

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
JANUARY 2009**

SOCIAL STUDIES

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SOCIAL STUDIES**GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS****JANUARY 2009****GENERAL COMMENTS**

The January Social Studies examination offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council attracts mainly private candidates. Candidate entry continues to increase with approximately 2 300 candidates writing the examination at this sitting, representing an increase of approximately 300 candidates.

DETAILED COMMENTS**Paper 01-Multiple Choice**

This paper consisted of 60 items distributed as follows: twenty-four on Individual Interaction and thirty-six on Development and Use of Resources. The items were set at various levels of difficulty and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The mean score was consistent with that of 2007 and 2008.

Paper 02 Structured Questions and Extended essays

In this Paper there were ten questions, three on Section A, four on Section B and three on Section C. Section B was divided into two parts B1 and B11. Students were required to answer a total of five questions.

Section A: Individual Interaction

In this section candidates were required to respond to two out of the three questions set. The performance ranged from less than satisfactory to outstanding.

Question 1

This was the most popular question in Section A, the second most popular on the paper and recorded the highest mean score. It tested the candidates' knowledge of family types and features of family types. Many candidates were able to correctly identify the Sibling family type as the one given in the stimulus. The features of the named family type were well known. The popular responses included the absence of both parents and that children were left in charge of the home. Many candidates named the three family types as nuclear, extended and single parent.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to suggest factors leading to breakdown in family relationships. Many responses included limited communication between family members, physical, mental and emotional abuse and migration of one spouse.

For the Application part of the question, candidates were required to suggest actions to improve family relationships and to support the suggested action. Acceptable suggestions ranged from arranging structured counseling sessions for all members of the family with a reputable psychologist and scheduling family meetings based on discussions and agreement

of time by family members. The basis for these strategies was finding alternative ways to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner. Many candidates who attempted this question performed well.

Question 2

This question tested candidates understanding of the concepts of types of leadership and the ways in which members of a group may show dissatisfaction with the leadership style. The candidates named democratic, authoritative or autocratic and laissez-faire as types of leadership. Popular answers for actions that may show dissatisfaction with the leadership style ranged from engaging in discussion with the leader to change leadership style, refusing to attend meetings called by the leader, encouraging other members to boycott meetings and resigning from the group.

The Interpretation section asked the candidates to suggest reasons why members remain committed to a group. Many responses included feeling a sense of belonging and pride, being allowed to participate in decision making and respect for the leader and his leadership style. Few candidates also stated that members remain committed because the group represented a status symbol.

The application section asked candidates to suggest a way the leader of a youth club may encourage members to work together to achieve their goals. Many candidates suggested organising competitions with other group clubs, organising seminars and inviting resource persons to educate members on the benefits of cooperation.

The basis for these strategies was that the knowledge and skills gained would allow members to appreciate the skills and abilities of each member, resulting in greater cooperation. This question produced the third largest mean score.

Question 3

This was also a popular question. The Knowledge component asked candidates to define government and laws, and to identify two different taxes a government collects from its citizens. Many candidates experienced difficulty in defining government and laws. Correct definitions included a group of persons or an agency or body in a country that has been given the power of authority to control and direct the affairs of the country. Incomplete definitions included the people in charge of the country and persons elected by their peers. Correct definitions for law included rules that have been written and enacted by the government of a country and carry penalties for violation. Some candidates could not distinguish between laws and rules. Many candidates were able to state two different taxes a government collects from residents. Popular responses included income tax, property tax, Value Added Tax (VAT) and General Consumption Tax (GCT)

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to give reasons why the government of a country needs revenue. Correct answers ranged from to build and maintain infrastructure in the country such as roads, bridges, airports and hospitals, to pay government employees and to provide services such as education and health and social benefits for the people especially the poor.

For the Application component, candidates were asked to suggest one strategy that may be used to encourage people to pay their taxes. Common responses ranged from educating citizens as to the use of the taxes they pay, enforcing penalties for those who do not pay taxes, reducing the amount of taxes people pay and introducing a more efficient system of tax

collection. The most common justification of the strategy was based on the belief that there would be greater willingness to pay taxes if persons knew what their taxes were used for. Other justification included the advantages of an efficient system which would lessen time wasted in joining long lines to pay taxes.

Section B: Development and use of resources

This section is divided into two parts. Part 1 consists of two structured questions and Part 11 consists of two extended essays. Candidates were required to attempt one question from each part of this section.

Question 4

The Knowledge section of this question tested the candidate's knowledge of the concepts of life expectancy and crude death rate. Few students were able to define life expectancy correctly as the average number of years that persons in a given population are expected to live. Some correctly defined crude death rate as the number of deaths in one year per thousand of a population. Candidates were also asked to outline four factors affecting life expectancy. Popular responses included an increase in regular exercise, improved diet and nutrition, improved medical facilities and health care, and a reduction in stress levels.

