fear' of her mother*.

Implicit in this part of the question is the writer's technique. A few candidates hinted at but did not discuss with conviction the elements of Part (c). Acceptable responses to this part included: using *Marlene as the child narrator or as the adult reflecting through the consciousness of a child; using various tones in Marlene's voice, for example, language registers (from the Standard to the non-Standard); using voices of other adult villagers to comment on social issues; using folklore and juxtaposing the young naïve Marlene with the adult who looks back*.

The mean for this question was 12.03 out of a total of 35.

Question 8

This question was the least popular. Less than 1 per cent of the 916 candidates attempted it. The stimulus read: *In spite of her insightfulness, Marlene, even as an adult, was still confused by some relationships*. Candidates were required for Part (a), to describe two instances of Marlene's insightfulness in the chapter "So Few and Such Morning Songs'; for Part (b) to describe two instances of Marlene's confusion in the chapter "A Story with No Name"; and for Part (c), to discuss one device that Forbes uses to portray insight and confusion in the novel.

Candidates did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the text in order to describe two instances of Marlene's insightfulness in the chapter "So Few and Such Morning Songs" or her confusion in "A Story With No Name". Candidates also did not demonstrate sufficient facility with narrative techniques to respond to the final part of the question which asked for one device used to portray insight and confusion in the novel. Acceptable responses included: *the narrative structure itself which tends to reflect Marlene's random wanderings; the narrator's 'head' becomes the site of wandering as well ('my head don't work straight…sometimes my head weave stories'); stories do not support chronological development; symbolism, as in silence and the ways in which silence confuses or clarifies issues*.

The mean for this question was 12.33 out of a total of 35.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

This question was the most popular, garnering more than 50 per cent of candidates' responses. The stimulus read: "*I want you people to be against me", Bolo says and his voice, Bee tell me, was a terrible cry*. "*I want you to be my enemy. I want you to come and take these girls from me"*. For Part (a), candidates were required to describe the situation in which Bolo poses this challenge; for Part (b), to discuss why Bolo would challenge the villagers in this way and for Part (c), to show how Lovelace presents the tension between the community and Bolo in the novel.

Clearly the Bolo/Bee dynamics resonated with candidates and many were familiar with the text. For Part (a), candidates were fairly conversant with the issue of Bolo's *abduction* of Primus' daughters, Bee's role in trying to resolve the issue and Bolo's defiance of the entire village. Part (b), which asked for the reason for Bolo's challenging of the villagers was not lost on candidates who discussed Bolo's passion in waging his one-man war against the men in the village to regain their manhood. Part (c) which dealt with the writer's presentation of the tension between the community and Bolo was also managed well. Acceptable responses included: *Bolo's challenging of Bee's decision to obey the law and stop shouting; Bolo's return from prison and turning into a bully and the reasons for this; the abduction of Primus' daughters; through elements such as contrast, figurative devices and symbols*.

The mean for this question was 15.33 out of a total of 35.

Question 10

The stimulus for this question read: *Eulalie is a marginal, forgotten character* in ***The Wine of Astonishment***. For Part (a) candidates were required to describe Eulalie; for Part(b), to explain her role in the novel and for Part (c), to discuss Lovelace's treatment of women in the novel.

Superior responses demonstrated knowledge of Eulalie's symbolic role in relation to the Bonasse community, whereas weak responses demonstrated limited knowledge of this 'marginal' character. A brief description of her yields her being the village belle and future wife of Bolo, only to be taken and used by the returning Ivan Morton. Although some candidates had challenges with the word *role* in Part (b), some rightly saw her as the personification of beauty and innocence in the village; she was Ivan's first 'victim' from the village; her 'violation' must have affected Bolo, whose pride would not allow him now to have her.

Part (c) which asked for the writer's treatment of women in the novel, had responses which primarily featured Eva, the narrator and matriarch. Other responses included the fact that women are generally marginalized; they are victims of the male world.

The mean for this question was 15.52 out of a total of 35 marks.

Short stories

Candidates are asked to prepare ten short stories for this section. Of the 916 candidates attempting the Prose Fiction profile 37 per cent attempted the question on short stories. No candidate attained full marks for these questions. As with the Poetry, this section contains Type B (comparative) questions. Generally, candidates were not conversant with some of the stories. In some instances, only one of the stories was studied sufficiently with the other, a mere passing acquaintance. Consequently, candidates lost marks as they launched into story telling or repeating of information to 'pad' their responses.

A World of Prose

Question 11

"Septimus" and "Emma" were used to demonstrate how children and adults see the world with the suggested bias that readers preferred the children's perspective of the world. Part (a) required candidates to provide an outline of the views held by the children; Part (b) required an explanation of the adults' views on the matter and Part (c) required candidates to say which view is preferred with (textual) justification.

The children in "Septimus*"* collectively endorse the view of their parents that everything in the family must be shared: the children play together; 'own' the street together and as Septimus would later learn, share the goodies together. In "Emma*"* the children want to be spontaneous, unpretentious and not full of adult restrictions when they grow up. The adults, however, (as in the adult Septimus' delight in having an entire apple for himself and in "Emma" with the adult play of deceit, betrayal and hypocrisy) tend to have opposite views to that of the children.

Candidates for Part (c) exercised their reader-response skills although some did not base their responses too much on textual evidence. There was the tendency here to support the issues with their own narratives and this tended to divert their attention from the onus to keep to the 'facts' of the stories. Justification requires textual responsibility.

The mean for this question was 15.06 out of a total of 35 marks.

Question 12

Referring to the stories "Shabine" and "Blackout*"* in the context of ambiguity in male–female relationships, candidates were asked in Part (a), to describe one male–female relationship presented in each story and for Part (b), to show how the ambiguity is presented in each of these relationships and finally for Part (c), to discuss one theme that each writer portrays through these relationships.

Able candidates described the narrator's secret fascination with Justine in spite of his grandmother's warnings (since he is her social superior). The brief bus-stop encounter of the black man and the white woman and the stereotypical assumptions form the basis of the relationship in "Blackout."

Part (b) proved challenging to some candidates as they had problems understanding the word *ambiguity*. Acceptable responses for "Shabine*"* included: *the privileged male admirer sees Justine as a seductress and appears to be blind to the communal rejection of her; they both desire each other but lack the will to take the leap from admiration to action. The norms of North American culture (segregation and racist responses) evident in the subtle actions of the woman and the nationalistic pride juxtaposed with strong sense of equality affirmed by the West Indian black man in "Blackout" reflect the tension and ambiguities the story explores*.

Candidates were able to choose from a range of themes (racial intolerance, gender issues, class, inhibited love, black/white relationships) and some were able to apply them to the stories under discussion.
The mean for this question was 14.14 out of a total of 35 marks.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

- Candidates need to be conscious of the demands of the comparative essay, as in Paper 02, Questions 5 and 6 (Poetry) and Questions 11–12 (Prose Fiction, Short Stories).
- A genre-specific approach is suggested so that candidates can better appreciate the discrete nature of the genres and not use them inappropriately in their responses.
- Teachers must continue to teach drama from a technical perspective and not as prose. The teaching and reinforcing of dramatic techniques must remain important.
- Modelling responses and more sustained practice are needed for students to sharpen their essay-writing skills.
- The use of technology is suggested to enhance and reinforce learning and appreciation of texts, for example, websites to enrich the learning experience.
- Attention must be paid to **all** parts of the question.
- Special attention should be paid to the section of the questions addressing the devices and effectiveness as candidates continue to underperform in this area.

Candidates need to be reminded that June 2012 was the beginning of the new cycle of texts to be studied and examined (with this 2013 being the first January sitting). Knowledge of the revised syllabus is necessary.

For the Prose section in Paper 02, the only comparative questions are those set on the Short Stories (Questions 11 and 12). All other prose questions are on single texts. Candidates need to select the appropriate texts from the revised syllabus in order to be adequately prepared for the examinations.

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2013

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one on each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. Each question consists of a number of sub-parts that require candidates to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question, for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged in three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparisons. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension
ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

The table below shows mean scores as a percentage of the maximum score for Paper 01 for the period 2011–2013:

Percentages of Mean Scores for the Period 2011–2013

Paper 01	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)
DRAMA	68.13	60.30	54.25
POETRY	55.46	53.70	57.95
PROSE	53.93	50.60	59.40

Unlike the past years, candidates' performance Drama declined while there was improvement this year in the other two genres.

Question 1: Drama

Overall, 199 (0.98%) of the 20,318 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to lines 1–4 of the dramatic extract and identify Nora's state of mind, supporting their response with one stage direction and one other piece of evidence. Although candidates were able to identify Nora's state of mind (she was sad/upset), many confused stage directions with textual evidence. Some identified two stage directions. Acceptable textual evidence included: *"Oh really! Trying to frighten me!"* and *"But—No, that's impossible!"* (line 3).

Candidates were asked to explain the dramatic function of the children in Part (b). Acceptable responses went beyond describing the children to explaining how their presence impacted Nora and even the audience. Thus, the children's presence reinforces Nora's maternal qualities (she is kind and gentle with them); their presence also reinforces her inner turmoil and the audience senses conflict when she admonishes them not to mention the 'strange man' who was at the house.

Part (c) did not pose a challenge to candidates as many were able to comment on the Christmas tree as prop. Quite correctly, they mentioned that the tree hinted at setting (time of year, that is, Christmas time) and that it acted as a kind of diversion from the tension/conflict.

For Part (d), candidates were required to use lines 23–26 to state their impression of Nora, with supporting evidence. Two marks were awarded for the impression and one mark for the supporting evidence. Two general impressions anticipated were that Nora is a multi-faceted woman/her life is busy and she will do whatever it takes to preserve her marriage. Candidates demonstrated a general knowledge of Nora's character but lacked the vocabulary required to respond adequately to the question posed. They were able to describe the tasks Nora did but fell short in terms of using those ideas to form an impression or a conclusion.

Candidates experienced difficulty stating one contradiction shown in Nora's character, which was required for Part (e), although they managed to find evidential support in some instances. Embedded in the contradiction is Nora's two-sidedness – the devoted wife and mother and the mother who encourages her children to lie; the good home-maker who cannot settle on any task or get a chance to do so and the loving wife who lies to her husband.

For Part (f), candidates were asked to explain the dramatic function of Helmer's entrance. Many candidates realized the significance of the entrance but far too many could not use the literary language to bolster their response. Acceptable responses included: breaking/heightening the tension; adding to the suspense; breaking Nora's train of thought.

Candidates displayed creativity and imagination in their responses to Part (g), which required them to imagine being Nora and use evidence from the extract to suggest how they wanted the audience to respond to them.

Four thousand three hundred and fifty-three that is approximately 19 per cent of the 20,318 candidates who attempted Question 1 earned marks between 15 and 20. The mean for this question was 10.85 out of 20. This was the lowest mean achieved of the three genres tested.

Question 2

One hundred and eighty-three (0.90 %) of the 20,343 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in identifying the phrase ('almost forgotten my dream'/ 'my dream') that captured the main idea in lines 1–6.

Part (b) required candidates to identify the device in line 5 (simile) and comment on its effectiveness. The speaker compares the dream to the sun, a symbol of hope, life and possibilities. Most were able to identify the device and some gave reasonable responses regarding the effectiveness.

Part (c) required candidates to discuss the effect of the repeated word ('rose') in lines 7, 8 and 11. Acceptable responses mentioned the development of the notion of progression and or entrapment. Thus, the magnification of the wall (representing obstacles) and the way in which the word 'rose' ends line 7 and begins line 8, present the encirclement or entrapment of the speaker.

Part (d) (i) required candidates to identify the speaker's tone in lines 1–12 (reflective/nostalgic/conversational) and lines 20–29 (militant/determined/strident) and (d) (ii) required them to comment on the appropriateness of the change. Candidates were able to note the difference in tone at the beginning of the poem and towards the end. However, the discussion fell short in terms of *why* this change was appropriate. Acceptable responses captured the hope embodied in the dream at the outset, then the wall and finally the need to encourage himself to overcome the challenges in order to liberate himself.

For Part (e), candidates were asked to state what was suggested by the use of "shadow," "wall," and "night" in (i) and for (ii), show how "dream," "sun," and "light" were opposed to (i). This was challenging to many candidates who interpreted the words in (i) in the very literal sense of a nightmare that the speaker was experiencing while he was asleep. Consequently, the words "dream," "sun," and "light" were erroneously interpreted as morning which brings sunlight, or the persona awakening from an unpleasant dream. Full marks were awarded to candidates who mentioned that the second set of words suggests hope and that the first set of words suggests entrapment and a strong sense of being unable to overcome obstacles.

Most candidates managed to respond appropriately to Part (f), which asked for an explanation of line 24: "Help me to shatter this darkness". The speaker recognizes that he is in a state of defeat and pleads for assistance (perhaps from a higher power) to destroy this oppressive darkness or wall.
Most candidates did exceptionally well on part (g), both in providing another title for the poem and using text-based evidence to justify their choice. Some responses included the idea that the title heightened the persona's struggle to recapture what was lost; that it focused on the persona's past and that it encouraged reflection or introspection.

Five thousand, four hundred and sixteen (approximately 21%) of the 20,343 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15 and 20. The mean for this question was 11.59 out of 20.

Question 3

The mean score (11.88) on Prose Fiction was the highest of the three genres. Four thousand six hundred and twenty-one (approximately 19%) of the 20,319 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15 and 20. Eighteen (0.09%) candidates earned the full marks out of 20.

Most candidates had a fair sense of what the passage was about and were able to answer Part (a) which asked for an outline of the passage. Acceptable responses took into account the fact that the old man had caught no fish; the concern of the boy and the old man's disposition/strength.

Part (b) required from candidates an identification of the mood in the first paragraph (despair/hopelessness/sadness) and to provide supporting evidence from the passage. Candidates had little difficulty with evidence from the passage. Some lost marks as evidential support given was not confined to the first paragraph.

Characterization appeared to be understood by candidates. Part (c), which asked for two aspects of the boy's character, with supporting evidence, was well handled. Any two of these character traits were acceptable: *caring, compassionate, dutiful, and obedient*. Candidates cited evidence such as the boy's helpfulness in carrying the old man's fishing and sailing gear; his being sorry for the old man; and that he reluctantly obeyed his parents' command to leave the old man.

Although candidates correctly identified the device in Part (d) as simile, they had challenges in commenting on its effectiveness. Some struggled with an explanation and commented that because a desert is a dry place, the simile is ineffective since it is no place for fishes to live. However, the effectiveness lies in its *literary* not literal meaning: a desert conjures up images of absence (of food and water); the landscape of a desert tends to be bleak and ravaged and this image is connected to the old man—nature's harsh, enduring, unproductive (fishless) landscape.

For Part (e), two marks were awarded for the effect created by the detailed description of the old man in paragraph 2, and one mark awarded for justification. Acceptable responses included how he was initially presented as thin and gaunt but as the paragraph developed he is seen as physically strong.

Part (f) asked candidates to explain why they might find the impression created by the final paragraph unexpected. Acceptable responses indicated the difference between what the reader expected based on the information given in the first paragraph as against what was presented in the final paragraph. Structurally, the final paragraph is the shortest. It ends with the refusal to be defeated; it testifies to the old man's inner strength (evident in his eyes), unlike the other paragraphs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 22 of the syllabus):

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviou). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

Questions 1 and 2, which are set on the Shakespeare text *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, attracted almost one-half of the total responses for the drama section. Question 1 was more popular than Question 2, and was attempted by more than half of the candidates.

This question sought to elicit from candidates, a discussion on male dominance in the play. Part (a) asked for an outline of two situations in which such issues occur; Part (b) required a discussion of how women deal with the identified situations and Part (c), a discussion of one dramatic technique that Shakespeare uses to present the issue of male dominance. Candidates demonstrated familiarity with the theme of male dominance and were able to use male/female relationships relating to daughters and lovers to discuss Part (a) and use examples of Hermia, Titania and Helena for the discussion in Part (b). A few candidates referred to the mechanicals (the all-male cast) and lost marks here. Part (c) however, proved the most challenging in terms of identification of the technique and discussion of its function. Weak candidates repeated and narrated the theme of male female relationships in the play. In some instances, dramatic irony was named but arguing its relevance was not convincing. Accepted responses include plot development, characterization (comparison and contrast), use of suspense and dramatic tension.

