

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION  
JANUARY 2007**

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

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**GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**JANUARY 2007**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The January 2007 examination in Social Studies consisted of four papers:

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Paper 02 – Structured and Extended Essay

Paper 032 – Alternative to the School-Based Assessment

Social Studies has become very attractive to private candidates. This year the number of candidates who entered for Social Studies was 2348. The number who wrote the examination was 2016. The overall performance of the candidates in the examinations was consistent with January 2007.

The performance of some candidates in some questions at the General Proficiency level was excellent. This is probably due to desirable study habits, the choice of questions by candidates and the availability of tuition in private institutions.

Some questions on the core of the syllabus remain attractive, while others on Government and regional organisations continue to be unpopular. In Section C, the Options, the questions on Tourism were popular.

The responses at the General Proficiency continue to be lengthy. Some candidates offered responses that were substantial, thought provoking, well constructed and appropriate. Candidates who did not have a clear grasp of the terms and concepts in the syllabus and who were ill prepared did not respond satisfactorily to the questions.

In some questions in Section A, the candidates' performance was excellent. Some candidates obtained full scores. The Knowledge component in most questions was well known and at the required standard. The overall performance in some questions in the Interpretation profile was satisfactory.

The major problem in the Interpretation profile continues to be inadequate explanations and the lack of development of the responses by candidates despite the fact that every section in the examination reminds candidates to develop responses fully. The Application component in each question asked candidates to justify why the suggested measure, strategy or action was appropriate or would be successful. The responses to this part were interesting.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **Paper 01 – Multiple Choice**

Paper 1, the Multiple Choice Paper examined the core of the syllabus assessing both the Knowledge and Interpretation profiles. It consisted of 60 items; 24 on Individual Interaction and 36 on Development and Use of Resources. The reliability of this paper was very good. There were a variety of items testing various levels of difficulty. This paper provided adequate syllabus coverage, and an acceptable range of equating items. The mean score compared favourably with last year's.

### **Paper 02 – Structured and Extended Essays**

#### **Section A: Individual Interaction**

This section required candidates to respond to two out of the three structured questions set. Some responses were outstanding while others lacked substance and were less than satisfactory. Question 1 was the most popular followed by Question 2. Question 3 was the least popular in this section.

#### Question 1

This question was very popular. It focussed on non-legal unions, family types and the consequences individuals face in the non-legal unions. Many candidates responded with good competence to the demands of the question. The Knowledge part asked candidates to identify types of non-legal unions, family types found in the Caribbean and the problems children face in non-legal unions. Many candidates obtained full scores for this component. Some candidates who were not prepared offered incorrect responses such as trade unions and credit unions. The 'neglect of fatherhood,' 'poor parental guidance' and 'lack of communication' were described as problems children face.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to give reasons for the existence of non-legal union in the Caribbean. Responses ranged from choice of relationship by individuals, to economic constraints that prevent elaborate celebration, inadequate commitment and love and the lack of sanction by the state.

The Application part asked for strategies that would help young people to resist non-legal unions. The popular strategies offered by candidates were based on education. These included school interventions, seminars and workshops, films and documentaries on the social problems. Many candidates used the development of awareness in young people to justify the strategy suggested. Overall performance of candidates on this question was quite good.

### Question 2

This question was based on institutions in society and was quite popular. The Knowledge part asked candidates to state the characteristics of an institution and to describe its functions. Most candidates who attempted this question had some awareness of the characteristics and functions of institutions. Correct responses such as serving community needs, leadership roles and value systems were offered. Some candidates also indicated 'rules and regulations' for members and the provision of 'adequate information' to members as characteristics. Functions offered were based on socialization, preparation of the workforce and the acquisition of knowledge.

The Interpretation component asked candidates to give reasons for institutions in society. Most of the responses given by candidates focused on the societal needs, environmental and technological changes and keeping 'up to date' with universal developments. Generally candidates gave satisfactory responses to this part of the question.

For the Application part candidates were required to suggest ways to improve the education system in the country and to justify the way that was suggested. The common response to this part was 'training and providing more facilities' for teachers and students. The justification generally was based on making the system more effective and efficient. Generally, the responses to this question were satisfactory.

