

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2009

HOME ECONOMICS: MANAGEMENT

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GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Examinations Council Administered its 28th examination of the Caribbean Secondary Certificate of Home Economics in May 2009. The examination consisted of three components: Paper 01 – Multiple Choice, Paper 02 – Structured Essays and Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment.

Paper 01- Multiple Choice

Candidate performance improved this year over performance in 2008. However, candidates had difficulties with questions that assessed the following topics:

- Values and goals
- Multi-mix for toddlers
- Aim of work simplification
- Methods of purifying water in the home
- Suitable material for a table top
- Identifying a place setting.

Paper 02 - Structured Essay Questions

This paper consisted of two parts, Part A and Part B. Part A comprised three compulsory questions while Part B comprised four questions from which candidates were required to choose two. Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions. Each question was awarded a total of 16 marks, six marks for the Knowledge Profile and 10 marks for the Use of Knowledge Profile. The mean mark was 42 per cent, the maximum possible mark was 80 and the marks obtained ranged from 0 to 72.

Detailed Comments on Essay Questions – Paper 02

Question 1

This was a compulsory question, which focused on work and work ethics.

In Part (a), candidates were given the statement “Persons work to satisfy basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and health”, and were asked to state three other reasons why high school graduates may seek employment. In their responses, most candidates were able to state the reasons correctly. A few candidates wrote on the basic needs that were already stated in the question.

Some popular correct responses that candidates wrote were:

- to earn an income
- for further education
- to be educated
- to confer status
- to occupy time
- to help family members

Popular incorrect responses given by candidates included:

- to satisfy basic needs
- to buy a car
- for entertainment
- to buy clothes
- to pay medical bills
- to save money to buy a house

Part (b) of the question required candidates to give one example of how each of the following attitudes can be displayed by workers in an organization – (i) Responsibility, (ii) Safety consciousness and (iii) a Sense of commitment.

Most of the candidates responded competently to this part. Correct responses for responsibility included:

- doing their work on time
- being punctual
- carrying out tasks correctly/efficiently
- abiding by the rules and regulations of the organization.

Correct responses for safety consciousness included:

- wearing the proper protective gear
- following safety rules and guidelines
- being alert to danger
- unplugging appliances when not in use
- wiping up spills to prevent accidents.

Correct responses for a sense of commitment included:

- working extra/over time
- being on time and regular
- completing tasks on time
- being loyal to the organization
- carrying out tasks given to the best of your ability.

On the other hand, some candidates who did not respond correctly cited the attitudes as the examples, as shown below:

- Responsibility - being responsible
- Safety consciousness – doing the job safely
- Sense of commitment – being committed

Part (c) (i) asked candidates to outline three benefits that participating students would gain from a week-long career symposium. The majority of the candidates responded correctly.

Popular correct responses included:

- being able to plan and choose their own career
- being exposed to several career choices
- having an understanding of interview procedures and requirements
- having a knowledge of the jobs/careers available and their requirements and qualifications.

The common incorrect responses that candidates wrote were:

- gaining experience on the job
- developing skills
- earning a good salary
- obtaining knowledge and values
- getting jobs from the companies

Part (c) (ii) asked candidates to describe the next appropriate step that should be taken by a student who participated in the symposium and who is preparing to (a) seek a job and (b) pursue higher education. In this area the responses candidates gave were satisfactory. Some correct responses for (a), seek a job, included:

- prepare resume
- write application
- collect information on available jobs
- practise interview procedures
- prepare appropriate clothing to wear to work/interview.

The incorrect responses were:

- get a high paying job
- have a good work attitude
- work hard to get a good career
- have good money management.

Some correct responses for (b), pursuing higher education, included:

- apply to college and university
- determine career choices
- determine requirements
- seek funds to pay for college.

On the other hand, the incorrect responses included:

- send out recommendation and resume
- go for your goals and values
- be polite and disciplined
- have determination
- apply what was learned at the symposium.

It can be concluded that candidates' analytical skills and critical thinking ability are satisfactorily developed. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on interpretation; also candidates must learn to spell the common terms associated with the subject.

It is to be noted that although Question 1 was compulsory, a few candidates did not attempt it.

Question 2

This was a compulsory question that tested candidates' knowledge of budgeting. Part (a) tested candidates' ability to recall reasons why families should prepare budgets. Part (b) required candidates to list three guidelines for wise management of the family's income, other than making a budget. Part (c) tested candidates' understanding of the factors that the Jones family must consider when preparing their budget. Candidates were expected to also apply their understanding to the situation given and provide reasons for each factor outlined. Part (a) in particular was fairly well done, as most candidates were able to list at least two of the three reasons correctly on why families should prepare budgets.