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays and 142 (2.13%) of the 6,554 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two (0.03%) of these candidates earned full marks (35). The mean for this question was 17.31.

Question 2

Part (a) of Question 2 asked the candidates to outline the situation that caused Helena's accusation of Hermia in Act III Scene 2, from which the quotation came; Part (b) asked for a description of the aspects of the personalities of Helena and Hermia that were brought out in this exchange and Part (c), a discussion of Shakespeare's presentation of friendship in the play.

Generally, candidates failed to recall this particular incident accurately. Some were able, to some degree, to identify the incident in the forest triggered by Puck's inadvertent enchantment of Lysander and the consequences, required in Part (a). Candidates were also able to note the similarities and differences in these women. Predictably, Part (c) which sought to discuss the presentation of friendship, (which really is a discussion of the *how*) was the most challenging. Candidates tended to recount what happened in the play without drawing meaningful conclusions about friendship (what is suggested). Typical responses to this part of the question were literal. Few candidates were able to discuss the different ideas about friendship that were suggested and or identify how techniques such as contrast, irony, and characterization were used to highlight issues about friendship.

Seventy-eight (2.28 %) of the 1,822 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Eight (0.44%) of these candidates earned full marks. The mean for the question was 16.24.

Old Story Time

Question 3

Question 3 was the most popular question in the drama section. Part (a) asked for a description of what was happening (in reference to the quotation from Act I, Scene 1); Part (b), a discussion of Miss Aggy's idea of the perfect wife for Len and finally, Part (c), a discussion of how the playwright's dramatic presentation of black/white relationships is a powerful aspect of this play.

Though both incidents have to do with women of whom Miss Aggy disapproved, many candidates referred to the river incident with Pearl and Len (instead of the photograph incident) for Part (a). Acceptable responses described Miss Aggy receiving a letter from Len which included a picture of his wife Lois, her rage and rejection of Lois and Pa Ben's advice. Most candidates handled Part (b), which asked for Miss Aggy's idea of a perfect wife for Len, quite well. Part (c) required a broader treatment than a description of black and (near)-white characters. Discussion should relate to the play as a whole, in terms of Rhone's presentation of black/white relationships. Acceptable responses for this part of the question included major characters and what they represent; interrogations of whiteness as good and black as bad or evil; the ways in which the play can be making social commentaries in terms of value systems, dramatic irony (inversions of roles).

Four hundred and sixty-seven (4%) of the 11,980 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Eight (0.07%) candidates earned full marks of 35 on this question. The mean for this question was 18.92, which was the second highest mean for a question in this section.

Question 4

This was the least popular question on this paper, as only 250 candidates attempted it.

For Part (a) of the question, candidates were asked to outline the situation that caused Pa Ben to make the comment quoted in Act II, Scene 3. Many could not remember the incident (Len's visit to Pa Ben's house in a bid to save Lois from his mother's harm). Part (b) asked for a discussion of two of the three listed cultural practices (story telling, church going and belief in the supernatural). Even though prompts were provided in the wording of the question, many could not see these folk forms as dramatic technique. Part (c) asked candidates to comment on two themes brought out by these presentations. Acceptable responses included, (but were not limited to) history, or the past, religion, culture, identity, race, and class.

Two of the 96 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. No candidate earned full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 13.82.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were, "It is the Constant Image of Your Face" and "Dreaming Black Boy". Slightly more than half of the candidates attempted this question. Part (a) required candidates to outline the hopes and desires portrayed in each poem; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the poem found to be more appealing; and for Part (c) the task was to discuss one device from each poem which portrayed hopes or desires.

Part (a) assessed candidates' knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall, assess and summarise the information. Although candidates were more knowledgeable about "Dreaming Black Boy", most responded well to this part of the question. The personal, yet text-based responses, provided for Part (b) were refreshing and informative. Part (c), which focused on literary devices (the writer's craft), posed a challenge for many candidates. In many instances devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support. Many did not link the device with hopes or desires. Acceptable responses included appropriate identification of devices and such devices and establishment of the connection between such devices and the hopes or desires.

Words that were commonly misspelt included *repetition, racism* and *prejudice*

Fourteen hundred and forty-four (approximately 14%) of the 10,304 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Fifty-four (0.52%) of these candidates earned the full mark of 35. The mean for this question was 20.13.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list two poems that focused on the theme of conflict to answer the question set. Any relevant poems could be used but popular choices were, "Forgive My Guilt", "Once Upon a Time", "The Woman Speaks to the Man who Has Employed her Son.", "This is the Dark Time, My Love", "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Epitaph" . Part (a) required candidates to describe this conflict (whether external or internal); Part (b) asked candidates to comment on how the conflict is treated or addressed in each poem and finally, Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which is used to explore this conflict.

Part (a) was handled well for the most part. In this part of the question, candidates were expected to name the poems selected but sometimes they did not quote titles correctly. For Part (b), some candidates had difficulty with the word "comment" as they thought it meant solving the conflict.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of conflict. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices and treated the discussion as a continuation of Part (b).

Four hundred and forty-five (approximately 5%) of the 9,617 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Twenty-one candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 16.80.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels. *Songs of Silence* continues to be unpopular although for this sitting: the number of candidates attempting the questions set on this text increased marginally.

Many of the candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated interesting insights. Part (a) of Question 7 asked for an outline of two of these three chapters: "The Idiot," "Miss Minnie" and "Morris Hole". Part (b) asked for a discussion of how the writer presents the confusion in the adolescent's world in the chapters selected in (a); and for Part (c), a justification of the chapter which is more appealing.

Many candidates went beyond the level of "outline" in Part (a) while others went to the extreme of storytelling. A few candidates misread the rubric and commented on all three chapters. Candidates' ability to organize and summarise significant events in the chapters was the main skill tested. Candidates found Part (b) challenging in that they did not deal with the writer's *presentation* of confusion as some neither identified nor discussed a technique. Acceptable responses included the use of proverbs and the story of Marlene's mother and Pa Brown to frame her relationship with Ezekiel; relying on village gossip to explain strange incidents; the episodic, staccato-like collage of images and/experiences mirroring the confusion in Marlene's mind; the use of imagery, dreams and the river.

Part (c) was primarily reader-response, (with the requisite textual justification). Candidates managed reasonably well as they demonstrated familiarity with the text.

One hundred and nine (9.9%) of the 1,041 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Six candidates scored full marks on the question. The mean for the question was 21.57.

Question 8

By referring to two characters in the novel, Question 8 asked for a discussion of the statement, "Forbes presents silence as a refuge in the novel Songs of Silence." Many candidates identified suitable characters who portray silence, for example, Paul's mother in 'A Story with No Name', Marlene the narrator, and other characters such as Miss Minnie, Effita, Nathan and Little Fool Fool. Candidates were also conversant with the concept of silence as refuge. For candidates to have gained maximum marks there needed to have been stronger identification and discussion of devices/techniques to present the many nuanced silences in the text. Acceptable responses included symbolism; interplay between what is said and what is not; and contrast and comparison.

Forty-eight (5.15%) of the 912 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. One candidate scored full marks. The mean for this question was 19.38.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Twice the number of candidates attempted this question, compared with the number attempting Question 10. Part (a) asked candidates to trace the rise of Ivan Morton; Part (b), a comparison between the leadership style of Ivan and Bee and Part (c) required an analysis of the ways in which the tension between Ivan and Bee dramatise the clash between the old ways and the new.
For Part (a), many candidates gave details about Ivan without showing how he developed. By missing the concept of *trace*, candidates ignored the chronological element embedded in the task (many did not even mention Ivan the boy). Because the text is not chronologically sequenced, this might be part of the challenge faced by candidates. For Part (b), candidates were knowledgeable about the leadership styles but the details supplied sometimes were not germane to the question. In some instances, candidates did not draw inferences from details given. For example, when Ivan moved into the Richardson's house, what did his actions suggest? How might that inform his leadership? Part (c) was handled commendably. Candidates saw the tension represented by these men in terms of the old ways (tradition, roots, the folk) and any threat to that way of life. Many were sensitive to the tension portrayed in the comparison, the writer's use of suspense and many candidates mentioned the near explosive scene when Ivan told Bee that his people could "act white" as a means to survive.

One hundred and seventy-four (2.59%) of the 6,582 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Three candidates scored full marks of 35. The mean for this question was 16.62.

Question 10

Referring to Bee telling Eva, "I going to break this law," candidates were asked to discuss the ways in which the *Wine of Astonishment* explores the idea of resistance and rebellion. Although weaker candidates resorted to storytelling, the idea of resistance resonated well with candidates as there was little difficulty identifying incidents and characters involved. Some candidates listed points (as with pros and cons) a practice that is not encouraged. In some instances, candidates lacked the vocabulary to express themselves and knowledge and usage of certain words (as in *passive*, *active*, *non-violent*, *non-insurrectionary*, *retaliate*), which could have helped. Additionally, candidates lacked awareness of basic historical fundamentals about the plot, such as (the American presence in Trinidad at that time). Popular responses included the collective resistance of the church led by Bee and the Bolo/Prince confrontation.

Forty-eight (1.44%) of the 3,186 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two candidates achieved the maximum score on this question. The mean for this question was 15.33.

Short Story

Question 11

The Short Story section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question; candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were, "Blackout" and "To Da-duh, in Memoriam." It asked candidates to make the connection between setting and plot. Candidates were asked to describe the setting of each story in Part (a). Part (b) offered options for the candidate to show how the writer used descriptive language or dialogue or contrast to develop the story. Part (c) asked for an explanation of the significance of setting in the development of each story.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward. Some candidates disregarded the rubric for Part (b) and discussed more than one technique. Acceptable responses for this part included the use of descriptive language to evoke mood; description of landscape; dialogue to reinforce attitudes and; perceptions; and contrast (from the perspective of character, setting, intentions).

Part (c) posed a challenge in that candidates displayed limited knowledge of the significance of setting to the development of the story. Acceptable responses included the ways in which the setting (as in "Blackout") provides the background and reasons and attitudes of the positions taken by the two characters (the sense of superiority of the woman as against the nationalistic pride of the man). The two settings in "To Da-duh, in Memoriam" become the representation of the two main characters (rural Barbados and cosmopolitan New York) and the conflict between native tropical elements and the modernizing effect of the metropolis.

Here is an example of a good response to Part (c):

The white woman is in mental darkness and fails to see the 'light' that the man is showing her that all men are created equal. In the end, it is not he who needs to take a 'light' from her (cigarette or otherwise) it is she who must take a 'light' (knowledge and acceptance) from him. Also, in 'To Da-Duh in Memoriam', the story starts off with the narrator not being able to see, as the airport is dark and somewhat crowded, obscuring her view. She eventually sees Da-Duh, as she is standing in the light in her white dress and trying to find her way to them. Similarly, the [narrator] was in 'darkness' thinking that her world of technology was all there was, and was better, only to come to Barbados and see the flaws in her lifestyle and the emptiness of it…setting is significant in both stories and the 'darkness' can be taken both literally and symbolically as it represents the need for some kind of 'light' in order to see clearly.

Twenty-four (0.67%) of the 3,410 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. One candidate earned the full mark of 35. The mean for this question was 14.49.

Question 12

In this question candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list and in Part (a), to describe the love relationship portrayed in the two stories: Part (b) asked for a discussion of how the attitudes displayed by two characters affect the outcome of the relationship and Part (c), an identification of and commentary on one device used by the writer to convey his/her view of the relationship. Some candidates lost marks because they included inappropriate texts (such as poems, drama texts and novels). Apart from naming and discussing devices, candidates generally demonstrated a degree of weakness in writing the comparative essay.

Eighty-four (1.68%) of the 4,973 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two candidates earned full marks for this question. The mean for this question was 15.79.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

On the whole, many essays were well structured, coherent and cohesive. Teachers should be commended for their hard work. However, more attention needs to be given to the acquisition of knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques, the ability to discuss their use by the playwright and to comment on their effectiveness. We urge teachers/instructors to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

1. Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

2. Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.

3. The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.
4. Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

5. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as 'dramatic function' and 'writer's craft'. Candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

6. Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance).

7. Students should know the skills required when they are asked to define, discuss, trace, describe, determine, comment on, or show. Teachers must prepare students by dedicating time to closely examining the nature of the response expected by each of these and other key words used in questions.

8. While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to describe, explain and analyse with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

9. Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2014

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately five to eight short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question for a total of 60 marks.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section A, Drama, consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section B, Poetry, consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates must choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Section C, Prose Fiction, consists of six questions. The two novels (Questions 7–10) are Type A questions. The short story consists of Type B questions. Candidates must answer one question. Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105.

Of the 12 questions on this paper, five had candidates earning full marks. Prose (Question 11) achieved the highest mean (22.41); the second highest mean was from Drama (Question 2 with a mean of 19.69). The lowest mean came from Prose (Question 8) with a mean of 7.92 out of a total of 35 marks for each question.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props.
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive.
- Awareness of the interaction among characters.

Compared with 2013, candidates' performance on Paper 01 showed improvement in the Poetry and Prose Fiction profiles. Overall, the mean performance in Profile 1, Drama, was 9.69; in Profile 2, Poetry, 10.73; and Profile 3, Prose Fiction, 8.03. The weakest performance was in Prose Fiction.

Question 1 (Drama)

This question had the lowest mean. For Part (a), many candidates misinterpreted *aspects* and gave responses which merely stated the familial relationship between the two men (uncle/nephew). Acceptable responses should (keeping to lines 1–10) focus on the character traits of the men, for example, Petu was authoritative and authoritarian whereas Ato, the nephew being submissive, deferred readily to Petu's commands. Part (b) asked for two functions served by the stage directions starting from line 10 and ending at line 20. Some candidates restated the stage directions whereas others responded appropriately to include the following: *they serve to inform the audience that time has elapsed*; that *Ato wastes no time in obeying Petu*; that *time has elapsed since Ato's appearance and disappearance*; and that *Eulalie's smoking and drinking reflect her attitude to the community's traditions*.

Again the word *aspects* in Part (c) appeared to be problematic to candidates. Instead of focusing on the nature of the relationship between the couple, candidates provided 'surface' responses that essentially restated factual information from the extract, such as, Ato and Eulalie were married.

Some candidates did not provide sufficient justification for the aspects of the relationship identified, whereas some identified aspects with no justification. Acceptable responses should take into account the fact that *the couple is still very much in love with each other (they still can share a joke and they have private names for each other).* Also, *Ato is protective of her (advising her not to drink too much).*

In response to Part (d), although candidates understood what the question demanded, some responses were not as comprehensive and comments were mainly made about Eulalie's drinking and smoking. Responses should also include her disgust and resistance to the traditions of her husband's family.

Candidates were comfortable with Part (e) which dealt with tension and gave acceptable responses such as *the tension intensifies towards the end because the playwright increased the tempo of the action by the shortened lines of dialogue, increased use of stage directions and the use of questions.*

Part (f) allowed candidates to demonstrate their creativity in suggesting the title and justifying it. A few however, presented titles without textual evidence, and thus lost marks. Others 'lifted' words from the extract such as "taboo", "Ato" and "Eulalie" without critical application. Candidates need to remember that reader-response items are always text-based.

Question 2 (Poetry)

Most candidates earned full marks for Part (a) which asked for three things about the bayou (a place of mystery, habitat for frogs and grasshoppers, mossy).

Apart from mentioning the mystery, many candidates could not show how stanza 1 was connected to stanza 2. Acceptable responses for Part (b) should include the following: s*tanza 1 introduces the idea of the allure of buried or sunken pirate treasure, while stanza 2 seems to take the reader on a treasure-hunting expedition where travellers seem to enter a world "dripping in mystery"*; *stanza 2 further develops the mystery introduced in stanza 1 by suggesting that beyond buried treasure, there might be even some live, dangerous creatures lurking beneath the surface.*

Although candidates were able to identify the device in stanza 2 that Part (c) required them to provide, many failed at explaining the effectiveness. Acceptable responses of the device included, *personification/metaphor ("the bayou sweats"); metaphor/imagery ("dripping in mystery"); and imagery appealing to sight ("murky") and sound ("hushed in secrecy").* All devices point to the idea of a heightening of the tension/excitement surrounding the bayou's hidden and perhaps dangerous secrets.