### Question 3

This question was the least popular in Section A of the paper. It focused on conflict and cooperation in groups usually found in schools and communities. The Knowledge part was based on the characteristics of a Boy Scout Group and factors that cause conflict among school clubs. Some candidates were able to do this part of the question correctly. However their responses appeared to be reflections of experiential learning. Responses such as Boy scouts 'help in time of disasters', 'instil discipline among members' and 'help people' were common.

The Interpretation part of the question required differences between a debating club and a photography club as well as reasons for different clubs in schools. In most instances candidates offered responses that were vague and unclear. Generally, clubs were regarded as 'providing fun activities for members.' Some candidates gave responses based on developing social and communication skills and talents.

The Application part asked for strategies that would encourage cooperation among various clubs and to state why the strategy would be successful. There were a variety of responses. Common responses were based on projects, field trips, bazaars and seminars. Generally, these responses lacked development. The justification statements were vague and contained statements on 'encouraging cooperation among the groups' rather than stating how the strategy would result in cooperation. Overall, the candidates' performance on this question was fair.

## **Section B: Development and Use of Resources**

This section is divided into two parts. Part I contained two structured questions while Part II consisted of two extended essays. Candidates were required to attempt one question from each part of this section.

### **Part I – Structured Questions**

#### Question 4

This question was popular. It focused on the development of physical resources, the benefits, the management of pollution levels and strategies to monitor such levels. The Knowledge part was well done. Candidates were able to define the term ‘physical resource’ and give examples of these resources. Examples offered were land, water and minerals. Most of the benefits stated by candidates were based on employment and earning foreign exchange through exports.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why the management of pollution levels is important. Candidates’ responses focused on health issues such as safe potable water, protection of plant and animal life and environmental issues such as global warming. Some candidates stated that the citizenry would become ‘sick and unhealthy’ and would be unproductive. The responses to this part of the question were satisfactory.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest to an environmental agency ways to monitor pollution levels and to state why the ways would be effective. Most of the suggestions focused on ‘taking samples of water’ and ‘using technology to obtain information on pollution levels’. The justification statement was based on the availability of testing procedures and reliable technology. Overall the performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory.

#### Question 5

The focus of this question was on regional cooperation. Many candidates did not respond to it well. The knowledge part of the question asked candidates to state the meaning of multilateral agreement and Caribbean Integration. Many candidates could not respond satisfactorily to this part. Most of the responses were based on ‘agreements between people’ rather than among countries. Caribbean integration was seen as simply “coming together”. However, candidates were able to state some of the factors that facilitate regional cooperation. Factors such as trade, disasters, and sports were common.

The Interpretation part of the question was not well done. Few candidates gave acceptable responses. The responses were wide and seldom focused on the main issue, ‘health.’ The popular response was ‘one voice.’ Candidates who were prepared offered responses based on cost reduction of ‘operations’ and the availability of more trained health providers for the region.

The Application part focused on Caribbean Integration. Candidates were asked to suggest ways the CARICOM Secretariat may inform citizens about the importance of integration. Many candidates suggested seminars and the use of radio and television programmes to educate the citizenry. The justification statement was generally based on coverage and reach. Overall this question was poorly done.

## Part II – Extended essays

### Question 6

This question was popular. It focused on unemployment. Candidates were required to define ‘unemployment’ and ‘underemployment’ and to describe types of unemployment. Many candidates defined unemployment as ‘persons not in a job,’ ‘the unwillingness to work but cannot find jobs.’ Underemployment was generally defined as ‘persons with all the skills for a better position but works in a minor position.’ Most of the definitions contained examples to support the definitions offered. The main types of unemployment given by candidates were seasonal and normal.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to explain factors that were responsible for unemployment. Many of the candidates’ responses to this part were based on lack of educational and academic qualifications, the lack of opportunities in rural areas and the use of cheap migrant labour. Few candidates regarded population growth and industrialization and technology as factors responsible for unemployment. Most of the responses were not well developed.

The Application part asked for measures to reduce unemployment and for a justification statement on the effectiveness of the measure. A common measure suggested was based on government’s intervention in providing educational programmes for students and skills training for workers. Other good suggestions such as expanding the service sector, improving the infrastructure and establishing partnership with the private sector to create jobs were rare. Generally, the performance on this question was fair

### Question 7

This question focused on ‘the Importance of Health care in the Caribbean’ and was not a popular choice. The Knowledge part asked candidates to identify healthy practices and to state problems citizen face in obtaining quality health care in the region. Many candidates focused on ‘safe sex’, ‘proper nutrition’ and ‘personal hygiene’. The problems faced by citizens were ‘poverty and financial difficulties’, ‘insufficient quality drugs’ and ‘substandard care offered by some health institutions’.

