

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
JANUARY 2008**

SOCIAL STUDIES

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SOCIAL STUDIES

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JANUARY 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

The January 2008 Social Studies examination offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council was sat primarily by private candidates. This examination consisted of three papers: Paper 01, Multiple Choice items, Paper 02, structured questions and extended essays and Paper 3/2, Alternative to School Based Assessment. This year 1930 candidates sat the examinations and the overall performance was consistent with that of January 2007.

Some questions in Paper 02 particularly in the core section of the syllabus, continue to be popular, while the popularity of the questions in Section C varied among the three options.

Some of the responses to the questions in Paper 02 continued to be lengthy, but demonstrated a lack of in depth knowledge and understanding of key concepts defined in the syllabus. Some candidates' responses were well expressed and thought provoking and showed their ability to write clearly and concisely in relation to the demands of the questions.

In most questions in Paper 02, the responses to the Knowledge and Application components were fairly good but the Interpretation profile presented some challenges to the candidates. Many candidates offered responses that lack development despite the advice provided by the rubric of the paper. Candidates who prepared themselves for the examinations wrote responses that reflected diligence and application to their study.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper consisted of 60 multiple choice items and examined the core of the syllabus in the Knowledge and Interpretation profiles only. The items on the paper tested various levels of difficulty and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The mean score of 38.57 compared favourably with that of 2007.

Paper 02 – Structured Questions and Extended Essays

In this paper there were ten questions, three on Section A, four in Section B and three on Section C. Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions.

Section A: Individual Interaction

Question 1

This was a popular question. It tested the candidates' knowledge and understanding of social issues such as incest and domestic violence. Many candidates were able to define these terms accurately. They were also aware of other social issues such as drug abuse, separation of parents, child labour, teenage pregnancy and crime and indiscipline.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to offer reasons for incest and domestic violence. For incest, popular responses focused on male temptation caused by inadequate supervision of females in the home and dissension between fathers and mothers. For domestic violence, reasons were based on financial difficulties, uncontrolled stress, insecurity of fathers, substance abuse and poverty.

For the Application part, candidates were required to suggest measures to reduce poverty and to write a statement to support the suggested measures. Acceptable suggestions ranged from training people to growing food, building support institutions to assist in the provision of basic needs and making education available to all. Justification statements were based mainly on economic benefits to the country. On the whole the overall performance in this question was satisfactory.

Question 2

This question focused on the changing roles of men and women in the Caribbean society. The Knowledge part asked candidates to state traditional roles of men and of women and then to state the factors responsible for the changing roles of family members. Most of the candidates were able to identify the traditional role of providing the financial needs of the family or breadwinner for men, and the preparation of meals and looking after the family for women. Factors responsible for changing roles focused mainly on the independence of women, educational and employment opportunities for women, and the need to have greater earning power.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to explain ways the changing role of women have affected the present day Caribbean family. Most candidates gave positive and negative effects. On the positive side, candidates indicated that “more money was coming to the home” to satisfy needs and wants. On the negative side, the responses were mainly based on the lack of love and affection for the children. Some candidates mentioned conflict resulting in divorce, and children engaging in undisciplined behaviour.

The Application part of the question asked for ways young people may improve relationships in family and to state why the suggestions would be successful. Most responses focused on communication, dialogue and discussion. Some mentioned arranging recreation and “picnic” days for the family and assisting in household chores. The justification statement was based on the fact that such activities help to strengthen family bonds. This was a popular question and the overall performance was satisfactory.

Question 3

This question was the least popular in this section. It focused on democracy, types of democratic governments in the region, arms of government and the reasons for electing a government. The Knowledge part was poorly done. Many candidates did not know the types of democratic government in the region. Responses such as first-past-the-post and proportional representation were common. Few candidates gave monarchy and republic as acceptable responses.

The Interpretation part was well done. Candidates offered several correct and plausible responses as reasons why citizens elect a government. Some of these responses focused on making of laws for the governance of the country, the need for a new government because the term of office of the last has ended, the need to provide security for citizens, and to have a group of persons to act on behalf of the people. This part of the question was well done.

The Application part asked for actions youth leaders may take to influence the decisions of government. Most candidates suggested that youth leaders may organize protests, demonstrations and meetings to highlight and to bring their concerns to government. The success of such actions was based on government's eagerness to address problems that are brought into the public domain by the electronic media. Generally this question was not well done.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

This section is divided into two parts. Part I consists of two structured questions and Part II, two extended essays. Candidates were required to answer one question from each part of this section.