For Part (d), candidates gave vague responses and the word *impressions* appeared to have been a challenge. Acceptable responses should indicate that *the impression is created that mortal danger lurks in the bayou and this can come from any of the creatures/monsters which can grip, clench, snap and hold*.

Most candidates gave reasonable responses to Part (e) and mentioned the use of phrases like, *holds a mystery, movements unknown, dripping in mystery* to suggest the notion that the person is viewing the bayou from a distance. For Part (f), candidates tended to view stanza 4 in isolation and therefore missed how it is connected to the poem as a whole. Acceptable responses should mention how it *reinforces the idea of mystery and danger to those who venture in it*; *"guardian trees" which suggest that the vegetation serves to protect its secrets from intruders*; *the image of the empty canoe drifting suggests that the human occupant(s) has/have been destroyed by the bayou or the creatures there — a general reinforcement of danger throughout the poem*.

Some candidates did not exercise creativity in Part (g). However, others gave acceptable responses in describing and substantiating the mystery—*there is a monster in the water*; *there is no danger but a feeling of dread created by the atmosphere and vegetation*.

Question 3 (Prose)

Candidates performed satisfactorily on Part (a) which asked for two reasons for Amabelle's visit to Kongo (*to ask his approval for the elder to visit him to talk about Joel's accident and to make an offer to pay for Joel's funeral*). However, many failed to be specific in their responses, providing vague or incorrect assumptions as their answers. For instance, many stated that Amabelle visited Kongo because she wanted to ask him something or she sought to tell him that the elder wanted to see him, suggesting then that Kongo was being summoned by the elder, rather than the elder wishing to visit him.

For Part (b), candidates were also able to provide the two versions of Joel's death as presented in the extract — *accident* and *homicide*. Many scored full marks on this item. For Part (c), some candidates were able to accurately identify Kongo's feelings (*grief/sorrow*) and that *his over-emphasized actions disguised his emotions* (for example, *digging flour from his fingernails and taking snuff to steady himself*).

For Part (d), candidates were able, for the most part, to identify the simile and a few gave reasonable responses about its effectiveness. However, many candidates merely explained what weeds are/do. Those who responded appropriately, mentioned *Joel being one with nature or his being independent/self-reliant, bringing out the notion that weeds need very little, if any, special treatment to flourish*. Candidates found Part (e) quite challenging. Generally they could not explain what was ironical in the way Joel was buried. Many commented on the fact that he was

buried naked. Candidates could not make the link between the father giving Joel a ceremonial burial and a typical ceremonial burial. Ideally, candidates were expected to note that *all the trappings of a 'decent' burial were removed yet his father's description of the burial ritual made Joel into a kind of cosmic royalty*.

Some candidates knew what was required for Part (f) but lacked the literary language to express themselves. Essentially, *Kongo's measured, controlled, simple and affectionate choice of words/expressions seem extraordinary, heroic and regal. His tendency to repeat reinforces his sense of loss but also (especially when he repeats "my son") shows grief, pride and affection*. Part (g) asked to state what was suggested in line 26 ("Tell him I am a man….He was a man, too, my son."). Many candidates only captured the fact that his refusal of financial aid for the burial of his son suggests he is independent and missed the opportunity to suggest that Kongo believes that he needs to be treated with respect regardless of his position.

Recommendations

- Teachers/instructors should continue to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to literature.

- Discussing the effectiveness of literary devices must be the focus of continued analysis of style. It is not good enough to merely identify or define devices.

- Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

- Candidates are encouraged to watch live and recorded plays so that they are better able to appreciate the 'performance' element of the genre. They need to focus some more on the dramatic function of stage directions.

- Teachers could help students to dramatize sections of plays in class, dramatize scenes and summarize them to encourage recall.

- Teachers are encouraged to assist students in understanding the rubric of examinations so that they do only what is asked.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on page 23 of the syllabus):

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense, in a new form, information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses …and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

- The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

For Question 1, candidates were asked to describe the challenges faced by one of these couples: Lysander and Hermia or Demetrius and Helena before their wedding. Part (b) asked for a description of how the challenges identified in Part (a) are resolved and Part (c), Shakespeare's use of the couples' experience to demonstrate that marriage is an important social institution. Although some candidates resorted to narration of the couples' stories, many identified appropriate challenges, for instance, *Egeus' objections to Lysander and his insistence that*

Hermia marry Demetrius; under the enchantment Lysander professes love to Helena and rejects Hermia; Egeus supporting the idea that Demetrius should be Helena's husband or generally, *society's patriarchal laws and their impact on these couples*.

Part (b) was also reasonably attempted. Part (c) however, posed a challenge as many candidates were not able to make the link that Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of marriage forms part of the climax. This part of the question asked candidates to show how Shakespeare uses the couples' experience to demonstrate that marriage is an important social institution. This implicit use of technique (via the marriages) is a typical feature of comedies and candidates missed this. Generally, candidates tended to speak more about love than marriage, missing the point that the marriages offer resolution and consolidation, thus endorsing the notion that it is worthwhile and desirable.

The mean for this question was 17.94.

Question 2

Candidates handled this question better than Question 1. Part (a) asked for a description of one of the incidents which occurs in the magic wood and Part (b), a discussion of the outcome of this incident. Part (c) asked for an examination of how this incident relates to the title of the play. Although few candidates narrated, most confined their discussion to the woods. For Part (a), acceptable responses included the consequences of Oberon's malice and Puck's enchantment.

Part (b) was not handled well as some candidates could not separate the incident from the outcome and in cases where the outcome was mentioned, it was not discussed. Acceptable responses included *the ways in which Puck 're-enchants' the enchanted ones back to the right ways of seeing* or *the ways in which the illusion is removed so characters are back to normal*. Relating the incident to the title (as was asked for in Part (c)) was handled fairly well. Even responses that were weak in Parts (a) and (b), scored well here as candidates were able to explore issues such as magic, dream, the fantastical and the suspension of reality.

The mean for this question was 19.69.

Recommendations

A few recommendations that will enable candidates to better appreciate Shakespearean texts (and drama as a whole) are given below.

- Teachers should find creative ways to get students to summarize scenes (even the minor scenes).

- Students should be encouraged to dramatize scenes to aid recall.

- Teachers should ask students to identify dramatic techniques in live dramatizations.

- More practice is needed with regard to the Part (c) of drama questions, which tend to target the language and application of drama.

- Teachers should use technology (such as DVDs) to demonstrate how dramatic techniques work.

- Teachers should prepare worksheets with questions/tasks that focus on dramatic techniques.

Old Story Time

Question 3

The thematic concern of this question was family relationships. Part (a) asked for Lois' role in the play; Part (b), a discussion of one instance of conflict involving Lois and Part (c), an examination of two ways in which Rhone resolves conflict in the play. Candidates tended to discuss the play rather than concentrate on Lois' role. Inaccuracies such as Lois being male, her being confused with the character Miss Aggy (Mama) and misrepresenting other texts were noted. Acceptable responses for Part (a) dealt with *Lois' pivotal role as wife, daughter, daughter-in-law and professional* and *the ways in which she is connected to Len, Miss Aggy and George*. In terms of conflict, as required in Part (b), candidates were expected to choose one instance in the play where this was evident. Candidates did better in this part as they were able to identify and discuss instances such as *when Miss Aggy sees her photograph and the consequences*; any other physical encounter (as in her mother-in-law's visits); *the blackmailing incident with George* or even when *she accuses Len of being cold and insensitive*.

For Part (c), many candidates described instead of examined the two ways in which the conflict was resolved. Some concentrated on one conflict instead of two. Acceptable responses included *dramatic irony*, *contrast*, *symbolism* (as in the ending of the play) and *the use of Pa Ben as character/storyteller in his role as mediator*. Others concentrated on the ways in which the characters solved their own conflict and not the ways in which the playwright did, which essentially evaded the playwright's craft.

The mean for this question was 16.78.

Question 4

This question earned the lowest mean for the drama section. Candidates were expected to describe one instance when the audience was reminded that the play has its roots in the past (Part (a)). Acceptable responses for this aspect included *the rural setting for the storytelling*; *references to 60 years ago*; *the type of housing (wattle and daub)*; *the king's head on stamps and monetary currency*. Part (b) asked for a discussion of one way in which flashbacks are used to reinforce the idea of past events. Candidates were expected to mention for instance, *Lois as the bank teller and being blackmailed by her boss George; Len's humiliation at school at the hands of George and his peers*. Candidates fared better in Part (c) which asked for a discussion of one theme highlighted by the playwright's treatment of the past. Submissions such as *family relationships, cultural practice*, *gender, power relationships*, *colour* and *class* were acceptable.

The mean for this question was 15.67.

Poetry

Question 5

The two named poems for this question were "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "This is the Dark Time, My Love". Part (a) required candidates to describe the suffering presented in each poem. They were better able to describe the suffering in "Dulce et Decorum Est", perhaps because of its overtly physical nature. Candidates did not always capture the emotional/mental suffering in the latter poem. For Part (b), candidates correctly identified and named the device used to portray the suffering but many could not sustain the discussion (that is, keeping it to the theme of human suffering). Part (c), which asked candidates to use the title of each poem to discuss the poem they found more effective in portraying human suffering, posed some challenges as well. Although this part of the question allowed for personal choice and discretion, candidates were expected to apply the content and craft to their personal responses.

The mean for this question was 13.39.

Question 6

This question required candidates to identify two poems by name, which focus on relationships. Although some candidates did not use poems in this cycle and others used inappropriate texts (as in non-poetry), many selected appropriate poems for this question. However, details to support the theme of relationships were not always sustained, for example, in "Orchids". A popular and well-handled poem was "God's Grandeur" which portrays mankind's relationship with the environment. A few lesser known poems were not handled confidently, for example, "South",

"Theme for English B" and "West Indies, USA". Part (a) asked candidates to describe the relationship. Part (b) asked for a discussion of devices used to explore the relationship in each poem. The tendency was to explain and not analyse. Further, in some instances, only one device was identified. If this is to be acceptable, the candidates must show its effectiveness (textually) in both poems. In order to gain full marks, candidates must correctly identify each device, show how it is used to portray the relationship and make a statement of comparison between the two poems.

For Part (c), candidates were asked to discuss the relationship they found more appealing. Many did not refer to the other poem or suggest how they came to prefer the poem being discussed. Those who handled this section well concentrated on relationships involving man/nature; teacher/student; parent/child. For this section, application and poem selection posed challenges. Discussions were unbalanced because candidates did not always know both poems well enough for the application needed.

Prose Fiction

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The questions set on the two novels (Questions 7–10) are Type A questions. The questions set on the short story consist of Type B questions. Candidates were required to answer one question from this section.

Songs of Silence

Question 7

This was not a popular choice among candidates. Responses were sparse and superficial. There were instances of inaccuracies and personal invention. Very few candidates were sufficiently aware of the text and its nuances. For Part (a), candidates were asked to discuss the relationship between these characters — Longman and Marlene's mother and the Lady with no name and Marlene's father. For Part (b), candidates were required to explain what limits the narrator from telling the whole story of these relationships. For Part (c), candidates were asked to show how the way the story is told contributes to the fascination. The relationships involving Marlene's parents are clouded with uncertainties and candidates for Part (a) were expected to describe what appeared to be unusual about these relationships, for instance, *Marlene's observation that when the traveller (Longman) stopped or stayed, her mother was exceptionally joyful and would break out into singing; the incident of Marlene seeing her father giving fish to the no name lady and his stern warning for her not to mention it and the ways in which she became suspicious and speculative.*

Acceptable responses to Part (b) included, the fact that *the narrator's mother outlines what issues belong to the world of adults and that of children*; *the role of village gossip, superstition and rumour*; and generally, *the limitations of a child narrator, using the first person point of view*.

Implicit in this part of the question is the writer's technique. A few candidates hinted at but did not discuss with conviction the elements of Part (c), which really should concentrate on how the story is told. Acceptable responses to this part of the question included: *using Marlene as the child narrator (in a sense, the eyes of a child)*; *the loyal, trusting daughter speculating on the marital relationships of her parents; the ways in which the blanks are filled; the interaction of the adult or outside perspective on the issues* and *the role of irony and intrigue*.

The mean for this question was 10.54.

Question 8

This was an open-ended question in which candidates were to discuss the two ways of viewing the text — as a cohesive whole or as a collection of separate short stories. Acceptable responses for the whole text view would entail the fact that *Marlene is the single narrator throughout; the setting is typically the same rural village; Marlene's family members appear in the stories and that the symbols, and images of the river, silence and colours are seen in the text*. For the view of the short story, the idea that *the stories are self-sustaining; the themes changing; the main characters can 'stand alone'; separate chapter titles and the varying perspectives (from the communal to the intensely personal) are all points that may be used*.

The mean for this question was 7.92, the lowest for this paper.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

This question focused on the roles played by the minor characters Primus and Buntin. Part (a) asked for a description of an incident in which either Primus or Buntin plays a meaningful role; Part (b) asked candidates to comment on this character's role in the novel and Part (c), for a discussion of the male villagers as a group in the novel. Although it appeared that the word *meaningful* posed a challenge, generally, Primus was the more popular choice for Part (a). Many cited the Bolo/Primus standoff and the few who chose Buntin, mentioned his shop being the meeting place for the community. Those who chose Buntin often did not recognize that for Part (b), he was also part of the awakening of the consciousness of the community and black people generally. Although candidates mentioned the activities at his shop, they did not take the

discussion much further. For Part (c), candidates tended to describe what the men did but did not so much see how they functioned as a group in terms of their being protectors, guardians of the traditions (for example, stick fighting), restorers of order and providers.

The mean for this question was 19.69.

Question 10

This open-ended question asked candidates to look at both sides of Bolo. It was the preferred choice although some candidates resorted to storytelling or discussed only one side of Bolo. Superior candidates showed both sides of the argument — Bolo the warrior and community-builder and Bolo the 'bad john' who degenerates when the community lacked the courage to support his values.

The mean for this question was 15.97.

Short Stories

A World of Prose

Question 11

"Berry" and "The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream" were used to discuss the issue of injustice. Part (a) asked for an outline of each story; Part (b), a description of the injustice in each story and Part (c), a discussion of the narrator the candidate thinks contributes more to his/her understanding of injustice. Candidates knew the stories and managed Part (a) quite well. The issue of injustice resonated with them and they had strong views about racism, parent/child relationships and matters of infidelity. These enabled them to form their own views. What a few lacked for Part (c) was showing how their own experiences are shaped by the characters' experience of injustice. Additionally, some candidates did not mention the impact of writer's craft, as in the omniscient narrator's perspective as a means of getting into the hearts and minds of the characters.

The mean for this question was 22.41, the highest overall.

Question 12

Candidates were asked to refer to two stories studied from their prescribed text and, for Part (a), to describe a memorable event or incident in the stories; for Part (b), to comment on one character's reaction to the events or incidents in the stories and for Part (c), to show how the writer keeps the reader interested in the stories. Common choices were "Emma", "Blackout",

"Shabine" and "The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream". Part (b) proved to be the most challenging as candidates tended to narrate before getting to the essential material required for the response. Some candidates recognized writer's craft that was necessary to do justice to Part (c) and mentioned the child narrator and the use of flashback.

The mean for this question was 16.71.

Recommendations

- Candidates need to be conscious of the demands of the comparative essay, as in Paper 02, Questions 5 and 6 (Poetry) and Questions 11–12 (Prose Fiction, Short Stories).

- A genre-specific approach is suggested so that candidates can better appreciate the discrete nature of the genres and not use them inappropriately in their responses.

- Teachers must continue to teach drama from a technical perspective and not as prose. The teaching and reinforcing of dramatic techniques must remain important.

- Modelling responses and more sustained practice are needed for students to sharpen their essay-writing skills. Modelling is essential. Attention must be paid to all parts of the question.