The Interpretation part of the question asked for reasons why a good health care system would benefit a country. Many of the candidates offered reasons based on a ‘strong labour force, high productivity levels, affordability of services and less government spending on sending citizens away for treatment’. Most of these responses, however, were not well developed.

The Application part asked for ways citizens may monitor their health. Many suggestions focused on regular visits to the doctor to check blood pressure and sugar levels. Diagnostic testing and x-rays were also common responses. Justification statements were based on the saying, ‘your health is your wealth’ but were not fully developed. Generally the performance of candidates on this question was fair

## Section C – Options

There were three options in this section. Each option had two questions. Candidates were required to respond to one question in this section.

## Consumer Affairs

### Question 8

This question was based on 'The Caribbean Food Import Bill.' Not many candidates responded to this question. The Knowledge part asked candidates to identify countries from which food is imported to the Caribbean and to state the effects of foreign products on the local economy. Most of the candidates were able to correctly identify countries such as Canada, USA and England. Some candidates who were unfamiliar with countries in the Caribbean offered Guyana as an answer. The 'loss of income' from the region was the popular response to the final part of the knowledge component. Other correct responses such as, the preference for foreign goods and services, and loss of jobs, were rare.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to give reasons why the region is not self sufficient in the production of locally grown food. Correct responses such as, unavailability of land, production cost, natural disasters, traditional farming practices and the failure of governments to support agriculture, were provided by some candidates. However, these responses lacked development.

The Application part asked for strategies to encourage the private sector in agriculture. Some candidates suggested 'soft loans,' 'reduced taxes and free lands'. Other incentives such as reliable local and foreign markets and storage facilities were offered. The responses, however, were not developed, and the statements to say why the suggested strategy would succeed were not very convincing. They were vague and contained references to the benefits to consumers. The candidates' performance on this question was fair.

### Question 9

This was not a popular question. It was set on 'devaluation.' Candidates in an essay format had to state the effects of devaluation on consumers for the Knowledge component. Some candidates' responses focused on 'paying more for less,' and doing without some commodities. Some emphasized loss of jobs and the inability of consumers to purchase goods and services. A few candidates stressed fewer choices in the market place and inferior quality.

The Interpretation part of the question asked for reasons why governments may devalue its currency. Responses such as 'directives from the IMF,' and 'poor economic management' by the authorities were advanced. A few candidates focused on balance of payments problems of the country. However, the common response was to encourage the purchase of locally produced commodities.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest a measure consumers may take to reduce the effects of devaluation and to write a statement to justify the measure suggested. Many candidates focused on 'budgeting,' 'to avoid wasting food' and 'to grow some food in their backyards'. The justification statement emphasized saving money by using these measures. Generally, the performance of the candidates on this question was unsatisfactory.

## Communication

### Question 10

This question focused on ‘Our Cultural Heritage.’ The Knowledge part asked candidates to define ‘cultural heritage,’ give examples of cultural art forms and to state ways in which art forms have been transmitted. Candidates were able to capture the definition of cultural heritage by using examples. Most definitions referred to values and beliefs passed on by parents and grandparents. Examples of art forms ranged from poetry to drama to drumming; however, many candidates omitted responses on the ways in which these art forms are transmitted.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to give explanations for the changes to cultural art forms in the region. Many of the responses focused on the way the art forms are adapted for the electronic media and the busy life of parents, as explanations. A small number of candidates mentioned the attitude of the younger generation to things traditional as old-fashioned.

The Application part asked for activities that school principals may organise to ensure that cultural heritage is passed on to students. Some candidates suggested including art forms such as drama in the curriculum and to organise clubs and cultural groups to showcase art forms. The justification statement was based on the relief students would experience from new activities in the school environment. The performance of candidates on this question was fair.

### Question 11

This question required candidates to write an essay on ‘Artistic and Creative work in the Caribbean’. Many candidates did not attempt this question. For the knowledge part candidates were required to name different types of artistic works recognized by society and to identify ways by which these works are protected from illegal use. Some candidates’ responses contained references to dance and music, calypso, paintings and sculpture as artistic works. For protection candidates named copyright laws. Other correct responses such as patents and licences were rare.