Part I

Question 4

This question focused on migration and citizens of the CARICOM. It was a very popular question. The Knowledge part asked candidates to define migration, name CARICOM countries from which people have migrated and to list factors that have influenced Caribbean people to migrate. Candidates handled this part quite well. Most responses indicated "the movement of people from one place to another to live." Candidates were also able to name Guyana, Montserrat, and Haiti as CARICOM countries from which people have recently migrated. The main factors listed were health, employment and education opportunities. A few candidates mentioned increases in criminal activities.

The Interpretation part asked candidates to explain why the migration of skilled people would negatively affect the region. The main response related to the 'brain drain' and its effect on the economy, and the decline in the capacity of the labour force. A few candidates accepted the necessity of 'hiring foreign labour' to do the jobs that required special expertise. However, this point was not well developed.

The Application part asked for strategies to reduce migration from less developed to more developed CARICOM countries and for a statement of why governments should accept this strategy. Strategies suggested related to job creation and improvements in infrastructure and services to stem migration. Response to the justification part was weak. A few candidates hinted that such developments would cause citizens to develop a feeling of pride and so "put the country on the map". On the whole, the candidates' performance in this question was satisfactory.

Question 5

This question was unpopular. It tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of regional cooperation. The knowledge part required candidates to state the meaning of the term 'regional cooperation' and to describe factors that encourage regional cooperation among Caribbean countries. Many candidates who attempted this question stated that regional cooperation meant "the coming together of countries to assist each other" and were appropriately rewarded. Most candidates could not describe factors that encourage regional cooperation. Some responses hinted at family ties in the region and the availability of resources. Acceptable responses such as similar historical and cultural background and the threat of natural disasters were few.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why it may be difficult for Caribbean countries to cooperate. Good reasons based on “insufficient funds available in the region,” “different resources” and petty jealousies were common. However, these reasons were not fully developed.

The Application part asked for measures that Caribbean leaders may take to encourage regional cooperation and to state why the suggested measures would succeed. Some of the measures suggested mentioned laws and regulations and more regional trade among member states. This part of the question was poorly done. The few candidates who offered statements to support their measures did not do so in any convincing way. Generally the candidates’ performance in this question was less than satisfactory.

Part II – Extended essays

Question 6

This question was unpopular. It focused on economic cooperation. The Knowledge part asked candidates to define economic cooperation, identify regional organizations that promote economic cooperation and to name member countries of the organizations identified. Some candidates defined economic integration as “coming together of two or more countries for trade and other purposes”. Most candidates knew the regional organizations and had some notion of the countries that make up the membership.

The Interpretation part asked for explanations of how Caribbean manufacturers would benefit from economic cooperation. Most of the responses to this part focused on cheaper goods and services and cost reduction. These responses were not clearly developed and in most instances were vague.

The Application part asked for actions government may take to strengthen economic cooperation and a statement of why the suggested action would be successful. The best of the responses to this part suggested some form of persuasion to develop loyalty to the region.

More acceptable actions such as holding workshops and trade fairs were few. Many candidates did not justify the suggested action. The candidates’ performance in this question was fairly satisfactory.

Question 7

This was a very popular question. It focused on employment, unemployment and underemployment. For the Knowledge part, candidates were required to define employment and underemployment and to describe two types of unemployment. Employment was defined by many candidates as having a job and receiving a salary while underemployment was defined as a situation in which a person is over qualified for the job he or she holds. The types of unemployment described by most candidates were seasonal, casual and technical.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why some young people in the Caribbean are unable to find jobs in their country. Most of the responses were based on insufficient qualifications, lack of work experience and lack of specific skills and training. Many candidates answered this part quite well. Some, however, did not develop their response fully and clearly and could not receive the full marks.

The Application part asked for ways employers may prepare young people for employment. Many candidates suggested training programmes but did not elaborate on the details of such programmes. Responses such as apprenticeship training and holiday jobs for young people were not forthcoming. A few candidates suggested work seminars and on the job training. The justification statement was based on the assumption that employers would have more productive employees. Generally the performance of the candidates in this question was satisfactory.

Section C – Options

There were three options in this section. One question was set on each of the options. Candidates were required to answer only one of these questions. Some questions were more popular than others. Question 10 was quite popular.

Consumer Affairs

Question 8

This question focused on the products of modern technology that commercial banks have made available to consumers to transact business. For the Knowledge part, candidates were required to identify these products and to state the types of business for which they are used. In addition candidates were required to describe benefits of using these products.