- The use of technology is suggested to enhance and reinforce learning and appreciation of texts, for example, websites to enrich the learning experience.

- Special attention should be paid to the section of the questions addressing the devices and effectiveness as candidates continue to underperform in this area.

Candidates are reminded that January 2015 will be the end of this cycle and hence this cycle of texts. A new cycle of texts will be used for June 2015.

For the Prose section in Paper 02, the only comparative questions are those set on the Short Stories (Questions 11 and 12). All other prose questions are on single texts. Candidates need to select the appropriate texts from the revised syllabus in order to be adequately prepared for the examinations.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2014

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one on each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. Each question consists of a number of sub-parts that require candidates to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question, for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged in three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparative analysis of aspects of two poems. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified in the question. However, for the other, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied on the prescribed list to answer the question.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

i) Comprehension
ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

The table below shows mean scores as a percentage of the maximum score for Paper 01 for the period 2012–2014:

Mean Scores by Profile: Paper 01, 2012–2014

(Expressed as Percentage of Profile Maximum Score)

Paper 01	2012	2013	2014
DRAMA	53.64	52.45	56.08
POETRY	46.76	53.82	48.82
PROSE	48.06	50.51	48.43

Candidates' performance declined in Poetry and Prose.

Question 1: Drama

Eighty-six (0.43%) of the 20,104 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to lines 1–4 of the dramatic extract and state what they learnt about Tyrone and Mary. Acceptable responses included, *Mary and Tyrone are playful/affectionate; Tyrone flatters Mary or Mary falls for the flattery which seems to transform her.* Candidates did well on this question.

Candidates were asked to state Tyrone's intention at the beginning of the extract (lines 1–6) for Part (b). Acceptable responses included, *Tyrone's intention is to cheer her up or Tyrone's intention is to distract her from what seems to be bothering her*. Apart from a few candidates who used similar responses for Parts (a) and (b), candidates responded fairly well on this question.

Part (c) asked candidates what was suggested by Mary's exclamation, "Right in front of Jamie!" Acceptable responses included any of the following:

- *It suggests that she is embarrassed by the affection shown to her in the presence of her son*
- *It suggest that they are not normally this affectionate in front of their son; Mary is a coy woman*
- *Mary is a shy woman who does not like displays of conjugal affection in front of others*
- *Mary is very straight-laced about matters of (sexual) love.*

Most candidates, were able to earn at least some of the 3 marks allocated to this question.

For Part (d), candidates were required to justify whether Mary was really "fishing for compliments" as in lines 8–9. One mark was awarded for the position taken and two marks, for the justification. The flexibility of the reader-response element allowed candidates to score in this part as they were allowed to agree or disagree. Examples of acceptable responses were as follows*: No, Mary is not fishing for compliments. She appears to be a senior person and really may have trouble with her eyes; or yes, she is fishing for compliments as she can always depend on her husband and son to make her feel better (and stop her from worrying about Edmund).*

Candidates experienced difficulty with Part (e), which asked them to comment on the use of any **one** of the stage directions in presenting Mary's state of mind from lines 29–42. Most were able to identify and explain the stage directions; however, many did not **comment** on the playwright's use of the stage directions to present Mary's state of mind. Some candidates also had difficulty with identifying both aspects of Mary's state of mind. Many focused on the fact that she was worried/concerned, and did not recognize that there were changes in her state of mind. Acceptable responses captured the following:

The playwright effectively uses the stage directions to establish that Mary seems to be quite agitated or distracted. He does this by using the stage directions to show the sudden changes in her mood or mood swings ("She laughs…she changes to a brisk business air" and "she sighs with humorous exaggeration…she goes to the parlour, then turns, her face worried again"). It seems as though she tries to shake off what is disturbing her but it very quickly seems to overcome her. The stage directions show the contrasting actions which are an indication of her state of mind.

For Part (f), candidates were asked to explain the effect that Edmund has on the performance on stage.

Many candidates did not earn the full four marks on this part and gave superficial responses such as, "*Edmund adds suspense to the audience*." Acceptable responses should include some of these ideas:

Edmund is not on stage. Yet, all the actions and even emotions displayed on stage are centred on him. Mary seems to be distracted and worried because of his illness. Her inconsistent actions seem to be because of his illness. Her husband's actions toward his wife are also directed by Edmund or his illness. She seems to have become a "ghost of the dead" and his actions on stage are geared towards bringing her back to her former self by helping her not to focus on Edmund's condition. This is evident in his exclamation. *"You're a fine lunkhead! Haven't you any sense? The one thing to avoid is saying anything that would get her more upset over Edmund".*

For Part (g), candidates were asked to show how Jamie's comment, "you can see she's deliberately fooling herself with all that summer cold talk" might affect the audience. This was not handled well. Acceptable responses included:

Jamie's comment at the end of the extract answers many of the questions that the audience has had about the action on stage. The reason for Mary's state of mind is confirmed. Her husband's actions are also explained. The audience will therefore understand that his actions are quite justified given the situation where it seems that Edmund could die. The audience may also feel a great deal of compassion for Mary as well as for Tyrone as his wife's physical appearance, health, and state of mind seem to have deteriorated and he seems to be unable to help her, though he tries.

The mean for this question was 10.81 out of 20. This was the highest mean achieved for the three genres tested.

Question 2

Thirty-two (0.16 %) of the 20,102 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in identifying where *(on a train)* and when *(at night)* the event is taking place. The second portion of Part (a) asked candidates to say in what way the speaker was different from those around him. Candidates had no difficulty in stating that the speaker was alert/awake while the others were sleeping.

Part (b) required candidates to state the impressions created by the used of, "My muscles moved with steel" (line 14) and "We thunder through ravines" (line 18). The use of the word "impressions" seemed to have caused some amount of difficulty for candidates. Some candidates took a literal interpretation of the first quotation. An acceptable response for the first quotation was *acknowledgement of the merger of the living with the non-living and/or the suggestion of power created. The latter also emphasized the power of the train, its speed and especially the loud sound it makes as it rushes through the valley.*

Part (c) required candidates to explain how the poet used contrast in lines 4–5 to hold the reader's attention. Many candidates identified and explained the contrast, but some did not go on to fully explain **how** this contrast served to hold the reader's attention. Acceptable responses should contain some of the following ideas:

> *The poet contrasts the train/nature; light (from the train)/darkness (of the night); being awake/asleep. The speaker shows us the trees, the mountains, the lake, mist and rain as he lies awake while everyone around him is asleep. Why is he awake? Why the details of nature? The poet creates these and other questions in our minds through the contrasts presented. These questions are only answered at the end of the poem, "I stay up half the night/To see the land I love".*

Part (d) required candidates to identify the literary device used in one of the following (1 mark) and comment on its effectiveness (2 marks): "Bridges of iron lace" (line 6) **or** "gullies washed with light" (line19). Acceptable responses for the former included a discussion which captured the following:

> *Through visual imagery, this metaphor compares the design of the metallic structure to beautiful, delicate and patterned needlecraft–that of lace. This comparison extends the contrast between the sound of the train as it thunders in the night and the beauty and quiet of the trees, nature the land that he loves.*

For the latter, this metaphor/personification portrayed *how the light of the train shines in the darkness, covering the gullies with its radiance.*

For Part (e), candidates were asked to show how the poet captured the movement in this journey.

Many candidates focused on movement as the train progressed so they gave information on the various sights that the persona experienced as the train moved along. Only a few commented on aspects of the poem which suggested movement, for example, diction, devices and rhythm. In other words, candidates seemed to relate more to content than to structure. Candidates were expected to mention for instance, the short lines, the rhyme scheme and strong stress, weak stress pattern which create a rhythm (beat) that suggests constant movement. In addition, candidates were expected to indicate that phrases and words such as "rhythm rocks", "straining", "thunder", "rush", "rattles", "shake", "jerk", "shove", produce alliterative and other sound effects that suggest the powerful engine heading to its destination.

Part (f) asked candidates to describe the speaker's attitude in the last two lines of the poem.

Acceptable responses included:

> *the attitude is one of patriotism/nationalism; the love for country is such that the speaker is willing to remain awake half the night, just to see his beloved country. Not even the lulling/rocking movement of the train could get him to sleep.*

Part (g) asked candidates to suggest another title for the poem (1 mark) and justify this with evidence from the poem (2 marks). This question was well done. Candidates used their creativity to find text-based suggestions for their titles.

The mean for this question was 10.41 out of 20.

Question 3

Twenty-seven (0.13%) candidates of the 20 043 who attempted the question earned the full marks. The mean score (9.99) on Prose Fiction was the lowest of the three genres.

For Part (a), most candidates had a fair sense of where the event was taking place, and were able to provide supporting evidence. Acceptable answers included, *near Castle Rock or in a forested area or in the fringes*.

Part (b) (i), required candidates to state why Ralph was hiding, and (ii), asked for a description of his state of mind. Acceptable responses included, *that he was hiding because he was in danger or he was being hunted by the others ("the hunters"). Acceptable responses for the second part of this question included that, Ralph was scared. He thought the hunters were pursuing him. He only felt safe when he realized that there was a feast and the hunters would be occupied with that. But this feeling of being safe was temporary as he realized that tomorrow would bring new dangers.*

Many candidates seemed to have some difficulty responding to Part (c), which asked for an explanation of the writer's use of contrast in the first paragraph. Some were not able to identify the contrast. Also, most of those who were able to identify the contrast could neither adequately explain it nor comment on how it was used by the writer. Many candidates omitted this question. Acceptable responses included:

> *The writer contrasts the image of the hunters whom Ralph sees at present with the image of them as he had known them; the description of Bill, for instance, as a savage "striped brown, black, and red" does not fit the picture or image of Bill in shorts and shirts. Additionally, hunters are supposed to be strong and brave, and while the image of the hunters is terrifying in that it generates fear in Ralph, these hunters ironically, like Ralph, appear to be quite terrified ("and then had rushed back to the sunny rock as if terrified of the darkness under the trees").*

For Part (d), candidates were asked to identify the literary device used in, "The afternoon died away" (line 7) **or** "Ralph wormed out of the ferns" (line 8) and comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses included the following ideas:

> *The former is personification/metaphor. The writer compares the passage of time from afternoon to night with death. This emphasizes the fear of the unknown and of danger that Ralph is perhaps associating with the night. It also suggests the slow passing of time for Ralph which he has to endure. The latter, is metaphor. It creates an image of Ralph's crawling movement on the ground to avoid detection. The image of him moving as a worm (hinting perhaps at his vulnerability) also helps the reader to understand the possible danger that he may face*.

For Part (e), two marks were awarded for candidates' giving the impressions created by "impenetrable thicket" (line 9) **or**, "He peered with elaborate caution" (lines 9-10). Again, the word "impressions" seemed to have been a challenge for candidates and many merely paraphrased or explained the selected phrase. Acceptable responses should note that

> *"impenetrable thicket"— conveys the idea that Ralph is hemmed in by the thick vegetation that he cannot get through. This can only symbolize his feeling of being trapped by his hunters* ***or*** *his sense of being surrounded by 'savages'* ***or*** *the intensity of terror that he cannot think through* ***or*** *the great psychological distance between Ralph and his pursuers. The latter ("He peered with elaborate caution") suggests that this expression also emphasizes the danger that Ralph faces. He has been hiding and is going to great lengths to protect himself.*

Part (f) asked candidates to explain how the writer maintained suspense in the passage. Some candidates seemed to have difficulty identifying suspense, while others mentioned one incident that caused suspense but failed to describe how suspense was **maintained**. Acceptable responses should mention that *the writer suggests that the hunters are new to this role and seem to be as afraid as the hunted ("terrified of the darkness")*. Suspense is also maintained because though Ralph is safe because of the feast he is aware that tomorrow could present a different situation. It is this sense of uncertainty which heightens the tension and keeps the reader in suspense.

Finally, in Part (g), candidates were asked to identify the overall mood of the passage and to provide evidential support for their answer. In some instances, although they identified the correct mood (*fear/ anxiety*), *candidates did not provide textual support. Acceptable responses should include words used such as "panic", "terrified", "savage" to create the mood; the idea of the hunt is established in the first paragraph; the setting (forest, night/darkness) enforces the mood*.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions. Moreover, students need to be familiar with appropriate literary language and use it in their writing and should understand genre-specific words, terms and concepts such as mood and suspense.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on page 22 of the syllabus):

i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama

Shakespeare: — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

Of the pair of questions on this text, the second was more popular than the first, Question 1 sought to elicit a discussion on the pairs of rulers, Oberon and Titania and Theseus and Hippolyta. Part (a) asked for a description of the circumstances of Oberon's meeting with Titania in the magic wood. Part (b) required a discussion of what resulted from this meeting and Part (c), a comparison of Shakespeare's presentation of Oberon and Titania with that of Theseus and Hippolyta.

Generally, candidates performed satisfactorily, especially in Parts (a) and (b). Part (c), however, posed a challenge in that candidates failed to compare Shakespeare's **presentation** of one couple with his presentation of the other. Candidates fell short in discussing the playwright's craft. They did not provide an adequate comparison of the two couples. For instance, *Theseus and Hippolyta personify sobriety and mature wisdom; they represent stability and a unique union of love and reason, unlike Oberon and Titania, whose marital discord upsets the balance in nature and affects the human kingdom*.

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays. The mean for this question was 17.41.

Question 2

Part (a) of Question 2 asked the candidates to describe the nature of the complaint in Act 1 Scene 1, when Egeus approached the court of Theseus regarding Hermia; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the effect of this incident on the course of events and Part (c), a discussion of Shakespeare's presentation of male dominance of women in the play.

This was the most popular of the four drama questions. Candidates demonstrated superior knowledge of the text, especially in Parts (a) and (b). However, many candidates resorted to storytelling of the incidents identified as examples of male dominance in Part (c). It appears that candidates were not effectively prepared to answer questions dealing with dramatic presentations/dramatic techniques.

The mean for the question was 21.74.

Modern Drama*: Old Story Time*

Question 3

Question 3 was the second most popular question in the drama section. Part (a) asked for a description of a situation in which one character was portrayed as mostly good and one that was mostly evil; Part (b), a discussion of the character who made the drama more exciting as a result of this portrayal and finally, Part (c), a discussion of how the playwright used the final scene to reinforce the idea that good triumphs over evil.

Generally, candidates were quite knowledgeable of the text although for Part (a) some selected scenes instead of 'a situation'. Candidates referred to characters such as George, Len, Miss Aggy, Pa Ben and Lois. Part (b) was the most challenging as candidates generalized and related incidents from the play without elaborating. Also, opinions, when given did not have supporting details. Some candidates deviated from the characters discussed in Part (a) and so lost marks. For Part (c), some candidates did not focus enough or at all on the final scene, though they used aspects from other parts of the play. A few gave their personal religious views on this final scene, without the requisite textual reference. Those candidates who gave effective responses noted *the ways in which this final scene brings together the major characters; the effectiveness of the flashback to answer pertinent questions, especially for Miss Aggy's benefit; the symbolism of the circle and the confessions and reaffirmation of love and loyalty*.

The mean for this question was 19.65.

Question 4

This was the least popular question on this paper, as only 1 227 candidates attempted it.

For Part (a) of the question, candidates were asked to describe one instance when the educational appeal of storytelling was highlighted. Some candidates found the concept of "educational appeal" problematic as they were unable to identify the 'teachable' moments in the play. Educational appeal was taken to mean 'education', as in Len's academic achievements. Part (b) asked for a description of one instance when humour was used to entertain the audience. Candidates did well in this part as there was no shortage of examples of, for instance, *Pa Ben's witty interaction with his 'on-stage' audience; the biting exchange*

between Lois and Miss Aggy, among others. Part (c) asked candidates to show how Rhone used the art of storytelling to appeal to his audience. Acceptable responses included, (but were not limited to) *song and dance; proverbs and sayings; suspense; preparing for the storytelling event.*

The mean for this question was 16.14.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were, "Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" and "South". Approximately 25 per cent of the candidates attempted this question. Part (a) required candidates to describe the places being described in the poems; Part (b) asked for a comparison of the speakers' attitudes to the places portrayed and for Part (c), the task was to discuss one device from each poem which was used to create an effective portrayal of the places.