For the Interpretation section, the candidates were provided with a population pyramid. Candidates were asked to write two statements about the pyramid. Correct responses included that the greater proportion of the population is in the lower age group; there are many young people in the population, and the percentage of females is slightly larger than that of males. Candidates were also asked to give one reason why a government needs information from a population pyramid. Many candidates gave correct responses such as for providing benefits such as old age pension for the elderly, employment opportunities for the youth, and educational facilities for the different age groups.

The Application section asked Candidates to suggest one strategy to the Ministry of Education to educate young people on healthy lifestyles. Good responses included introducing Health and Family Life Education in all schools, organising seminars and using resource persons to sensitise young people about healthy lifestyles. Many justifications were based mainly on the belief that increase in knowledge would help students to change unhealthy behaviour.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' knowledge of land pollution. For the Knowledge section, many candidates were unable to define the concepts of land pollution and physical resources. A correct response for pollution was the introduction of foreign substances into the environment that makes it unhealthy for humans. A larger percentage of the students were able to define physical resources as those gifts of nature and gave examples such as rivers, seas, land, minerals and forest. The description of two ways in which land may be polluted was poorly done. Many candidates simply wrote on pollution and not specifically on land pollution. Correct responses included the dumping of garbage on the streets, on beaches and in the gullies. Incorrect responses included discharge of raw sewage in rivers and seas.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three consequences of land pollution. Again this section was poorly answered. For many candidates answers reflected water and air pollution. Good responses included an increase in health problems such as gastroenteritis and

dengue resulting from an increase in rats and mosquitoes because of the dumping of containers that create breeding ground for such pests.

For the Application section, candidates were asked to suggest to the government one measure it may introduce to reduce the effects of land pollution. Responses ranged from enforcing penalties for illegal dumping, having seminars to educate the public on the dangers of land pollution and providing support to non governmental agencies that mount clean-up campaigns. Common justifications were related to people obeying laws because of the embarrassment and fear of punishment, and belief that an increase in knowledge would create greater awareness of the causes of land pollution and greater care for the environment.

Question 6

This question was the least popular and had a low mean and a significant number of students scoring 0. It was based on globalization and its impact on CARICOM countries. The Knowledge section asked candidates to define globalization and state two negative effects of globalization on trade in CARICOM.

Many candidates were unable to define globalization and simply mentioned an increase in trade. The concept of the spread of technology, capital and businesses across the world was ignored. Many candidates also had problems relating trade in CARICOM to globalization. The most popular response for the negative effect was the competition with foreign goods that resulted in factories closing and people losing jobs in CARICOM states. Some candidates also mentioned the dumping of cheap and inferior goods in CARICOM countries.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why cooperation among CARICOM countries may reduce the negative effects on trade. This section was also poorly answered as candidates failed to make the link between cooperation and trade. The most popular response was the sharing of resources to create larger markets which would increase bargaining power and lessen the impact of competition.

For the Application section, candidates were asked to suggest to CARICOM citizens one action they make take to improve the quality of goods and services provided in their countries. The most popular response included buying and consuming goods produced in CARICOM countries and reporting to the relevant authorities the presence of inferior and defected goods so that they can be removed.

The justification related to the premise that buying CARICOM goods will provide greater profits for CARICOM producers and thus the incentive to produce quality goods.

Section C- Options

There were three questions in this section and candidates were required to answer one question. All questions were attempted. Question 8 was the most popular in the section and Question 9, the least popular.

Question 8

For the Knowledge part, the candidates were asked to describe two practices of an educated consumer. Popular responses included reading labels on goods, comparing prices and quality of goods before buying, and asking questions about goods and services. Candidates were

also asked to name two agencies that protect consumers in a country. Many students gave only one agency. The most popular response was the Bureau of Standards.

The Interpretation section asked reasons why consumers may need to be protected. This section was well answered by many candidates. Popular responses included to prevent citizens from being exploited by business people for example overcharging and that some consumers may be unaware of their rights.

The application section asked the candidates for one action consumers may take if their rights are violated. Actions included reporting the matter to the Bureau of standards and calling in to 'talk- show' programmes to report violation of rights.

Justification for the action emphasized sensitising the population about those businesses and agencies guilty of violating consumers rights so that other consumers will take appropriate action.

Question 9

This was the least popular question in Section C and was poorly done. It focussed on the ownership of mass media. The Knowledge section asked candidates to define mass media. The candidates performed well on the first section by defining mass media as means of communication which reach a large section of the population. However several candidates offered responses that focussed on mass communication. Most were able to give an example of electronic mass media as the radio and television and non electronic mass media as the newspaper. Identifying two types of ownership was also well done by the majority of the candidates. Types of ownership included private and state or government.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why citizens of a country may encourage private ownership of the media. Candidates gave responses that included a greater variety of programmes which catered to different interests and views and reduction of the influence of political interference.