Some of the incorrect responses included:

- to meet all the basic needs
- to maximize savings
- to put away money to spend on bill and food
- to save time and energy

Part (b) was generally poorly done. Most candidates gave reasons for preparing a budget instead of the guidelines. Even in instances when the reason was named in Part (a) it was repeated in this section. This indicated that some candidates did not know the guidelines for planning a budget for wise management of their income. Some popular but incorrect responses included:

- to save money/ open bank account
- to join partner or sou sou or box
- management processes
- make shopping list
- avoid buying brand names
- buy convenience food
- avoid credits and layaway

Part (c) required candidates to outline five factors that the family must consider when preparing the budget and to give one reason for considering each factor. This part was fairly well answered by a few of the candidates. However, some of the candidates did not apply the factors in the scenario given and misinterpreted the question. The weaker candidates might have been put off by the length of the scenario and this might have contributed to the candidates' misinterpretation. Some of the responses referred to general factors of budget planning rather than the Jones family's budget. Popular incorrect responses included:

- the size and age of the family
- the management processes
- the budget should be realistic
- fixed expense (only)
- flexible (only)

In Part (c), it was also noted that some candidates made up a budget instead of listing things to consider when preparing the budget. The weaker candidates found it difficult to organise their thoughts in this part of the question and therefore failed to earn high scores.

Overall, candidate performance on this question was barely satisfactory. Most of the candidates' scores fell between 6 and 11 out of a total score of sixteen.

Question 3

Question 3 was a compulsory question which tested candidates' knowledge of safety processes in the home and precautionary measures that could be taken during natural disasters.

Part (a) required candidates to identify two features of an electric steam iron that are intended to assist in the prevention of accidents during use and to state the usefulness of each feature identified.

Few candidates correctly identified the features of the electric steam iron. However, they were able to explain their usefulness. They listed features such as rubber handle, plastic, cord and knob, among others.

Some candidates misinterpreted the safety features and instead listed general rules or safety protection for using the electric iron. Responses included:

- Do not leave iron on when not in use.
- Do not plug in with wet hands.

Part (b) required candidates to list two steps for safely cleaning a microwave oven. Most candidates were able to list at least one step; unplug the microwave or turn off the microwave before cleaning. Some candidates had difficulty explaining the use of a damp cloth as part of the safe cleaning. They gave responses such as; wet dry cloth, wet rag, not so wet cloth and piece of cloth. Some made attempts to explain the removal of the plate from the microwave. They, however, responded with phrases such as the following: remove the glass, put glass in a safe place, remove all the parts and wash it.

In Part (c), candidates were required to outline three precautions that should be taken to prevent injury from fruit trees during a hurricane. Most candidates did not clearly outline the precautions, or provided unrealistic precautions, hence they generally scored half of the marks. Candidates' responses, for example, were:

- limb the tree
- pick ripe fruits
- cut down trees
- tie tree to a strong tree or house.

Candidates were expected to write:

- Trim overhanging branches that might break or fall on house, car, people.
- Reap fruits that could be missiles during the storm.
- Cut down old trees that could be blown over.
- Secure tree limbs by tying to prevent breakage.

A few candidates gave general hurricane tips such as listen to the radio and clean drains.

In Part (d), candidates were asked to outline measures that should be taken to ensure that water is safe for drinking after the passage of a hurricane. Most candidates gave generally correct responses rather than the specific information required for full marks.

For example:

- Boil the water. Candidates did not mention how long and how the water is to be stored.
- Add chlorine bleach to the water was another popular response. Candidates did not mention, however, the proportion of bleach to water.
- Very few candidates mentioned buying bottled water.

Question 4

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the terms, family life cycle and socialization. It also tested candidates' understanding of the principles of menu planning, relating these principles to planning meals for the family. It was a popular question and was fairly well done, as the majority of the scores ranged from 6 to 11 marks.

Part (a) required candidates to explain the term "family life cycle". Most candidates were able to state the stages of the family life cycle but only a few related these stages to the nuclear family. Some candidates confused the life cycle with the family life cycle and even gave the definition of the family as their explanation of the family life cycle. The correct response was "family life cycle is the term given to the stages through which a nuclear family passes from union to parenthood to contracting stages". Too many students were unable to spell the stages correctly. Some examples were "begging" for beginning (which was very frequent), "contrasting" and "constransding" for contracting and "expending" for expanding. Candidates also failed to write the stages in the correct order, some referred to the stages as a cycle.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to explain the term, "socialization", as a function of the family. Most related socialization as occurring only within the family. Some saw it as being a social event by just making friends and having a good time. However, candidates were required to write the correct explanation as "the process of teaching and learning social skills for living in society which involves raising members of the family to live harmoniously in communities".