Some candidates confused "South" with "A Contemplation Upon Flowers" and "God's Grandeur".

Part (a) assessed candidates' knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall and summarize the information. Candidates were more knowledgeable about "Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," and most responded well to this part of the question. Candidates found Part (b) challenging and many struggled with the vocabulary to capture, describe or define "speakers attitudes" (such *as reflective, nostalgic, and appreciative). Part (c), which focused on literary devices (the writer's craft), posed its usual* challenges. In many instances, devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support. There was some confusion regarding the simile (which many candidates continue to misspell) and metaphor. Many did not link the devices with the effective portrayal of the places being discussed.

The mean for this question was 16.78.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list two poems that focused on the theme of a memorable event or experience to answer the question set. Part (a) required candidates to describe the event or experience in each poem; Part (b) asked candidates to compare the speakers' attitudes to the event or experience and finally, Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which is used to present this event or experience.

Part (a) was handled well for the most part. Popular poem choices were, "Dulce Et Decorum Est", "Forgive My Guilt" and "Dreaming Black Boy." In this part of the question, candidates were expected to name the poems selected but sometimes they did not quote titles correctly. Candidates demonstrated limited knowledge about the following poems: "Orchids", "A Stone's Throw", "Theme for English B" and "It is the Constant Image of Your Face." For Part (b), some candidates had difficulty in determining the speaker(s), therefore, they were in many instances, unable to address attitude.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of the memorable event and experience. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices.

The mean for this question was 16.83.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels.

Songs of Silence continues to be unpopular. However, some of the candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated interesting insights. Part (a) of Question 7 asked for a description of two occasions in which readers get a rich picture of rural life. Appropriate responses could include *Effita's warnings of death; the No-name Lady's habits; school activities; children's games; church services and village gossip.* Part (b) asked for one technique used by Forbes to create this effect. Candidates were expected to make references to, for instance, *the use of the child's voice or perspective; re-creation of diction and register of characters*; *recounting colourful conversations*; *symbols, metaphors, humour and proverbs*. Part (c), asked for candidates to comment on the lessons that readers might glean from these presentations. Some candidates had challenges with the word *glean*.

The mean for the question was 18.11.

Question 8

Question 8 asked for a discussion of the statement, "The narrator's references to school life allow us to understand the complex social influences and the varying outcomes of schooling in rural Jamaica."

The term "complex social influences" seemed to have interfered with candidates' understanding of the question. Candidates did not treat this as an argumentative essay in which the onus was on them to provide textual evidence to support the position taken. Strong textual evidence could have been taken from chapters such as "The Idiot", "Miss Minnie" and "Little Fool Fool, Fathers and Travelers."

Two candidates scored full marks. The mean for this question was 15.00.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Part (a) asked candidates to describe one incident in which Eva played a major part as Bee's wife; Part (b), a discussion of her role as character in the novel as a whole and Part (c) required candidates to say how she differed from the other women in the novel. Generally, candidates did well but found Part (c) challenging as they merely narrated Eva's qualities, with little emphasis on the actual **difference** between Eva and the other women and providing textual reference to support the points made. Acceptable responses for this part of the question should focus on the fact that *Eva is the most developed of the female characters; she may be compared with other women such as Eulalie, Ivan Morton's wife, the other women who are portrayed as victims and objects.*

The mean for this question was 16.63.

Question 10

Candidates were asked to discuss the following statement: "The major conflict in *The Wine of Astonishment* is between tradition and change." Responses to this question ranged from poor to superior. Mediocre responses confined themselves to narration of the plot without analysis of the text, with little knowledge of background to the context. There was the tendency to focus mainly on Ivan or Bolo. Superior candidates were able to successfully analyse the events as told by Eva and demonstrate the link between conflict, tradition and change as well as provide evidence to support their responses. While most candidates

understood the nature of both tradition and conflict there were those who concentrated heavily on either tradition or conflict.

The mean for this question was 16.56.

Short Story

Question 11

This section is similar to the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were, "Septimus" and "The Man of the House." Part (a) asked candidates to describe how the mother of each boy demonstrated her special care for him. Part (b) asked for an explanation of the ways in which each boy went astray and Part (c) asked candidates to comment on the message each story conveyed about the boys.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward. For Part (b), acceptable responses included *the principle of sharing that Septimus' mother tried to instill in him and for the latter story, how the boy failed to live up to his responsibilities*. In Part (c), candidates experienced some difficulty in comprehending the word "conveys". The message in the first story is *the power of strong family values in changing and sustaining one's character*. For the latter, the message is that *it takes more than goodwill to assume the responsibilities of manhood*.

The mean for this question was 16.11.

Question 12

In this question, candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list that shared the same theme and in Part (a), to describe what happened in each story; Part (b) asked for an explanation of how each story illustrated the theme. Some candidates failed to precisely define/describe the theme and consequently, many contrived their own (such as in "black' and "food"). Part (c), asked for a comparison of the authors' treatment of the theme in the two stories. Candidates knew the stories selected, for the most part. However, **some candidates lost marks because they included inappropriate texts (such as poems, drama texts and novels)**. Apart from naming and discussing devices, candidates generally demonstrated a degree of weakness in writing the comparative essay.

The mean for this question was 18.20.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

On the whole, many essays were well structured, coherent and cohesive. Teachers and students should be commended for this achievement. However, more attention needs to be given to the acquisition of knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques, the ability to discuss their use by the playwright and to comment on their effectiveness. We urge teachers to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

Teachers and students should note that the January 2015 sitting will be the last of this current cycle of texts.

The new cycle of the syllabus will begin in June 2015.

1. Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

2. Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.

3. The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

4. Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

5. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as 'dramatic function' and 'writer's craft'. students need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

6. Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance).

7. Students should know the skills required when they are asked to define, discuss, trace, describe, determine, comment on, or show. Teachers must prepare students by dedicating time to closely examining the nature of the response expected by each of these and other key words used in questions.

8. While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further. They should be empowered to master the language to describe, explain and analyse with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

9. Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, this kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2015

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The English B examination consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one on each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. Each question consists of a number of subparts that require candidates to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question, for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged in three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparisons. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props

- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

The table below shows mean scores for Paper 01 for 2015:

Percentages of Mean Scores for 2015

Paper 01	2015 Mean (20)
Drama	10.39
Poetry	9.75
Prose	12.02

Performance on Prose Fiction was the best compared with that of Drama and Poetry.

Question 1: Drama

Part (a) asked candidates to briefly describe what is happening in the extract. Acceptable responses included *Harry learns that his mother has been called to the hospital and that his father may be discharged*. Candidates did fairly well on this question.

For Part (b), candidates were asked to refer to the exchange between Sam and Hally and explain the *effect* created by the use of short sentences in lines 3–16. Acceptable responses included *the building of tension and speeding up of the action*. Responses were somewhat vague for this part of the question.

Part (c) asked candidates to suggest one reason for Hally's mood change in line 17. Acceptable responses included, *he realizes that his father may be discharged or his father has gotten worse*.

For Part (d), candidates were required to explain the dramatic function of the telephone call in line 24. In order to earn full marks, candidates needed to include one of the following: *the call serves to introduce a point of tension; provide information about Hally's parents (Hally thinking his mother is weak and not strong enough to resist her husband's demands); provide clarification of the message; provide information on Hally (shows that he may be insincere or selfish or shows the relationship with his father*). Some candidates did not earn full marks because the explanation was lacking.

Part (e) asked candidates to describe the relationship between Sam and Hally and provide supporting evidence. Candidates did well on this part of the question. Acceptable responses included the idea that *although it is an employer/employee relationship, it is a warm and caring one*.

For Part (f) (i), candidates were asked to explain the irony in lines 29–32 and Part (f) (ii) asked for a revelation of Hally's character from these lines. Candidates did not perform well on this part of the question. Many did not see the irony in the son's response that the hospital was best for his father and interpreted this as genuine concern for his father's wellbeing and not as an indication of his own selfishness.

Candidates were asked to suggest how Hally might react if his father came home and to provide justification for this suggestion. Candidates made sensible suggestions ranging from *the son's resentfulness, his failing his examinations, or his avoidance of his father since he wants to study*. This question assessed candidates' ability to use the context to make judgement and draw reasonable conclusions.

Question 2: Poetry

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in identifying the word ("again") in stanza 1 that showed that the trumpeter had been to that location before.

Part (b) required candidates to explain two images of the trumpeter that were suggested in stanza 1 and to provide the evidence. In some instances, the images were provided without the evidence and vice versa. Acceptable responses included: *image of a crazy person*, with the evidence, "*no wild paranoid gaze"*; *a beggar*, with evidence, "*no palm turned upward"*; *a sad/depressed person*, with evidence, "*no sad haze…*"; and a *proud/confident person*, with evidence, "*only a prideful stare"*.

Part (c) required candidates to state three effects of the power of music in stanza 2. Many candidates gave literal responses and others simply 'lifted' portions of the poem to supply a response. Acceptable responses should have contained some of these ideas: *kingdoms fall/power relationships change*; *people are liberated; people are empowered; prisoners are set free and earthquakes occur*.

Part (d) required candidates to identify the literary device used in one of the following and comment on its effectiveness: "cities that crack and crumble" (line 15) or "these piercing notes / may be daggers too" (lines 22–23). Acceptable responses for the former included a discussion which captures the following: *The hard 'c' sound contributes to the force and impact of the fall. The crack speaks to the initial reaction to the force, whereas the crumbling, to the final movement in the process. The implicit comparison of a concrete structure being 'broken' by trumpet blasts may also allude to the fallen walls of Jericho after the collective 'shout'/musical blast*. The device here may be any of the following: *alliteration, metaphor, onomatopoeia*.

For the latter, any of these devices is appropriate: *metaphor/irony/paradox/oxymoron/word play. Irony/paradox is seen in that the musician is profoundly changed by the very change in his listeners. There is paradox in the fact that music portrays how the beauty of the music causes pain. Word play and oxymoron are evident in that "piercing notes" and "daggers" both suggest wounds. There is a certain amount of incongruity in comparing the musical notes (something associated with healing and peace) with daggers (something associated with hurt and violence*).

For Part (e), candidates were asked to select an example of either rhyme **or** repetition and comment on its effectiveness. The attempt here was fair in that candidates had a good sense of these devices. Their shortcoming was commenting on the effectiveness. Regarding rhyme, *there are significant sound effects and some amount of half rhyme, as in lines 6 and 7 ("stare" and "aware" and lines 23 and 25, ("too" and "blue"). These long sounds contribute to the mood and enhance the intensity of the trumpet blasts. Regarding repetition, the word 'no' is repeated three times in stanza 1 and the phrase "down it comes" twice in stanza 2. The repeated "no" adds to the militancy of the trumpeter and reinforces the absence of what he is usually perceived to be (crazy and destitute). Stanza 2 builds the*

momentum as the music gathers a life and strength of its own, tearing down structures with its power.

Candidates were asked to identify in Part (f), three ways in which the final stanza is different from the others. This was fairly manageable for the candidates. Acceptable responses included any of these three ways: *it is shorter; it concentrates on the trumpeter and how he is affected by his own music; it shows the trumpeter has his own pain; it is more reflective; the more subtle effects of the music are evident*.

Part (g) asked candidates to identify, with supporting evidence, the speaker's attitude to the trumpeter. Although many could not find the appropriate literary language, many conceded, rightly, that the attitude is *positive*. Appropriate responses for the attitude included *admiration, respect* and *appreciation*. *Supporting evidence included "man-god"; "he / stands, and with trumpet levelled"; "a prideful stare"; "he alone knows"*.

Question 3

For Part (a) (i), most candidates were correct in identifying the setting (forest/near a river) and were able to say why Will captured the iguana Part (a) (ii), which was to provide food.

Part (b) required candidates to use supporting evidence and say why the mood in paragraph 1 is different from that of paragraph 2. Acceptable responses should have captured the contrast, such as *the mood in paragraph 1 is peaceful, calm, quiet and serene while the mood created in paragraph 2 is tense, fearful and threatening*. The response must have included the appropriate supporting evidence in order to gain full marks.

Many candidates seemed to have a challenge responding to Part (c), which asked for an explanation of the *effect* of each of these images: "giant fig tree with thick, gnarled roots" and "water seemed to turn from a dark green to an almost black". Responses tended to be rather literal and descriptive. For the former, acceptable responses should have included *the idea of the impact of the knotted roots, the strength of nature and an overall frightening/eerie effect*. For the latter, the many references to water cannot be unnoticed. *The progression to the darkness of the water engenders fear/threat and suggests an ominous mood*.

For Part (d), candidates were asked to identify one characteristic of Will and provide supporting evidence. Acceptable response included: *Will is careful/cautious (he takes his time to catch the iguana; he moves slowly and quietly); Will is a skilled hunter (he is equipped for his job as he has his stick with the loop and the canvas bag to capture and store the iguana); Will is attuned to his environment (he is alert to any changes; he notices the changes in the water, the noise of the howler monkeys); he admires nature's beauty (he looks at the sunset, he has a deep desire to live close to nature*).

For Part (e), three marks were awarded for candidates' explanation of how dialogue contributes to suspense in the passage. Not many candidates earned full marks. Acceptable responses included: *it increases the sense of danger (when Sharper tells Will that militia scouts are around); it reinforces the mood of fear (the dialogue occurs in whispers); it advances the plot (informing the reader that the characters are moving towards the cave and that others are there, in hiding*).

Part (f) asked candidates to suggest why Will dreams of building a house by the creek or river. Candidates attempted this part reasonably well. Acceptable responses included: *Will*

likes the beauty of the river (the sunset, the water, the enormous trees); Will enjoys the calm and peacefulness of the environment and he enjoys the idea of freedom (going to far undiscovered places) that the river symbolizes.

Finally, in Part (g), candidates were asked to predict, with justification, what would happen next in this episode. Candidates, for the most part, gave reasonable submissions such as *the characters will go to the cave and find the others gone; the militia scouts will track them and might kill them; a battle might ensue or they will reach the cave and get a chance to eat the iguana*.

Recommendations

Candidates continue to underperform in parts of the questions which require interpretive, analytical and non-literal responses. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions.

Students need to get accustomed to and use in their writing, the appropriate literary language and understand genre-specific words, terms and concepts such as *mood, effect, suspense* and *attitude*.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on page 22 of the syllabus)

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

- The ability to produce balanced, critical analyses

- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

For the questions on Shakespeare, the first was more popular. Question 1 sought to elicit from candidates, a discussion on the theme of love. Part (a) asked for a description of the love relationship of one of the couples. Part (b) required a description of the challenges faced by the couple and Part (c), a discussion of one dramatic technique that Shakespeare used to portray the theme of love.

Candidates showed a preference for the relationship between Hermia and Lysander. While candidates generally gave an average response, some concentrated on retelling the plot without focusing on the question. Of the three areas for discussion, Part (c) was not handled well. Generally, candidates were unable to identify and discuss the dramatic techniques used to portray the theme of love. Acceptable responses for a discussion of dramatic technique should have included any one of the following: *dramatic irony (as in Puck and the love potion); personification of male dominance (as in Shakespeare's presentation of male characters such as Egeus, Theseus and Oberon); use of contrast; the presentation of the magic wood as a reflection of the 'real' world; humour; Puck (as a character and commentary on love); allusion (classical references to Hero and Leander's tragic love story*).

Question 2

This question pertains to the issue of the powerful and the powerless. Part (a) asked candidates to describe one incident in which one character exerts power over another; Part (b) asked for a description of how the character responds to the situation and Part (c), a discussion of one dramatic technique Shakespeare used to present male dominance of women in the play.

The most popular relationship discussed was Egeus and Hermia. A description of the victim/powerless would have allowed candidates to gain full marks for Part (b). Based on the responses for Part (c), it appears that candidates were not effectively prepared to answer questions dealing with dramatic presentations/dramatic techniques. Acceptable responses for this part should have included any one of the following: *dramatic irony, personification of male dominance, use of contrast, comic humour and the character of Puck as a commentary on love*.