For the Interpretation part candidates were asked to explain ways artistes benefit from the production of their work. The main response to this part was based on financial gains to the artistes. Other responses such as ‘a sense of accomplishment’ and a ‘form of property’ were not seen in most responses. This part of the question was not done well.

For the Application part candidates were required to suggest actions artistes may take to educate the public on the protection of creative work. Candidates’ responses contained actions such as advertisement in the media and education programmes in the school system through visits by artistes. The overall performance of the candidates on this question was fair

## **Tourism**

### Question 12

This question asked candidates to write an essay on 'Tourism and the Caribbean Economy'. For the Knowledge part candidates were required to state ways tourism benefits the economy of Caribbean states. Popular responses were based on earning foreign exchange and job creation and employment opportunities. However, these responses were not fully developed to earn full marks.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to explain how developments in tourism have negatively affected CARICOM states. Some candidates focused on the use of 'too much land space' and 'the removal of the natural vegetation for hotels'. Some candidates referred to the introduction of diseases, infections and undesirable foreign influences to the region. Other correct responses such as pressure on the local services to cater for tourists' needs and increases in real estate prices were rare.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest strategies that may provide accommodation for tourists during the peak season. A common strategy suggested by the candidates focused on offers of bed and breakfast facilities by the citizens to the tourism boards. The supporting statement for this strategy was based on deepening the relationship between tourists and citizens. However, in many instances this statement was not fully developed. The overall performance on this question was fair.

### Question 13

Of the two questions in this option, this question was more popular. Candidates were required to write an article on 'Tourism in the Caribbean.' The Knowledge part required candidates to identify countries from which tourists visit the Caribbean and to describe factors other than climate that influence the development of tourism in the supply countries. Countries such as Germany, USA and Canada were identified. Certain responses by the candidates to the second part were popular. These were based on the ease of travelling, affordable vacations and good marketing strategies.

For the Interpretation part candidates were asked to explain constraints to the development of tourism in the host country. Many candidates referred to crime and criminal activities, lack of funding to develop adequate infrastructure and a high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. However these points were not well developed.

The Application part asked for activities that may bring citizens and tourists together to improve their relationship and for a statement to indicate why the suggested activity would be effective. Activities such as jazz festivals, carnival celebrations, cultural and heritage activities and campaigns to educate citizens on the importance of establishing good relationships were given. The effectiveness of the activity was not clear in many instances. Most responses were inadequate and simply referred to 'better understanding' between the groups. The overall performance on this question was fair.

### **Paper 032: Alternative to the SBA**

This paper caters for private candidates. It tests candidates' familiarity, knowledge, understanding and application of basic research skills and methodologies. In this paper candidates were asked to choose one of the topics provided and to respond to the questions that followed. These questions tested the candidates' knowledge on writing research questions, data gathering protocols, selecting a sample, displaying data, explaining data, stating findings and making recommendations. A case study was presented and research type questions were asked on it.

Many candidates experienced difficulty in formulating research questions on the topic. They chose to identify and validate data-gathering instruments and to describe the random sampling process. Many candidates simply wrote a question as a response while others referred to television and videos as data-gathering instruments.

Transferring of quantitative data accurately from the case study to a table (Question 5) and calculating the percentages also presented some difficulty. This resulted in weak conclusions and recommendations. Candidates who prepared themselves for this paper did well. Overall the performance on this paper was fairly comparable to that of 2006.

#### **Suggestion to Teachers and Private Candidates**

Social Studies is a popular subject at CSEC level. The questions in all papers set for the examination have been strengthened in terms of syllabus objectives, syllabus content, formatting, and attractiveness. A common sense approach and life experiences are therefore remove insufficient to respond to the demands of the questions. Candidates entering for this examination must read the textbooks and other resource material in their preparation.

The following are useful reminders for teachers and candidates.

1. Candidates must read all instructions on the question papers carefully and must follow these instructions.
2. Teachers should advise candidates that answers are strengthened by reading textual material on the subject.
3. Candidates should respond to the questions in the Options for which they have been prepared.
4. Candidates should not answer more questions than is necessary and should recognise that all the parts of a question are important.