Part (c) required the candidates to name two main nutrients that should be present in a toddler's diet. This was fairly well done. However, some candidates gave examples of foods from the different food groups as nutrients, as well as giving the function of the nutrients. They also listed calcium and iron, instead of naming two nutrients.

In Part (d) (i), candidates were required to plan a luncheon menu for Mr and Mrs Ron's family using the multi-mix principles. Overall, this section was well done with most

candidates gaining maximum marks. The responses, however, were varied and it was evident that some candidates did not fully understand how to write a menu. Some candidates merely listed a number of items/dishes.

Some wrote breakfast menus when they were specifically asked for a luncheon menu. Many candidates did not use the approved format in writing a menu, but wrote the dishes in any order. Very few made reference to the *multi-mix* principle, while several identified sandwiches as appropriate for a luncheon menu.

Part (d) (ii) required the candidates to write guidelines that should be followed when serving the food identified in the menu for the toddler. They were also required to write one reason for each guideline. Some candidates did not relate the guideline to the serving of the meal but rather to the preparation of the meal, for example, washing hands before preparing meal and wearing protective clothing were given as guidelines. Some candidates also related the guidelines to the comfort of the toddler while eating the served dishes. Reference was also made to the size of the food and that it should be cut in small pieces so that the baby can eat with the hand. Others wrote that the toddlers should be supervised when eating, and that meal time should be made pleasant. It was also noted that sufficient juice should be given to prevent choking. Some candidates did not attempt this part at all. However, there were candidates who gave correct guidelines but did not give any reasons for the stated guidelines.

Question 5

Question 5 was an optional question and tested candidates' knowledge of the management process referred to as "controlling". It was a fairly popular choice.

Part (a) required candidates to explain the management process referred to as "controlling". Most candidates did not give a full explanation of the management process of controlling. Others interpreted controlling as having authority or power over someone or something.

Part (b) required candidates to outline two reasons a family may need to practise "controlling" when implementing a plan. This part of the question was poorly done. The majority of candidates failed to outline the reasons why a family may need to practise controlling when implementing a plan and instead gave ways of controlling. The word "implementing" in the question was frequently misinterpreted. Some candidates responded to it as one of the management processes.

Part (c) presented a scenario about Mr Hutton's illness and his resulting inability to pay for his son's college education.

Parts (c) (i), (c) (ii) and (c) (iv) were based on the given scenario and were generally well done.

Part (c) (i) required candidates to identify three clear goals of the Hutton family. This part of the question was well done. The majority of candidates were able to identify these goals from the scenario given.

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to state two benefits that the family would gain as a result of achieving their goals. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the benefits from the scenario.

Part (c) (iii) required candidates to state one need expressed in the scenario.

Most candidates were able to identify the needs, while a few gave responses that were not associated with the scenario, for example, “happiness” and “budgeting”.

Part (c) (iv) required candidates to list one benefit that Harry would gain from making the decision to take a temporary job, and many candidates responded correctly.

Question 6

Question 6 was the most popular of the optional questions and focused on population and housing.

In Part (a), candidates were to define the terms “population density” and “over-population”. Some candidates were able to write appropriate definitions for the terms to include:

Population density is the number of persons living

- within a specific geographical area
- in an area per square mile
- in an area per square kilometre.

Over-population

- More people living in an area than expected and the resources become scarce.
- Resources of a particular country are insufficient for the number of people that live in that particular country.
- This is where there are not enough resources for persons to benefit from because there are a lot of persons in an area and little resources.

Some incorrect responses were:

Population density:

- Number of people living in a country or region
- The head count of each person in a home every ten years
- The amount of people that born and die in a country or state.

Over-population:

- Is the amount of persons in a country or place at a 1000 rate
- Is having “overcrowd ness” in a given place at a given time
- Refers to an insufficient space in a country or state.

Additionally, it was noted that many candidates gave definitions for census, death rate, birth rate, population and also included the use of formulae in defining terms.

In defining overpopulation, many candidates stated that this is population matched against resources but did not clarify that resources would be less than the population.

Part (b) required candidates to outline one way in which overpopulation might affect a family’s choice of housing. Many candidates misinterpreted this section and focused more on the social problems resulting from overpopulation, for example, crime, violence and teenage pregnancy. Some correct responses given were lack of adequate space and privacy, insufficient housing, unaffordable houses, not able to acquire desired house in preferred location and size of houses too small to accommodate all of the family members.

Part (c) consisted of a table advertising two housing units for sale. Benjamin and Sally, two young lawyers, opted to purchase Unit B which had the following features:

- two-bedroom townhouse
- full bathroom, powder room and laundry room
- situated in a town in a quiet secure gated
- back patio suitable for entertaining
- parking for two cars
- common areas maintained for monthly maintenance fee.