The application section asked candidates to suggest to private owners of the media one action they could take to encourage the citizens to express their views concerning the media. Responses included conducting household surveys to highlight concerns and suggestions for changes. The justifications were generally vague and related largely to improving the service.

Question 10

For this question a stimulus based on the Knowledge section asked candidates to outline three benefits of tourism to the economy. The most popular responses included bringing in foreign exchange and creating employment for a variety of persons.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why the development of the tourist product may have a negative effect on the agricultural sector in the Caribbean. This section was poorly answered as candidates failed to make the link between tourism and agriculture. Popular responses included using agricultural lands for the building of hotels and the competition of foreign food with local grown food.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one activity which governments may undertake to increase the benefits to agriculture from tourism. The responses were not well developed. A common response was encouraging hotels to use local food rather than imported goods. Most candidates failed to justify the action stated.

Paper 03/2: Alternative to SBA

This paper is written by private candidates. The objective was to test (i) candidates' knowledge of the research process, (ii) their Interpretation of data from a case study and (iii) their ability to analyze data to make recommendations.

Question 1: This required candidates to: select a problem from two choices given, give a reason for conducting an investigation, write an objective for the study, state the problem in the form of a question and identify a concept or term from the topic to be defined.

Topic (I) was 'Parents' Views on Sex Education in Primary Schools' (ii) Topic was 'Voter participation among Young Adults in General Elections'. Topic (i) was the more popular choice.

The responses to Question (i) demonstrated that the large majority of candidates could not perform the tasks that they were required to perform.

Very few candidates were able to formulate research questions as the majority presented those which either required 'yes/no' responses or were unrelated to the topic. Two examples of good research questions presented were as follows: What factors influence the participation of youth in general elections?

What are parent's views on sex education in the primary school?

Question 2: This tested candidates' knowledge of research concepts such as population, sample, research instrument, and their skill in selecting a sample. The performance on this question was weak and the majority of candidates did not score any marks. They displayed a complete lack of any knowledge of basic concepts of population and sample.

Question 3: Performance on this question was better as more candidates were aware of interviews and observations as research instruments. They could formulate a 'yes /no' question to be included in a questionnaire and they were able to list ways to display the data.

Question 4: In this question candidates were presented with a case study that required them to interpret data. The performance indicated that a few candidates were able to respond to the question; however the majority could neither formulate a research question nor state the sample size.

Question 5: This question tested candidates' ability to analyze data from a case study and to make recommendations. This was also an area of poor performance. Candidates were not able to analyze the data accurately and to state the findings of the research. The majority of findings presented were a repetition of the data from the case study rather than findings from an analysis of the data. An example of an appropriate finding was that 'the majority of women believed that HIV was transmitted by mosquito bites.'

In summary the areas of acceptable performance displayed by candidates were as follows:

1. Making recommendations based on data presented
2. Suggesting ways to display data
3. Identifying research instruments

The areas of very weak performance were as follows:

1. Describing a sample
2. Describing a sampling procedure
3. Giving a reason why a sample is necessary
4. Identifying a population for research
5. Stating the findings of a research study
6. Formulating a research question
7. Stating the objective/aim for conducting research

Suggestions

- Candidates can improve their performance on this examination. To do this they must seek adequate tuition that would allow them to prepare thoroughly for the exam.
- Candidates must understand that the questions require knowledge and understanding of concepts and the application and analysis of the information, thus everyday experiences and common sense are not sufficient to pass the exam.
- Candidates entering for Social Studies in the January examinations are advised to prepare themselves by studying the textual materials available rather than depending on experiential learning and common-sense.
- Candidates sitting the Paper 3/2 are advised to develop competencies in research skills and methodologies. Candidates do not possess the background knowledge and skills to answer the questions.
- Candidates are encouraged to make greater use of information in the self study resources and the guidance provided in the syllabus.

Examples of Common Responses from Scripts

Paper 03/2

Question 1

Topic: Parents' Views on Sex education in Schools

Voter participation Among Young Adults in General Elections

- 1 (a) Write one reason why you would want to investigate the topic you have chosen
- because sex education should not be taught in school
- 1 (b) State the aim of the study
- the aim of the study is to allow young adults to understand why they should vote in a general election
 - investigate whether parents educate their children on sex in the home
- 2 (a) State one reason for choosing a sample
- To gather information on the sample
 - To find out the behaviour of the sample in the constituency
- 2 (b) Describe how you would choose the sample for the study you have chosen
- From a group of persons to whom you would ask the question
 - Talk to different parents from different communities
 - Through questionnaires
- 2(c) Give one reason why you would have selected the method of sampling you described in (b) above
- Because a sample is a proportion of the people you need to interview
 - Because it gives you a fair idea of what parents think
- 3 (a) Identify TWO instruments other than questionnaires
- Surveys, graphs, books
- 4(a) State the problem the researcher investigated in the form of a research question
- Do you have any knowledge of what is the cause of increased discrimination of HIV
- (c) What was the sample size of the study
- 49% of the women are infected