Many candidates did this part quite well. Correct responses such as credit and debit cards, tele-banking and ATM machines were offered as products. Several benefits were described. These included making deposits and withdrawals, paying utility bills and buying goods and services using the bank cards at ATM machines.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why some consumers may be unwilling to use these products. Many candidates did this part quite well. Good responses based on suspicion and fear of losing funds, security and safety in relation to the location of some of the ATM machines and criminal activities that are possible were common.

The Application part asked candidates for strategies commercial banks may use to encourage consumers to use these products and to state why the strategy suggested would be successful. Several responses to this part suggested promotions, by sending out flyers and leaflets, and seminars for consumers especially the elderly. However, these and other correct responses were not fully developed or clearly justified. Many justification statements were vague. Overall the candidates' performance was only satisfactory.

Communication

Question 9

This question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the functions of the mass media in the Caribbean. For the knowledge part candidates were required to define 'mass media', state its functions and describe ways in which Caribbean governments regulate the mass media. The majority of candidates who attempted this question were unable to define mass media. Responses contained expressions such as sources of communication in the Caribbean, all communication devices used and the ways by which information is transmitted. Functions such as "to provide information and entertainment" were well known. The granting of licenses and censorship were alluded to by candidates as the ways by which governments regulate the mass media.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why governments regulate the mass media. Many candidates did not respond correctly to this part of the question. Several responses mentioned “misrepresentation of information” and to “balance information”. Correct responses such as to reduce libel and slander, and to maintain quality of service were few. Generally the responses offered by many candidates lacked clarity and development.

The Application part asked for strategies to improve the services provided by the mass media and to write statements in support of the strategies suggested. The strategy suggested by many candidates hinted at the quality of reception and programmes. These suggestions were unclear and not well developed. Support statements were vague and in several instances were not provided. Overall the candidates’ performance in this question was satisfactory.

Tourism

Question 10

This question required candidates to write a newspaper article on the topic, “Tourism is about people.” For the knowledge part candidates were asked to define the term ‘tourist’, name types of tourists and describe organized cultural activities that attract tourists to the region. Many candidates were able to define the term ‘tourist’ and to name the types of tourists correctly. Some of the organized activities described were mainly cultural and religious in nature. Examples and descriptions provided by candidates focused on jazz festivals, carnival, music festivals, special dance performances and steel pan music organized by tourism officials. This part was well known by most candidates.

The Interpretation part asked for reasons why residents react negatively to the presence of tourists in the Caribbean. Most of the reasons focused on perceptions about race, religion and attire of tourists. Other responses referred to “special treatment for tourists by officials” and to the spending behaviour of tourists. Some of the candidates scored well in this part.

The performance of most candidates in the Application part was less than satisfactory. The candidates were asked to suggest strategies that may improve relationships between residents and tourists and to state why government should accept their suggested strategies. Candidates who performed well in this part suggested strategies such as seminars for residents, and workshops and courses for residents in foreign languages. There were other responses with acceptable strategies but they were not developed. The justification statement focused on the financial gains to governments. Overall the candidates’ performance in this question was satisfactory.

Paper 3/2 – Alternative to SBA

There are five questions on this paper and candidates are required to answer all the questions. The objective of this paper is to test candidates’ knowledge, understanding and application of basic research skills and methodologies. There are two research topics given, and candidates are required to select one of the topics and to respond to the questions that follow.

The questions in this paper tested candidates’ knowledge and understanding of problem statements, research questions, research instruments, sample selection, presenting, analyzing and interpreting data, and making conclusions and recommendations based on research findings. A case study was presented to assess the candidates’ ability to evaluate research data and research information and to draw appropriate conclusions and make recommendations.

In this year's examination candidates had some difficulty with research terms such as sample, research instruments, as well as constructing problem statements and research questions. Many candidates offered acceptable recommendations consistent with the findings of the researchers in the case study. Appropriate sources of data were identified. Overall the candidates' performance in this paper was fairly satisfactory.

Suggestions

Candidates writing this examination especially Paper 3/2, are reminded that a good understanding of the terms and concepts stated in the syllabus is necessary to satisfy the demands of this paper. Private schools and teachers who deliver the syllabus in these institutions, are also advised to consult the syllabus for guidance.

There is an abundance of resource material, textbooks and Past Papers available to candidates who enter for the Social Studies examinations. The following should be noted:

1. Candidates should be clear on their choice of questions in each section of Paper 02.
2. All parts of a question should be attempted and clearly identified.
3. All instructions on the question paper should be followed.
4. The syllabus provides guidance both to teachers and candidates and should be consulted.