Part (c) (i) required candidates to discuss three reasons for the couple selecting Unit B instead of Unit A. In responding to this part of the question, many candidates restated the facts verbatim without further discussion as to the reasons the couple selected Unit B. Some popular correct responses were back patio for entertaining friends and family, parking for two cars as both lawyers could be owners of separate cars, house situated in a quiet, secure, gated community which would be ideal, based on their profession. Candidates who just stated the facts without discussion did not score full marks. Some candidates made direct comparisons between the two units without giving satisfactory reasons for the choice made, while some candidates merely copied the question but did not answer it.

Overall, candidates performed satisfactorily on this part of the question.

Part (c) (ii) asked candidates to describe two ways in which the vendor could make Unit A more appealing to potential buyers. In responding to the question, candidates got sidetracked by the words “advertised” and “vendor”, hence many candidates focused their responses on advertising techniques and the ‘selling of fruits from the fruit trees’. Candidates did not give detailed descriptions of the ways in which Unit A could have been made more appealing to potential buyers. In answering the question, some candidates suggested these incorrect responses: Unit A may be sound-proof, move the house or the day care to another location, turn the area into a gated community, cut down fruit trees, pick fruits and sell at the school, and using the parking lot/ driveway instead of a garage or carport. Some correct responses included, but were not limited to: build a patio at the back for entertaining, provide services for the maintenance of the lawn and yard, and fence the yard to provide some security.

Question 7

This was not a popular choice among the optional questions. Most of the candidates who attempted this question scored between three and eight marks.

Part (a) required candidates to define the terms (i) soft furnishings (ii) place setting and (iii) tableware. The expected responses were:

Soft furnishings: - Household articles/accessories made of fabric and used to decorate and add comfort to a home, for example, curtains, chair covers, bed and table linen.

Place setting: - Table appointments for service for one person, for example, breakfast setting, lunch setting, dinner setting

Tableware: - Utensils used at the table for holding, serving and handling food and drinks.

The majority of the candidates who chose this question were unable to correctly define the terms. However, they were able to give appropriate examples of soft furnishings. From the responses given for the terms “table setting” and “tableware” it would appear that candidates had little or no knowledge of these terms.

Responses given included:

- Place setting:
- used for any formal occasion, for example, silverware
 - Arranging of item or food in the corners. Order or the setting of place for certain occasion.
 - Is to set the place in a mannerful way that can be attractive, for example, bedroom.

Most candidates responded that tableware is something used at the table for decoration. The majority of responses were tablecloth and flowers. Responses included:

- Utensils that are used on the tables in order to enhance its look, for example, tablecloth
- Soft furnishing items/materials used at table, for example, table mats, tablecloth
- Kinds of tablecloths and table mats which are associated with the table.

Part (b) (i) asked candidates to illustrate the place setting for breakfast on a tray for a mother who was recovering from surgery. The breakfast consisted of fruit slices, scrambled eggs, toast and hot chocolate.

The responses given for this part indicated that a number of candidates knew the breakfast setting. Many persons placed things anywhere on the tray and did not know where the cutlery should be placed. Most candidates scored between three and four out of six marks.

Part (b) (ii) required candidates to describe two different items of soft furnishings which can be used in the bedroom to create a calm and peaceful mood for the mother during her recovery.

Correct responses included:

- Rugs, mats, curtains, fabric wall hangings, cushion that should be in pastel colours: blues, greens, pinks.

Almost all candidates were able to name two items but did not give appropriate descriptions. Some named items in the bathroom like toilet seats, toilet mats and towels.

Observations and Recommendations

The following are some recommendations that we would like the teachers to observe.

1. Poor English expression made many responses very difficult to decipher. Spelling was very weak and many responses were at best simple phrases rather than grammatically correct sentences. Attention must be paid to the English Language in Home Economics Management.
2. Many candidates performed poorly on aspects of questions that required them to demonstrate more than simple recall.
3. Too many candidates did not address adequately either parts or whole questions. In some instances candidates completely misinterpreted questions. Candidates must read questions carefully and underline key terms and phrases, in order to identify first what is asked of them and secondly what are possible correct responses to the questions. Candidates must therefore pay attention to the performance verbs in questions and provide relevant and adequate responses. Candidates had the tendency to give phrases or brief sentences when the question required them to give complete responses, for example, discuss or explain.
4. For some questions that required different points candidates responded by giving different aspects of the same point. For example:
Question - Outline five factors that this family must consider when preparing the budget.
Candidates' responses: How much to spend on food, transportation, light bill, rent, car.
These are "expenditures" so the candidate should have dealt with other factors such as: income, savings, health, education.