Old Story Time

Question 3

Part (a) asked for a description of one incident in the play in which Pearl is featured and one in which Margaret is featured; Part (b) required a discussion of how either Pearl or Margaret contributes to the development of the play and finally, Part (c), a discussion of the playwright's presentation of women in the play.

Generally, candidates were quite knowledgeable of the text, although for Part (a) many mentioned Miss Aggy's abuse of Len and not the *taunting exchange between Len and Pearl*. Also, some candidates failed to mention *Margaret's racist tendencies and disparaging remarks about Miss Aggy and Len*. Part (b) was treated superficially. *Pearl's altered appearance to mark the passage of time; Pearl as a foil; Miss Aggy's ironic adoration of Margaret; and Margaret as the symbol of perfection* were acceptable responses for Part (b). Part (c) required a discussion of any/all of these women — Miss Aggy, Pearl, Lois and Margaret. Some candidates did not focus enough or at all on Part (c). Acceptable responses included *the role of single parents; sex and sexuality; dramatic irony; women as symbols; the use of contrast and the exploration of issues such as class, colour and gender*.

Question 4

For Part (a), candidates were asked to discuss why Len wrote the love letter (to Margaret). Most candidates handled this part of the question fairly well but some were of the incorrect view that Len was genuinely in love with Margaret and not that he was only following his mother's instructions. Part (b) asked for an explanation of the effects this letter had on the development of the play. A glaring omission for this part was the significant effect of flashbacks. Part (c) asked candidates to discuss how Rhone uses the letter incident to portray one important theme in the play. A common theme discussed was racism. However, some candidates discussed this theme in very general terms and disregarded the context of the drama.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were "Orchids" and "God's Grandeur". Part (a) required candidates to describe the view of nature presented in each poem; Part (b) asked for the comment each poem makes on humanity's impact on nature and for Part (c), the task was to discuss one device from each poem which was used to portray nature.

Generally, "God's Grandeur" was handled better, although a few candidates confused this poem with "A Contemplation Upon Flowers".

Part (c), which focused on literary devices (the writer's craft), posed a challenge for many candidates. In many instances, devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support. There was some confusion regarding the simile (which candidates continue to misspell) and metaphor. Many did not link the device with the effective portrayal of nature.

Question 6

By far the more popular question, this was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list, two poems that focused on the theme of oppression to answer the question set. Part (a) required candidates to describe the nature of the oppression. Candidates generally discussed the oppressive situation but did not identify the type of oppression (for example, political and social) experienced by the speaker.

Part (b) asked candidates to explain how the oppression affects the speaker and finally, Part (c) asked candidates to discuss one device from each poem which is used to present the oppression. Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of oppression. This part of the question continues to pose a challenge to candidates. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels.

Songs of Silence continues to be unpopular. Question 7 referenced the chapters/stories "Miss Minnie" and "Travellers or Fathers, or Little Fool Fool" and Part (a) asked for a description of the person who nurtures the child in each chapter/story. Acceptable responses for this part included *Miss Minnie and Cudjoe Man*. Part (b) asked for a discussion of how each child is affected by the person described in Part (a). For Part (c), candidates were asked to discuss Forbes' presentation of family in the novel. Responses tended to be vague and very superficial. Candidates who attempted this question did not do very well and many scored zero.

Question 8

This question asked for a discussion of the statement, "In *Songs of Silence* individuals are often in conflict with the community to which they belong." Part (a) asked for a description of one of these characters — Mister Papacita, Effita and Cudjoe Man. Part (b) asked for a discussion on the ways in which Forbes presents the selected character's difference and Part (c), asked for a discussion of Forbes' presentation of community in the novel. Candidates tended to narrate and describe events in the novel without focusing on the question. In some instances, candidates created their own narratives in a bid to augment their responses. Therefore, scores achieved were quite low.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Part (a) asked candidates to describe one incident in which the villagers of Bonasse experience betrayal. Acceptable responses included *Ivan Morton's response to his roots and values; Corporal Prince's abusive behavior and Bolo's 'turning' on his own people in frustration*. Part (b) required a discussion of the impact on the Bonasse community. Part (c) required candidates to explore how Eva's voice contributes to a deeper understanding of the community's sense of betrayal. Generally, candidates found Part (c) challenging as they merely narrated Eva's qualities. Acceptable responses for this part of the question should have focused on the fact that *Eva's voice is one of an insider and not an outsider. She voices the collective consciousness of the Bonasse community; she is able to recall the community's past and traditions and show the changes and even as a 'sympathetic insider' Eva shows some amount of objectivity by neither judging nor condemning the motives of those who, for instance, move away from the church.*

Question 10

Candidates were asked to respond to Bee's report of Ivan's statement: "We can't be white but we can act white." Part (a) asked for a description of the situation which prompts this statement. Part (b) required a discussion of the effects of this statement on Bee. Candidates did not manage this section satisfactorily. Acceptable responses included *Bee's anger, disappointment, shame, sadness* and other suitable negative emotions, with textual evidence. Part (c) asked candidates to show how Lovelace uses the characterization of Ivan Morton to explore the theme of whiteness in the novel. Many candidates did not make a strong enough connection between the theme of whiteness and characterization. Acceptable responses included *descriptions of Ivan and his European look (dress, chauffeur-driven); Ivan's house as a symbol (he leaves his father's house to live in Mr Richardson's big white house); images of white/light (his light-skinned wife being selected over the village (black) beauty, Eulalie).*

Short Story

Question 11

The short story section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question; candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were "Berry" and "Blackout." This question asked candidates to describe an incident in which racism occurs. Part (b) asked for a discussion of the consequences of this incident and Part (c) asked candidates to discuss how the writer uses dialogue or characterization to present the theme of racism.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward and responded well to the instances of racism, especially in "Berry". For Part (b), candidates tended to narrate the stories rather than discuss the consequences. Acceptable responses included *Berry's baffled/puzzled reflection; his labelling people as "good" or "bad"*; the woman in "Blackout" is forced to reflect on her sense of superiority; the refusal of victims to be treated as such.

Part (c) appears to have posed a challenge to some candidates as they did not attempt this part while others made personal comments on the stories. Acceptable responses included: *dialogue is used to establish contrast and reflect social/racial differences; it sets the scene for racial tensions to emerge; it reinforces the plot and conflict; it reveals characters. In both stories, characterization is used to reveal hidden prejudices and racist attitudes; characters' actions are used to reveal racism and the writers use contrasting characters to reveal racism*.

Question 12

In this question, candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list with the same theme, in this instance the theme of relationships. In Part (a), candidates were asked to describe the nature of one of the relationships; Part (b) asked for a discussion of how the persons involved are affected by the relationship and Part (c), asked candidates to show one way in which the writers sustain interest in the portrayal of the relationships. Candidates were comfortable in handling Part (a). They were less so for Part (b). Acceptable responses should have indicated through the various types of relationships (parent/child; husband/wife; grandmother/grandchild; employer/employee) whether the effect is a negative or positive one. In answering Part (c), the positive or negative effects on the relationships require identification of the technique used by the writers to convey the message. Acceptable responses included: *narrative perspective; use of symbols; use of dialogue; flashback, especially in creating suspense; irony, suspense and satire*.

Observations and Recommendations

Although we commend teachers for their hard work, we are encouraging them to pay more attention to these areas which usually form the Part (c) of the questions: knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques; the ability to discuss and comment on the effectiveness of techniques and devices. We urge teachers/instructors to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

- Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

- Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.

- The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

- Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

- Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as *dramatic function* and *writer's craft*. Candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

- Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance).

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Candidates are reminded that January 2015 will be the end of this cycle and hence this cycle of texts. A new cycle of texts will be used from June 2015.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2015

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

(i) Comprehension

(ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.

- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props.

- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive.

- Awareness of the interaction among characters.

Question 1

Overall, 201 (1.08%) of the 18 672 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to lines 1–4 of the dramatic extract and indicate what they noticed about Mrs Wright's sewing on the quilt. Most candidates were correct in mentioning that Mrs Wright's normally neat and even stitches suddenly got uneven and haywire.

Candidates were asked why Mrs Peters says, "I don't think we ought to touch things" in Part (b). Acceptable responses went beyond "She was not at home" to indicate that *the place was indeed a crime scene as Mrs Wright was in custody*. Not many candidates were able to use the stage directions and other references to come to that conclusion.

Part (c) asked candidates to state two things about Mrs Wright's character suggested by the dialogue and provide supporting evidence. Many candidates were able to mention that she sews well, sings well, is sensitive, pleasant/nice and is afraid of cats. However, they fell short on providing the supporting evidence, such as: *"nice even stitches"; "she used to sing real pretty"; she had a bird and a bird cage; "sweet and pretty"*.

For Part (d), candidates were required to comment on the effectiveness of two stage directions ("Shakes her head" and "shivers") in expressing Mrs Hale's attitude to Mr and Mrs Wright. Many candidates were correct in noting that Mrs Hale's gesture is suggesting regret in not visiting her as often as she should have (some mentioned pity for Mrs Wright). The other stage direction ("shivers") generated for the most part, acceptable responses along these lines: *the gesture emphasized how cold she perceives Mr Wright to be or it shows her fear or mistrust of Mr Wright, underscoring her belief that Mr Wright is an evil man — a man to be feared.*

Candidates experienced some difficulty explaining the role of the women in the extract, as required by Part (e). Some mentioned that they were good neighbours, others that they were gossips. Acceptable responses should include *they provide the audience with the commentary/background information*; *they contribute to the economy of the play by filling in the story that would take too long to show on stage*; *they highlight Mrs Wright's domestic situation and emotional state.*

For Part (f), candidates were asked to explain the dramatic function of the bird cage. Many candidates realized the importance of the cage but could not use the literary language to bolster their response to connect Mrs Wright's situation (trapped and harmed) with the bird. Apart from her sewing, Mrs Wright's joys seemed to be centred on the bird.

Candidates displayed creativity and imagination in their responses to Part (g), which required them to suggest a title for the extract and use evidence from the text to support their choice. Here is a sample: *'Mrs Wright's Secret' as based on the women's conversation, it is evident that no one really knew the struggle she was experiencing. She even owned a bird which nobody knew about and which she hid in her sewing box. This probably symbolized her hidden conflict with her husband or the crime she seemed to have committed.*

The mean for this question was 12 out of 20. Although this is an increase over last year, it remains the lowest mean achieved of the three genres tested.

Question 2

Fifty-four (0.29 %) of the 18 665 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in describing what was happening in the poem. Acceptable responses included *an angry father has gone to defend his son who has been accused of stealing from a store. He finds out that his son was guilty and leaves the store*.

Part (b) required candidates to indicate the effect of the italics in line 4 ("*I didn't steal anything, honest* …). Many candidates were able to identify the words in italics as those uttered by the boy but most did not state the effect. Appropriate responses should indicate that *the italics highlight a contrast between the boy's 'honest' with his guilt that is proved with the mounting evidence*.

Part (c) required candidates to identify the lines where the father's attitude changes and why his attitude changes. Acceptable responses mentioned lines 13–15 ("Suddenly feeling / sick and alone and afraid …) or lines 11–12 ("Until there's present and sure …"). *The father's attitude changes as he recognizes that despite his son's claim of innocence, he is really guilty* OR *the father realizes that there is strong evidence to prove his son's guilt.*

Part (d) required candidates to comment on the poet's use of contrast. Candidates identified the contrast (innocence versus guilt) but failed to make a comment on how the contrast was used by the poet. Acceptable responses captured the idea of the bits of evidence coming together to prove the boy is guilty and erases his claim of innocence. The evidence is described as unfolding painfully slowly.

For Part (e), candidates were asked to identify the literary device in "guilt's sure odor seeping / into the mind" (lines 11–12) and comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses for the device were *metaphor* (ideally) or *personification*. *The conviction that the son is indeed guilty slowly penetrates the father's mind in the way a bad smell penetrates space*.

Candidates were asked in Part (f) (i) to describe the father's character and justify the answer with evidence from lines 13 to 20. Instead of describing his character, many candidates mentioned how the father was feeling. Acceptable responses should include *the father is proud (evidence — he does not want the storeowner to see how fearful he was); the father is fair/reasonable (evidence — he accepts his son is guilty after seeing the evidence); the father is emotional (evidence — he is hurt that his son has stolen from the store and is fearful of the consequences)*. Part (f) (ii) asked candidates to suggest how the father might handle the situation after leaving the store with his son. Candidates were quite creative in their responses. *Having his son apologize to the storeowner, punishing his son* or both were some appropriate responses.

Most candidates did exceptionally well on Part (g), both in providing another title for the poem and using text-based evidence to justify their choice. Some responses for titles included *"An Honest Man"* and *"A Father's Dilemma"*.

The mean for this question was 12.27 out of 20.

Question 3

The mean score (13.11) on Prose Fiction was the highest of the three genres. Four hundred and fifty-two (2.42%) of the 18 667 candidates earned the full marks of 20.

Most candidates had a fair sense of what the passage was about and were able to answer Part (a) which asked them to identify two settings in the extract *(school/house/home in Miguel Street)* and the narrator *(child/school boy named Vidiadhar)*.

Part (b) required candidates to give two impressions of the narrator, with supporting evidence. Some candidates spent time describing the narrator instead of providing a suitable word to sum up his character. Appropriate responses included the following: *obedient (he is the teacher's pet and does what the teacher tells him; naïve (he expects that all goats provide milk); observant (he pays attention to small details such as the appearance of the goat; he even noticed the neighbors peeping from behind their curtains when the row began)*.

Candidates seemed to have some challenge understanding the word *image* as used in Part (c) (i), which asked them to say what image of the goat is created in the extract. Acceptable responses included *lazy*/*useless*/*aloof*/*mysterious*. Where candidates presented a plausible physical image this was also accepted. Part (c) (ii) asked how the writer creates this image. Candidates did not manage this part very well.

Acceptable responses included *the writer creates the impression of the laziness of the goat through description of it being sleepy ("sullen and sleepy-eyed"* and *"its eyes half closed")*. Dialogue was also used to create the impression of the goat, as seen when the man returns the goat.

Part (d) asked candidates for their impression of Mr Hinds and for them to select two pieces of information to support their answer. Some candidates were not as perceptive and thought that Mr Hinds was a kind person since he asked the narrator about the goat. Acceptable responses included *he is a scheming/conniving man (evidence — how he handles the raffle); dishonest/trickster (evidence — when he makes the narrator the winner of the raffle [and the goat], he passes the responsibility of taking care of the goat to the boy and asks with a knowing smile how the goat was getting on, knowing full well something was wrong with the goat).*

For Part (e), candidates were asked to explain one way in which the writer makes the extract humorous. Acceptable responses included *choice of characters (the schemer teacher, the naïve narrator and a mother who refuses to explain to her son that male goats do not produce milk); language (use of dialogue, sentence structure, irony [readers knowing a ram does not produce milk, unlike the hope of the naïve boy]).*

Part (f) asked candidates to say why the man was angry and to provide supporting evidence. Candidates who were not astute enough to see the ways in which the goat was *"useless"* and *"lazy"* as described by the narrator, were not able to grasp what was required for this part of the question. *The man was angry because the goat did not provide the 'services' for which he had been borrowed*.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 22 of the syllabus):

(i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living

(ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)

(iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism

(iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses

(v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02

(vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

(vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

This 2015 sitting marks the beginning of the new cycle of texts.

Drama – *Julius Caesar*

Question 1

Question 1 was not as popular with candidates as Question 2. The very strong responses were from candidates who were able to describe in detail the opening scene, explain the contrasting views of Julius Caesar presented in the scene, and synthesize the information presented to illustrate the importance of the scene to the play. Less proficient responses were able to deal with Parts (a) and (b) but only sought to repeat the details given in the first two parts without including the kind of insight that would allow them to meaningfully explain the importance of the scene to the play.

Very weak responses only gave one or two sentences for each part, merely mentioning details. Far too many responses were like this and did not score well. Many of these appeared to have a sense of literature as mere information rather than grasping the sense that insight and detail are important to meaningful literary analysis.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to the opening scene and describe what is happening. Acceptable responses should include *the street crowded with revellers; the sharp and witty exchange between Murellus and the cobbler; the former trying to downplay Caesar's popularity and steps made to remove the crowns used to decorate Caesar's statues*.

Part (b) asked for a comparison of the views of Caesar in this opening scene. Acceptable responses included *the crowd's admiration versus the tribunes' disapproval of Caesar and the ways in which this was played out, for instance, under the guise of restoring order, the tribunes attempt to get the crowd to cease the revelry.*

Part (c) asked candidates to show how this scene is important to the play as a whole. This was the most challenging section to candidates, as it appeared that many were not able to bring into their discussion the dramatic importance of such scenes to plot, characterization, theme and conflict. The better responses explained how the contrast in response to Caesar was the foreshadowing of the kind of conflict that led to civil strife and Caesar's death. Their discussions focused on how Flavius' views were early indications of dissent regarding Caesar's heroic status. Other responses appropriate to this discussion included *the scene preparing the audience for Caesar's entrance; the scene is full of tension and volatility, which are features of the action throughout the play; the common people play a role in this scene and the play as a whole; themes such as power, loyalty and war are introduced*.

The mean for this question was 14.49.

Question 2

This was the more popular of the two Shakespeare questions. Many candidates related well to the "Ides of March" warning and could give a background to this date and its significance. It is clear that teachers did well to have students understand the significance of this date to the events in the play. There were very few candidates who could not describe what happened in the scene. Where they could not, it was clear that they either had not read the text or had not paid sufficient attention to class activities.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to Caesar's warning ("Beware the Ides of March") in Act 1 Scene 2 and describe what happens in this scene. Part (b) asked for a description of another instance when Caesar is warned and for candidates to describe his reaction to this warning. Many candidates were able to recall for Part (b), relevant details about either Calpurnia's reservations or the warning given to Caesar by the old man

while on his way to the senate. Calpurnia's warning was the one that was more popular with candidates and was usually recounted in impressive detail. Weaker responses were brief and lacking in focus on what the questions asked. A few candidates, however, had details totally unrelated to the text being examined.

Part (c) asked candidates to show how these warnings are significant to the play as a whole. As in Question 1, many candidates were unable to explain the significance of warnings to the rest of the play. While they did better at answering this section than Question 1, the issue which surfaced as a basis for the poor responses appeared to be the lack of adequate preparation in discussing and writing how different parts of the play influence action throughout the rest of the play. Students did not seem to be clear about what *significance* means and teachers will need to create opportunities in teaching for students to illustrate how the details being focused on can help the movement of the play in relation to plot, characterization and theme.

The more competent candidates were able to show the significance of the warnings to plot, suspense, character and theme. Thus responses which dealt with the ways in which the warnings created the 'what if' scenario; issues of fate and destiny; the dramatic effect of the supernatural; the role of women and how their ideas were received were covered. In addition, a few were able to show how foreshadowing as both theme and technique played a central role in the understanding of the text, given its significance to audience response and plot development.

The mean for this question was 19.08.

The Lion and the Jewel

Question 3

Part (a) required candidates to refer to the mime of the lost traveller and describe what happens in this mime. Most candidates gave appropriate responses which included *the photographer having car trouble; abandoning the car and starting to walk; spotting Sidi bathing by the river; slipping as he tried to photograph her; his being brought to the Bale; being plied with liquor and getting embarrassingly sick*. Part (b) asked for candidates to discuss two characteristics of the Bale revealed in this mime. Again candidates were able to mention *the Bale being in charge and commanding respect; his being wily/sly and being worldly-wise*. Some perceptive candidates did not necessarily find the Bale an admirable character and were able to use textual support to justify their position.

Part (c) asked for candidates to show how mime is used as a technique to advance the plot. Far too many candidates merely recounted the events of the mime. Many candidates could not make any textual connection of the mime to the eventual outcomes of the play. Acceptable responses included *the mime introduces one of the most powerful characters — the lion/the Bale; it introduces important themes such as traditional ways versus modern ways; gender issues; sexuality, power issues and the oral tradition*. As one of the three mimes, it forms part of the structural construct of the play.

The mean for this question was 14.38.

Question 4

More candidates attempted this question than Question 3. Part (a) asked candidates to describe two incidents which show that the Bale is clever. Candidates were correct in mentioning *how he manipulates his first wife to perpetuate the rumour of his impotence; how the Bale uses sex as an instrument of power; how he bribes the land surveyor; and how he uses his understanding of human nature to get what he wants*. Part (b) asked candidates to say to what extent the Bale is an admirable character. Some candidates gave acceptable responses which suggested that even though he was not necessarily a likable character, *he was admirable in terms of his agility and prowess for a man his age; his ability to outwit males and females; and, for a rural tribal chief, he knew the ways of the world*.

Candidates were asked, in Part (c), to discuss the importance of the title of the play. This part of the question continues to be challenging for candidates. Many candidates did not link the lion image to the Bale or the jewel, to Sidi or even suggest why this might be so. Acceptable responses should include the *symbolism in the strength of the lion and the beauty and value of the jewel; exploring traditional gender relationships (strength and beauty) and sexual conquest*.

The mean for this question was 16.71.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were "Theme for English B" and "A Lesson for this Sunday" and the focus was on life. More candidates attempted this question than Question 6. Some candidates confused "Theme for English B" with "Dreaming Black Boy". Part (a) required candidates to describe what happens in each poem; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the understanding of life that the speakers arrive at; and for Part (c), the task was to discuss one device that each poet uses to convey the speaker's understanding of life.

Part (a) assessed candidates' knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall, assess and summarize the information. Most candidates responded well to this part of the question. Some candidates were equally perceptive in discussing the speakers' understanding of life and for "Theme for English B" gave responses such as *the speaker recognizes that one's race may not determine one's interest and preferences* and for "A Lesson for this Sunday", *we see manifestations of innate cruelty, even among the young and innocent*.

Candidates struggled with Part (c). Many supplied vague responses that did not make reasonable connections between the theme and the devices chosen. For "Theme for English B", candidates could have mentioned *symbol (as in the white college on the hill)*; *contrast (up the hill and down in Harlem)*; *rhetorical questions and repetition*. For "A Lesson for this Sunday", *the use of metaphor ("with its frail kites of furious butterflies"); simile ("frail as a flower") and pun (prays/preys)*.

The mean for this question was 13.96.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list two poems that focused on the theme of resistance. Some candidates did not select poems which offered robust discussion. Many had difficulty explaining the nature of the resistance, required in Part (a).

For instance in *"A Contemplation Upon Flowers" the speaker has a problem accepting his mortality (and essentially resists death because he wants to live forever); in "Once Upon a Time" the speaker resists the changing times and yearns for a time (in the past) when people were less hypocritical*.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of resistance. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices and treated the discussion as a continuation of Part (b). Acceptable response should mention in the discussion *the use of irony/contrast as in "A Contemplation Upon Flowers" in that flowers, so simple, can teach a lesson to human beings, who are by nature complex and dynamic; in "Once Upon a Time", it is the son to whom the father looks to be taught trust and honesty, instead of the other way around*.

The mean for this question was 16.08.

Prose Fiction

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels.

Frangipani House

Question 7

Many of the candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated interesting insights. Part (a) asked candidates to describe one incident which portrays Matron's treatment of the elderly. Candidates mentioned incidents such as *Matron's treatment of Mama King when Ben LeCage visited her; her grudging accession to giving Mama King two sausages but removing her dentures, making eating difficult; Matron's reaction when Mama King ran away; sedating those who stand up to her*.

Part (b) asked for a discussion of Mama King's reaction to Matron's care. Acceptable responses included *Mama King's bitterness towards Matron as she sees beyond her mask of concern for the elderly women; the antagonistic exchanges between them and her belief, unlike the other women, that it is no privilege to be at Frangipani House*.

Part (c) asked for a discussion on how the use of flashbacks helps the reader to understand Mama King's reaction to Matron's care. Many candidates could identify the flashbacks but failed in making the link with Mama King's reaction to Matron's care. Acceptable responses included *how these are used to provide information on Mama King's life (her abusive relationship with her husband and the hardships she experienced when he disappeared) hence these experiences have enabled her to see Matron for what she really is; the memories provide insight into Mama King's character (her strong will and determination); the reader understands more fully why Mama King feels so abandoned by her children*.

The mean for the question was 11.10.

Question 8

This question resonated well with many candidates, especially the expression of Mama King feeling "trapped like a bee in a bottle". Part (a) asked for a description of the cause for Mama King feeling this way. Acceptable responses included *her feeling robbed of her freedom; forced into a regimented lifestyle at the home; feeling deprived of all the things that made her feel alive and feels like living at Frangipani House is like serving a life sentence*. Part (b) asked for a discussion of one issue that Mama King highlights about institutions for the elderly. Here candidates demonstrated much sensitivity in their responses and mentioned appropriate issues such as *the inhumane treatment of persons placed in such institutions which are supposed to provide comfort in their last days; administrators (like Matron) who are more interested in making money than showing genuine concern for the vulnerable; the prison-like ethos of these institutions, which rob residents of their individuality and personhood*.

Part (c) asked for a discussion on how Mama King's memories functioned as an escape. Astute candidates discussed the psychological and mental escape and not necessarily the physical one. *Her running away provided both the mental and physical escape, as her memories take her back to her life as a young woman, wife and mother, when she was free*.

The mean for this question was 17.37.

Things Fall Apart

Question 9

More candidates attempted this question than Question 10. Part (a) asked candidates to describe one of these relationships: Okonkwo and his biological son, Nwoye; Okonkwo and his adoptive son, Ikemefuna and Okonkwo and his father. Knowledge of the text was fair and candidates were able to describe the chosen relationship. Candidates captured *the tension between Okonkwo and Nwoye, and the father's fear that his son will become a failure and idler as his own father; the Okonkwo/Ikemefuna relationship appears to be the perfect father/son relationship since he is good at 'manly' things though this is short-lived as Okonkwo participates in his sacrifice. The relationship between Okonkwo and his own father was one that caused*

much embarrassment, as he saw his father as a failure and scorned any resemblance of that trait in himself and those around him. This has impacted the relationship with Nwoye, as the fear of failure and the memories of a lazy father caused him to be unnaturally harsh towards his son.

Part (b) asked for a discussion of the impact of culture on the relationship the candidate described in Part (a). Some candidates confused 'impact' with 'description' of the culture. Acceptable responses included *how the deeply patriarchal Igbo culture affected Okonkwo's expectations of his sons; Okonkwo's narrow definition of masculinity, in the way he related to his sons (showing no emotion, except anger, spurning gentleness and sensitivity*).

Part (c) asked for an examination of one literary device to highlight the significance of the father/son relationship to the novel as a whole. Candidates in some instances offered a device but gave poor discussions to support their response. Acceptable responses included *contrast (Okonkwo and Nwoye, even in their preference of stories); flashback is also used to highlight contrast; symbols (Okonkwo being associated with yams which symbolize masculinity and Unoka, the flute); imagery (characters being associated with images that contrast or conflict with Okonkwo); irony (which underlines the relationship between what happens between Okonkwo and Unoka and what follows between Okonkwo and Nwoye); metaphor (the wrestling metaphor captures the internal and external conflict)*.

The mean for this question was 17.03.

Question 10

Foregrounding the idea that the text focuses on a community's experience of cultural change, Part (a) asked candidates to describe two changes that occur as a result of the arrival of the Europeans. Although candidates tended to concentrate too much on one change to the detriment of the other, most did this part reasonably well. Acceptable responses included *social disintegration (traditional religious practices are threatened, other traditional practices are discontinued, such as the abandonment of twins in the forest, converts to Christianity); creation of division in families (some deflecting to Christianity); use of excessive force (as in the use of guns) in quelling disputes; the possibility of education (the schools being run by the missionaries)*.

Part (b) asked for a discussion of how two characters respond to the changes described in Part (a). Acceptable responses centred around *Okonkwo and his friend Oberika, since both men are troubled by the changes yet respond to them differently. Okonkwo's response is rash and clamour for violence, whereas Oberika is cautious and give the changes reasoned contemplation*.

Part (c) asked candidates to examine the author's use of the three sections in the novel in reflecting the changes. Candidates tended to list the events in the sections or retell the story. Acceptable responses included *the author using Section 1 (the longest) to provide details on tribal life and the traditions and rituals which suggest for the most part, a stable society. Section 2 which begins with Okonkwo's seven-year exile, sets out the changes in Umofia during Okonkwo's exile, and the missionaries' inroads in the community. Section 3 (the shortest) deals with Okonkwo's return and the 'falling apart' in his eyes, of the traditional way of life — the white men have established trade, brought in a new government and their religion, which is now gaining ground, taking his own son as a convert. This section shows how imperialism has taken over and transformed Igbo culture. Okonkwo's inflexibility became his downfall*.

The mean for this question was 20.95.

Short Story

Question 11

The Short Story section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question, candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were "The Two Grandmothers" and "To Da-duh, in Memoriam." It asked candidates to consider the influence of grandmothers. Candidates were asked to describe what happens in each story in Part (a). Part (b) asked candidates to compare the grandmothers' influence on the granddaughters' view of themselves. Part (c) asked candidates to comment on the effectiveness of the writers' presentation of one of the (three) grandmothers.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward as they understood the plot. Candidates in some instances merely narrated what the grandmothers did and did not focus on *influence* for Part (b). Acceptable responses for Part (b) included *perceptions of beauty, ideas about skin colour in "The Two Grandmothers" and the granddaughter's artistic development in "To Da-duh, in Memoriam.*"

Part (c) posed a challenge in that candidates did not focus on *effectiveness* and resorted to narration. Acceptable responses should provide the rationale with textual support for which of the two grandmothers was selected.

The mean for this question was 18.82.

Question 12

In this question candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list which focus on conflict. Part (a) asked for a description of the nature of the conflict (as in internal, protagonist against nature, protagonist against machine, protagonist against society); Part (b) asked for a discussion of the development and resolution of the conflict and Part (c), an examination of the writer's use of dialogue to develop the conflict. Candidates tended to treat conflict only tangentially in the discussion. Many candidates did not show how dialogue was used; neither did they provide examples or reference in terms of how it was used to heighten conflict/tension in the stories or how it may be used to foreshadow upcoming conflict, develop conflict, demonstrate characters' internal conflict and advance the plot.

The mean for this question was 17.63.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

We continue to commend teachers for their hard work. However, more attention needs to be given to the acquisition of knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques, the ability to discuss their use by the playwright and to comment on their effectiveness. We urge teachers/instructors to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

- Generally, candidates responded unsatisfactorily to Part (c) especially in the drama section, it is recommended that teachers give students practice related to writing responses that show the importance of specific parts of the play to the play as a whole. This must be preceded by discussions and explicit teaching of the interrelatedness of the different elements of drama and the playwright's attempt to ensure that there is congruence between different elements of the play.

- Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

- The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

- Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

- Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as *dramatic function* and *writer's craft*. Students need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

- Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance). This year there was evidence that other media were used to respond to questions.

- Students should know the skills required when they are asked to *define, discuss, trace, describe, determine, comment on,* or *show*. Teachers must prepare students by dedicating time to closely examining the nature of the response expected by each of these and other key words used in questions.

- Teachers must remind students of the potential of literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts. Too often responses appeared to be recollection of facts and not engagement with texts.

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

JANUARY 2016

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The English B examination consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one on each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. Each question consists of a number of subparts that require candidates to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question, for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged in three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparisons. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props.
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive.
- Awareness of the interaction among characters.

The table below shows mean scores for Paper 01 for 2016.

Percentages of Mean Scores for 2016

Paper 01	2016 Mean (20)
Drama	13.65
Poetry	10.25
Prose	12.80

Performance on Drama was the best compared with that of Prose and Poetry.

Question 1: Drama

Part (a) asked candidates to briefly describe what is happening in lines 1–10 of the extract. Acceptable responses included *Bertha and her father are quarrelling about an incident in which Bertha says the Captain threw a lamp at her mother and could have hurt her*. Candidates did fairly well on this question.

For Part (b), candidates were asked how Bertha feels about her father and to offer support from the extract for their response. Acceptable responses included *Bertha is disappointed in her father. She says that he isn't her father when he does not seem to care that he could have hurt her mother*. Candidates responded well to this question.

Part (c) asked candidates to explain what the stage directions in lines 1, 3 and 27–29 reveal about the Captain. Acceptable responses included *the Captain is mentally ill and does not have much control over himself*. Candidates were able to state the Captain's condition but in many cases did not use the stage directions in their response.

For Part (d) (i), candidates were required to comment on the dramatic function of the Nurse reminding the Captain about his childhood in lines 31–41. In order to earn full marks, candidates needed to include what was happening on the stage and to state the dramatic significance. Acceptable responses included *she recounts the childhood incident to calm the Captain and prevent him from realizing that she is putting the straitjacket on him. This anticipates his declaration that he is caught, clipped and double-crossed.* Some candidates did not earn full marks because they did not explain the significance of the Nurse's action.

Part (d) (ii), asked candidates to explain what the Nurse's actions in lines 31– 41 reveal about her attitude towards the Captain. Acceptable responses included *the Nurse is caring because she treats him gently, distracting him instead of being stern with him*. Candidates were able to state the Nurse's attitude but in many cases did not explain the reasons for her attitude.

Part (e) asked candidates to identify one prop used in the extract and explain its effect on the conflict. Candidates did well on this part of the question. Acceptable responses included *the chair was used to keep the Captain under control and facilitates the end of the conflict.*

For Part (f) candidates were asked to comment on the effect of the Captain's statement, *Caught, clipped, and double-crossed*. Candidates did not perform well on this part of the question. They were able to identify that the Captain was tricked but did not comment on the effect this would have had on the audience or the action. Acceptable responses included *the comment encourages the reader to picture the Captain as a trapped animal that has been totally subdued.*

Part (g) asked candidates to suggest a title for the extract and justify their response with evidence from the extract. Candidates made reasonable suggestions such as "*Trapped" since the Captain is trapped in a straitjacket and 'caught, clipped and double-crossed' as the Captain is tricked into accepting the straitjacket to prevent him from hurting himself and others.* This question assessed candidates' ability to use the context to make judgement and draw reasonable conclusions.

Question 2: Poetry

For Part (a), the majority of candidates were correct in identifying the three things they learnt about the curandera in stanza 1.

Part (b) required candidates to state what she lives alone / On the edge of town (lines 1–2) suggest about the curandera. Acceptable responses included *she is a loner and she prefers to be with nature*. Candidates did fairly well on this part of the question.

Part (c) required candidates to identify the literary device used in one of the following and comment on its effectiveness: *like a large black bird, she feeds on / the desert* (lines 11–12) or *The wind / strokes the strands of long gray hair* (lines 21–22). Candidates were able to identify the literary devices but generally did not comment on their effectiveness.

Acceptable responses for the former included a discussion which captures the following: *Simile: The comparison of the curandera to a bird, perhaps a scavenger, living/eating off the land and surviving in this place*.

For the latter, any of these devices are appropriate: *Personification/imagery/symbolism — The image of the wind caressing her hair suggests oneness between the curandera and nature or the gray hair symbolizing an image of maturity and a soft, gentle spirit*.

Part (d) required candidates to comment on the poet's use of imagery in stanza 3. Candidates were able to identify imagery used in the poem but in many cases did not explain their function in the

poem or impact on the reader. Acceptable responses included *appeals to sight, sound or touch that are mostly natural and further enhance the themes of restoration and separation.*

For Part (e), candidates were asked to identify the speaker's attitude towards the curandera and support their response with two pieces of evidence from the poem. Candidates did fairly well on this part of the question. Acceptable responses included *Admiration — her endurance in the face of life's challenges and her selflessness in devoting her time to help others.*

In Part (f), candidates were asked to identify one example of contrast in the poem and to show how the poet uses it to make the poem interesting. This was fairly manageable for the candidates as they were able to identify the examples of contrast but struggled to discuss how they created interest. Acceptable responses included *the curandera living on the edge of town versus the townspeople living in the town; isolation/solitude versus being among people. The contrast generates interest or intrigue of a solitary mystical figure that the townspeople are drawn to.*

Part (g) asked candidates to suggest, with supporting evidence, the impressions created of the curandera's situation in the last stanza. Appropriate responses included *the woman is tired from the day's work which is reinforced by her rocking with the sun seeping in her bones.*

Question 3: Prose

For Part (a), the majority of candidates was correct in identifying three things the reader learns about Ma in paragraph 1.

Part (b) required candidates to comment on the effectiveness of *dressed in all black (in broad daylight, mind you) and wearing dark sunglasses*. Acceptable responses should have focused on *Fishcake's character – foolhardiness, lack of intelligence, or the impact on the reader – such as the creation of interest/intrigue.* Candidates performed fairly well on this part of the question.

For Part (c) (i), candidates were asked to state why Fishcake remained in the house after he took the items. Most candidates were able to correctly respond that *he was too tempted by the opportunity to have some fishcakes to leave or he saw the fishcake batter,* and other appropriate responses.

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to identify what the reason identified in Part (c) (i) suggested about Fishcake's character. Candidates did fairly well on this part of the question suggesting that Fishcake was *obsessed with fishcakes and would do anything to get some; foolhardy and reckless; and overconfident in his ability to escape capture.*

Many candidates seemed to have a challenge responding to Part (d), which asked how Ma's behaviour in lines 21–28 made the extract humorous. Responses tended to describe the image but did not capture the humour. Acceptable responses should have included *the comical image of an old woman manhandling a younger man who might have been physically stronger or the idea that Fishcake is oblivious to the fact that his joy would soon turn to sorrow but the reader is aware of it.*

For Part (e), candidates had to identify the literary device and comment on the effectiveness of *trussed-up like a turkey*. Not many candidates earned full marks as they correctly identified the

device but failed to respond to its effect. Acceptable responses included *the idea that Fishcake was tied up like a turkey prepared to be cooked and this rendered him immobile.*

Part (f) (i) asked candidates to comment on the significance of the rum shop in the extract. Candidates attempted this part reasonably well. However, some relied on their previous knowledge of the significance of the rum shop in a community instead of what was included in the extract. Acceptable responses included *It was the place where the challenge was issued or it was an important part of the setting*.

For Part (f) (ii), the majority of candidates correctly suggested that the boys in the shop would laugh at Fishcake, especially since he was beaten by Ma.

Finally, in Part (g), candidates were asked to identify, with textual evidence, one theme in the extract. Candidates, for the most part, gave reasonable submissions such as *Retribution: Fishcake thought that he would commit the crime without being* caught, *but he underestimated Ma's ability to defend herself and her property*.

Recommendations

Candidates continue to underperform in parts of the questions which require interpretive, analytical and nonliteral responses. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions.

Students need to get accustomed to and use in their writing, the appropriate literary language and understand genre-specific words, terms and concepts such as *mood, effect, suspense* and *attitude*.

More important, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on page 22 of the syllabus)

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgements, states of

consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living.

- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question).

- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgements in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism.

- The ability to produce balanced, critical analyses.

- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02.

- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text

- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *Julius Caesar*

Question 1

Of the two questions on Shakespeare, the first was more popular. Question 1 focused on a discussion on the women in the play. Part (a) asked for a description of the relationship between Calpurnia and Caesar, and Portia and Brutus. Part (b) required a comparison of the attitude of each wife towards her husband and Part (c), a discussion of the dramatic presentation of women in the play.

Candidates generally gave an average response, but some concentrated on retelling the plot without focusing on the question. Of the three areas for discussion, Part (c) was not handled well. Generally, candidates were unable to comment on the dramatic presentation of women. Acceptable responses for a discussion of the dramatic presentation of women should have included some of the following ideas: *although their roles appear to be minor*, *women contribute significantly to the drama; the women portray important themes in the play, such as loyalty and love; the women rely on their intuition and believe in superstition and warnings; they are powerful in their own right.*

The mean for this question was 15.36 out of a total of 35.

Question 2

This question focused on the theme of leadership. Part (a) asked candidates to describe Caesar and Brutus as leaders; Part (b) asked for a comparison of the people's response to the leadership of Caesar with the leadership of Brutus, and Part (c), a discussion of Shakespeare's use of either soliloquies or dramatic irony to present the theme of leadership.

Candidates were able to respond to Parts (a) and (b) fairly well. Based on the responses for Part (c), it seemed that candidates were unable to effectively respond to the role of soliloquies or dramatic irony in the exploration of the theme of leadership. Acceptable responses for this part should have included any one of the following: *Soliloquy – to explore idealism in leadership; to explore Brutus' willingness to make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the people; to highlight Anthony's ruthlessness as a leader. Dramatic irony – to heighten the tension and advance the action in the play; to provide contrast, to explore the theme of leadership or honour.*

The mean for this question was 14.58 out of a total of 35.

The Lion and the Jewel

Question 3

The question focused on the tensions surrounding tradition and change. Part (a) asked for a description of two incidents in the play in which tensions surrounding tradition and change are evident; Part (b) required a discussion of the attitude of one of the main characters to the tensions and finally, Part (c), a discussion of the playwright's presentation of either contrast or flashback in portraying the tensions surrounding tradition and change.

Responses to Parts (a) and (b) were fairly done with the focus being on the Lakunle's refusal to pay the bride price and the Bale's refusal to allow change in the village. Some candidates did not focus enough or at all on Part (c). Acceptable responses included *contrasts between characters and their attitudes towards traditional customs; the power and prowess of the Bale versus Lakunle's weak attempt at forcing European values on the village. Flashback, through the mimes of the lost traveller and the surveyor emphasize the Bale's cunning in preventing the Europeans from making inroads in the village.*

The mean for this question was 14.76 out of a total of 35.

Question 4

This was the least popular drama question. The question required candidates to refer to the mime depicting the story of the lost manhood. For Part (a), candidates were asked to discuss the events enacted in the mime. Part (b) asked for a discussion of one theme that is depicted in the enactment. Many candidates did not refer to the mime of the lost manhood for either Parts (a) or (b). Part (c) asked candidates to examine the dramatic effect of dance and song in the play. Candidates gave fair responses to this part of the question. Acceptable responses included *to generate interest and*

enhance audience appeal; to facilitate the retelling/narration of the story; to reinforce the cultural dimension of the play.

The mean for this question was 8.50 out of a total of 35.

Poetry

Question 5

This was the more popular of the two poetry questions. The named poems in Question 5 were "Death Came to See Me in Hot Pink Pants" and "Once Upon a Time." Part (a) required candidates to describe the deceptive situation in each poem; Part (b) asked for a discussion on each speaker's response to the deception and for Part (c), the task was to discuss one device from each poem, which was used to portray the theme of deception.

Generally, "Death Came to See Me in Hot Pink Pants" was handled better. Some candidates were unable to clearly articulate that the father, in "Once Upon a Time," participated in the deception and was also disappointed in himself.

Part (c) posed a challenge for many candidates as they were unable to effectively discuss the writer's craft. In many instances, devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support, either in the form of examples or a close understanding of the poems.

The mean for this question was 12.22 out of a total of 35.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list, two poems that focused on childhood experiences to answer the question set. Part (a) required candidates to describe one experience of the speaker. Candidates generally discussed a childhood experience that impacted the speaker. A few candidates chose poems that did not adequately treat with childhood experiences and offered weak responses. Part (b) asked candidates to discuss the impact of the experience identified in Part (a) and, Part (c) asked candidates to discuss one device used to portray childhood experiences. Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of oppression. This part of the question continues to pose a challenge to candidates. Some candidates mentioned but did not discuss the use of the devices.

The mean for this question was 14.18 out of a total of 35.

Prose Fiction

Frangipani House

Question 7

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels.

Frangipani House was the least popular text used for prose. More candidates responded to the question, which looked at the tension between the elderly and the young. Part (a) asked for a description of the relationship between Mama King and her daughters. Acceptable responses for this part included *the idea that the relationship was strained/not a good one and an explanation for the tension.* Part (b) asked for a discussion of one issue the author highlights about the way in which children treat their aging parents. Acceptable responses included a discussion of *neglect of the elderly and the substitution of hospices for love and care by families*. For Part (c), candidates were asked to discuss one technique the author uses to portray the relationship between the elderly and the young. Most candidates attempted to discuss the use of flashbacks but the responses tended to be vague and very superficial. Candidates who attempted this question did not do very well.

The mean for this question was 4.09 out of a total of 35.

Question 8

This question asked for a discussion of the treatment of the elderly at the hospice. Part (a) asked for a description of the treatment of the occupants at the hospice. Part (b) asked for a discussion of how Mama King's stay at Frangipani House affects her, and Part (c) asked for an examination of how the writer uses the house to symbolically portray the theme of appearance versus reality. Candidates responded to Parts (a) and (b) fairly well but did not do as well for Part (c). Acceptable responses for Part (c) included a discussion on *the hospice being more like a prison than a refuge or place of comfort and the deception that takes place there*. Generally, responses for this question were better than those for Question 7.
The mean for this question was 14.91 out of a total of 35.

Things Fall Apart

Question 9

This was the most popular prose question. It focused on Okonkwo's obsession with masculinity. Part (a) asked candidates to describe two of Okonkwo's perceptions of masculinity. Acceptable responses included *man as a provider, warrior and title-holder.* Part (b) required a discussion of the impact of one of Okonkwo's perceptions of masculinity on his community. Part (c) required candidates to examine Achebe's use of one technique used to present masculinity in the novel. Generally, candidates found Part (c) challenging, as they were unable to identify an appropriate technique.

Acceptable responses for this part of the question should have focused on techniques such as the *use of figurative language, symbolism and contrast.*

The mean for this question was 16.53 out of a total of 35.

Question 10

Candidates were asked to respond to the presentation of fear in the novel. Part (a) asked for a description of the kind of fear experienced by one individual and the Igbo community. Acceptable responses included *fear of failure or weakness and fear of punishment from the gods*. Part (b) required a discussion of the impact of fear on one individual or the community. Many candidates retold the plot instead of discussing the impact of fear. Part (c) asked candidates to examine Achebe's use of either foreshadowing or dialogue to heighten the significance of fear in the novel. This posed a challenge for candidates, as they were unable to make the link between the techniques and the theme of fear.

The mean for this question was 15.64 out of a total of 35.

Short Story

Question 11

The short story section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were "Emma" and "The Man of the House." This question asked candidates to explore the child narrators' observations and impressions of the adult world. Part (a) required candidates to describe what happens in the novel, and Part (b) asked for a discussion of one lesson learnt by each child about the adult world. Candidates did fairly well on these parts of the question. Part (c) asked candidates to examine one technique used by each writer to present the adult world as seen through the eyes of a child. Part (c) was not handled well as candidates rarely identified a technique used to explore the adult world. Acceptable responses included *symbolism, irony and humour*.

The mean for this question was 13.15 out of a total of 35.

Question 12

In this question, candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list, which focus on journeys. In Part (a), candidates were asked to describe the form the journey takes and the reasons for undertaking it; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the outcome of the journey on the protagonist and one other individual, and Part (c) asked candidates to examine how the writer uses setting to show the changes that result from the journey. Candidates concentrated on who took the journey and where it ended but did not identify the form the journey takes. However, the responses

for Part (b) tended to be vague and did not focus on the outcome of the journey on either the protagonist or an individual. Candidates were unable to effectively discuss how setting is used in the stories. Acceptable responses included *setting as backdrop, atmosphere, and as a metaphor for the journey / characters*.

The mean for this question was 12.33 out of a total of 35.

Observations and Recommendations

Although we commend teachers for their hard work, we are encouraging them to pay more attention to the areas that usually form the Part (c) of the questions: knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques; the ability to discuss and comment on the effectiveness of techniques and devices. We urge teachers/instructors to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

- Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.

- Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.

- The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.

- Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.

- Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as *dramatic function* and *writer's craft*. Candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.

- Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance).

- Students should know the skills required when they are asked to *define, discuss, trace, describe, determine, comment on,* or *show*. Teachers must prepare students by dedicating time to closely examining the nature of the response expected by each of these and other key words used in questions.

- While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and/or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to *describe, explain* and *analyse* with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.

- Teachers must remind students of the potential of literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgements and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts.