

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
HEADQUARTERS**

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

JANUARY 2010

**SOCIAL STUDIES
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The January 2010 Social Studies Examinations offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council attracted mainly private candidates. The examination consisted of three papers, Paper 01, Multiple-Choice items, Paper 02, Structured Questions and Extended Essays and Paper 03/2, the Alternative to the School Based Assessment (SBA). The number of candidates entering for these examinations increased from 2743 scripts in 2009 to 5208 scripts in Paper 02 in 2010, and from 2304 to 3397 scripts for Paper 03/2. Overall performance has remained stable.

Some questions in Paper 02, particularly in Section A of the syllabus, continue to be popular. However, there remains a lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of some key terms and concepts indicated in the syllabus. The Interpretation profile presented challenges to most candidates with responses lacking development. For the Application profile, many responses were not appropriate and well developed. Most candidates were unable to provide relevant justifications. The candidates who were prepared for the examination wrote responses that clearly reflected use of knowledge and application of the skills learnt.

Many responses for Paper 03/2 reflected a lack of knowledge and understanding of basic research concepts and skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

This paper consisted of 60 multiple choice items and examined the core syllabus in the Knowledge and Interpretation profiles only. The items were distributed as follows: 24 on Individual Interaction and 36 on Development and Use of Resources. The items tested various levels of difficulty and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The mean score of both proficiencies compared favourably with that of 2008 and 2009.

Paper 02 - Structured Questions and Extended Essays

In this paper there were 10 questions; three on Section A, four on Section B and three on Section C. Section B was divided into parts B (I) and B (II). Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions. Performance was generally moderate.

Section A: Individual Interaction

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

Question 1

This was the most popular question in Section A. It was attempted by approximately 88 per cent of the candidates. It tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of socialization within the family. Many candidates were able to correctly outline three aims that parents have for socializing their children. Popular and correct responses included teaching their children the values of society such as honesty and respect; developing their self esteem and confidence; and preparing children to learn to cooperate and interact positively with others.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to explain three consequences that are likely to occur as a result of poor socialization practices. This section was also well answered. Appropriate responses included children experiencing problems in school such as being unable to relate to other candidates and to resolve conflicts peacefully during group work exercise; showing lack of respect towards others, including candidates and teachers, which affects teaching and learning; and becoming delinquent children whose behaviour creates social and emotional problems for family members.

For the Application part of the question, candidates were required to suggest one way the school can assist the family in the socialization process. An example of an acceptable suggestion was that of introducing compulsory sessions for all candidates, in which positive values and attitudes are taught and resource persons such as psychologists and family counsellors are invited to provide guidance and share experiences of effects of socialization with the candidates.

The effectiveness of the strategy was based on the premise that if candidates understand and adopt the positive values and attitudes, then these would be displayed at home and passed on to others, especially to younger siblings. The overall performance of candidates was good.

Question 2

This question was attempted by only 30 per cent of the candidates. It tested candidates' understanding of the concepts of government and in particular coalition government. The Knowledge section asked candidates to define terms such as 'general election', 'candidate' and 'constituency'. The candidates defined general election as a process in which people vote to select a government to run a country. Most of the candidates did not include democratic process in the definition. For 'constituency', most candidates stated that it was 'an area for election'. Few candidates defined it as an official electoral area defined by the electoral commission.

The Interpretation section asked the candidates to give two reasons why a coalition government may be formed after a general election. The popular and correct responses included when there is no clear majority of seats obtained by a single party in an election to exercise a majority in parliament and because of a national crisis, the governing party may have interest in forming a government of national unity. Many candidates gave incorrect responses. The Interpretation section also asked candidates to explain one problem that can arise within a coalition government. The main responses included the difficulty in arriving at a consensus on government policies because of different political beliefs, philosophies and party loyalties, conflicts arising in the allocation of ministries, and problems in choosing the Prime Minister or President since all parties have their leaders.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to voters one action they may take to maintain orderly voting on polling day. Most candidates suggested that voters should take their identification cards with them and form a line to enter the polling station and leave the polling station immediately after voting, instead of congregating outside to discuss election issues.

The justification as to why the action would ensure order was that the use of identification cards and forming lines would result in less time wasted in having to swear in voters and to ensure that those who arrive early vote before others, which sometimes results in voters becoming impatient and abusive. The overall performance was poor.

Question 3

The Knowledge component of this question asked candidates to outline three characteristics of authoritarian leadership. Most candidates gave correct responses which included the leader making decisions without consulting members, not delegating authority to others in the group, and not listening to the suggestions of other members of the group or organization.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why the democratic style of leadership is usually considered the best. Correct answers ranged from the leader involving the members in the decision making process thus promoting team work and high levels of cooperation among members; the leader respecting the views and opinions of the members and catering to the needs of the members thus developing a high level of commitment to the organization; and the recognition of productivity and a reward system which encourages high productivity and quality work among members.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one guideline that may help the new executive committee of a sports club to lead effectively. A relevant response was that the members should be allowed to take part in planning and decision making by volunteering for membership in committees in which they would assist in the development of plans for the organization.

The most common justification for such a guideline was that people work best when they feel that they belong and that they are positively contributing to an organization in which they are seen as assets rather than liabilities. This was a popular question and the overall performance was satisfactory.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

This section was divided into two parts. Part I consisted of two structured questions and Part II consisted 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 candidates' knowledge of the concepts of migration. Many candidates defined migrant as a person who moves from one place to another to settle or a person who relocates to another country. Incorrect answers did not include the concept of permanency or settlement. Most candidates could identify two types of internal migration. These were mainly rural to urban and urban to rural. Other candidates gave the specific names of urban and rural places where movement occurred. Incorrect answers for types of internal migration included international migration. The Knowledge section also asked candidates to state one effect of the type of migration they named in (a). Effects included the development of slums and squatter settlements especially in the urban areas because migrants are unable to afford housing, and the loss of labour in farming areas resulting in low agricultural productivity for the country.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why some people may choose not to migrate from the Caribbean. Correct responses included that people may not want to leave immediate family and relatives which could affect them emotionally and psychologically, people may be very patriotic and have no desire to live elsewhere, and that some people prefer the warm tropical climate of the Caribbean which allows persons to enjoy certain activities all year. This part was well done.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to the government one way of regulating immigration. Popular responses included improvement in security such as using scanning and surveillance technology and the use of trained dogs at entry points to prevent illegal migration and setting criteria for employment such as specific type of skilled and professional occupations, level of qualification, years of experience, English language proficiency and an age limit of less than 40.

The justification was that the specific criteria for employment would limit the number of persons who would qualify for immigrant status. Generally, the question was satisfactorily answered.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' knowledge of energy resources. The Knowledge section asked candidates to name four resources that produce energy for the Caribbean. Correct and popular responses included petroleum, water, sun and wind. This part of the question was well done. Candidates were also asked to state two sectors in the economy that use energy from these resources. Candidates gave responses which included the names of companies and institutions. A few candidates gave responses such as the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and industrial sectors.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why energy is expensive to produce from the resources available in the Caribbean. This section was not well done. Correct responses included the fact that most Caribbean governments have to borrow loans and pay interest rates to produce such energy and this increases the cost of production. Also for some countries, multi-national companies are involved in exploiting the resources and this may involve a high cost of imported technical labour.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one measure that the government may introduce to help reduce the cost of energy to the consumer. An appropriate response was that the government should encourage the use of alternative energy such as solar energy and that encouragement should include subsidizing the cost of solar panels.

A common justification was based on the belief that a government subsidy on solar panels would make the installation more affordable to many persons and thus provide the incentive for business to invest in solar energy. This would make it cheaper in the long run. Overall the candidates' performance on this question was less than satisfactory.

Question 6

This question was a popular one. The Knowledge section asked candidates to outline three ways in which coastal waters may become polluted. Popular and correct responses included dumping of sewage in coastal waters from hotels, homes and industries located along the coast, run off of fertilizers from agricultural areas encouraging the growth of algae and the destruction of the coral reefs, and oil spills from large tankers transporting crude oil. This part of the question was well done.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three ways in which coastal water pollution may affect the economy of a country. The candidates explained that the destruction of reefs affects fish life and thus reduces catch and the livelihood of fishermen. Contaminated beaches reduce the number of tourists willing to use such beaches and thus impacts on tourist arrivals and loss of foreign exchange earnings. For some candidates, responses were vague and did not reflect how pollution can affect the economy.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one measure that may be used to reduce the level of coastal pollution. Suggestions included public awareness sessions through "call in programmes" in which persons are informed of the causes and consequences of coastal pollution and how each person can help to monitor coastal pollution. Another popular measure was enacting laws to regulate the disposal of solid waste and enforcing severe fines for noncompliance.

The justification for enacting laws was based on the premise that most people obey laws because of the fear of the punishment of either being jailed or having to pay fines with resulting embarrassment for themselves and immediate relatives. Overall, the performance was satisfactory.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to write an essay on the importance of education in Caribbean nations. The candidates began by outlining three educational needs that require the spending of large sums of money. Most popular responses were the training of teachers for all levels of education, the subsidizing or full payment of the cost of education for candidates, for example, examination fees and the provision of furniture and equipment for schools.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons for the expansion of the provisions for education. This section was not well done. Correct responses included the emphasis on early literacy and numerical skills and thus expansion of early childhood education through the building of new schools and upgrading of the existing facilities; emphasis on skill development to meet the needs of a globalized economy and thus increases in the provision of technical and vocational education, and also an increasing population with a large proportion within the 4–24 age group, resulting in an increase in money allocated for education.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one way in which governments may reduce expenditure without lowering the quality of education. This section was not well done as candidates had difficulty in linking reduction in expenditure and maintaining quality. Correct responses included partnership with private businesses and non-governmental organizations to assist in providing science and computer laboratories as well as maintenance for schools, utilizing school buildings more efficiently for homework, evening and summer classes and conferences, and providing vegetable seeds, plants and animals such as chickens for school agricultural projects for which produce will be used for school meals.

The justification for partnership was based on the premise that if private businesses assisted in providing finance, capital and expertise, then this would significantly reduce government spending and also provide high technology facilities that will enhance learning. Overall the performance was unsatisfactory on this part of the question.

Section C: Options

There were three questions set in this section and candidates were required to answer one. All questions were attempted.

Question 8

This was the least popular question in this section. Candidates were asked to prepare a talk on the topic 'demand and supply are influenced by a number of factors'. The Knowledge section required candidates to identify three factors that affect the demand for goods and services. Popular and correct responses included the size of the consumer's income, the consumer's taste and preference for certain goods, the availability of substitute goods at affordable prices and family tradition. Candidates were also asked to identify three factors that affect the supply of goods and services. Responses included the price of the goods, the prices of the factors of production and the state of the technology.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain how each of the demand factors affects consumers. Popular responses included that if one's income is small, such a consumer would be unable to purchase or access necessary goods and services such as nutritious food, educational books, medical and dental services. The consumer's taste and preference may result in him/her purchasing expensive and brand name goods to create an impression of wealth. This results in the consumer becoming heavily indebted and unable to cover other expenses. The availability of substitute goods, usually at cheaper prices, means that the consumer will be able to purchase a larger quantity and variety of goods without an increase in income and will be more able to satisfy the needs of the family.

The Application section asked the candidates to suggest one way in which the government may make basic items affordable to consumers. Suggestions ranged from exemption of taxes such as general consumption tax (GCT) from basic food items and publicizing the list of such goods to the consumers; making available discounts such as government food stamps and coupons and providing subsidies to encourage the production of locally grown food and manufactured goods. This would result in lower production costs.

Justification for implementing a subsidy was based on the premise that if cost of production is reduced, then it is expected that reduced costs will be passed on to the consumers. Overall, the performance on this question was moderate only.

Question 9

The stimulus for this question was the caption, 'The Mass Media – the Voice of the Caribbean'. Candidates were asked to write a newspaper article in support of linking the Caribbean region through the mass media. The candidates began by outlining three ways in which linking the Caribbean through the media can benefit citizens in Caribbean countries. Correct responses included Caribbean citizens benefit by becoming knowledgeable about the social, political and economic issues in the various Caribbean countries through Caribbean news. They are able to provide financial, human and capital assistance to Caribbean neighbours during natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and flooding. Opportunities are provided for trading especially on the stock market based on the information received. This part of the question was well done.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why citizens may voice complaints about the quality of the regional media. Responses ranged from receiving incorrect and biased information about certain Caribbean territories because of limited research on the particular issue; giving more air time to particular territories because of interest and allegiance to that territory; and unavailability of high quality entertainment packages highlighting local and regional talents.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one way in which media personnel may help to improve the quality of the regional media. A popular response was through the organization of a series of regional workshops in which experienced persons and researchers would provide updated information on media policy and quality. Conducting tours of media houses and providing exchange programmes for sharing ideas would also improve quality.

The justification was based on the fact that a highly educated media workforce with regional experience would be more likely to provide quality service. Overall, candidates' performance was satisfactory only.

Question 10

For this question the stimulus was the caption, 'Tourism is an extremely vulnerable industry'. As a Minister of Tourism, candidates were asked to prepare an address for a meeting of the Caribbean Tourism Organization on the topic. This question required candidates to begin by listing three tourism products offered in the Caribbean. The correct responses included, sand and sea, health, sports, music, festivals, food, heritage and eco-tourism. The candidates were then asked to identify three factors that hinder the development of the tourism industry. Some of the correct responses included tourist harassment, high levels of crime, poor infrastructure such as roads, and competition from other tourist destinations. Most candidates did this part of the question very well.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three consequences of the factors identified. An example of a correct explanation was that tourist harassment results in tourists becoming afraid of leaving their hotels to explore the tourism products which can reduce their length of stay and discourage them from informing other visitors and friends of their experience. This can result in a reduction of visitors to the island and a loss in foreign revenue.

For Application, candidates were asked to suggest one measure that CARICOM countries may take to deal with one of the factors identified. A common response to deal with competition included marketing the region as one major tourist destination by creating a regional marketing agency in which all islands would contribute. Advertisements would include the attractions of all the islands and encourage travel between the islands. This part of the question was poorly done.

The justification was related to the premise that combining all the attractions in the region would create a mega tourist destination with different tourism products, thus satisfying the varying needs of tourists. This would reduce competition from larger tourist destinations.

Suggestions to Candidates

- 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 do well on the examination.
- Candidates can improve their performance especially as it relates to concepts by engaging in concept mapping techniques to improve understanding.
- Candidates must be taught to develop the skill to transfer knowledge across themes and topics, and pay closer attention to the unifying themes of the syllabus.

- Candidates are advised to use their syllabus and become familiar with the required objectives, unifying concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed and extent of content. They must avail themselves of the variety of resource materials available to them including the CSEC Social Studies Manual for self study and distance learning.

Paper 03/2: Alternative to SBA

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

Question 1

This required candidates to select a problem from two choices given, give a reason why the topic was important to them or their community, write a research question for the study, state why the research question would be considered a good one and state two sources that could be used to obtain the data.

Topic 1 was 'The role of the police service in my community' and Topic 2 'Opportunities for senior citizens in my community'. More than 60 per cent of the candidates selected the first topic.

Many candidates were able to give reasons why the topic was important but had difficulty formulating research questions — questions that would direct the investigation and could not be answered by a yes/no response.

Some examples of good research questions written were:

- What is the role of the police service in your community?
- What are your views on the police service in your community?
- What available opportunities are there for the elderly in your community?

Question 2

This tested candidates' knowledge of sources, data collection, use of the data collection instrument, and disadvantages in using the particular instrument. The performance on this question was weak. Many candidates displayed a complete lack of knowledge of the concept 'sources'. Many identified data collection instruments but were unable to describe how they would develop the instrument and use the instrument to collect data. Many of those who identified an instrument were able to state one disadvantage of using the instrument.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to give reasons for the choice of sources of data for the research, the method used to analyse the data and reasons for the choice of method. Performance on this question was also poor.

Question 4

In this question candidates were presented with a case study on the study habits of students which required them to interpret data. They were asked to state the focus of the study, the sample size, and two features of the sample. The performance indicated that many candidates could state the focus of the research, the sample size and the features of the sample.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' ability to display the data from the case study, write two questions which might be included on a questionnaire relating to study habits of the candidates, and to draw one conclusion related to the study habits. This was also an area of poor performance. Some candidates were able to display the data accurately and most were able to write clearly stated questions. Such questions included, 'Do you study for the CSEC examination', 'How much time do you spend doing your assignments?', 'Do you have a study timetable?' Many candidates had problems stating one conclusion that was clear and relevant from the study. Some responses were simply repetition of the data from the case study. An example of an acceptable conclusion was that 'students in the study did homework assignments at different times of the day'.

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

1. Giving reasons for the importance of the topic
2. Focus of the research
3. Disadvantage of using a data collection instrument
4. Displaying the data
5. Sample size
6. Features of a sample
7. Writing questions for a questionnaire

The areas of very weak performance were as follows:

1. Formulating a research question
2. Understanding why a research question is good
3. Stating data sources
4. Giving reasons for choosing data sources
5. Developing a data collection instrument
6. Using the data collection instrument
7. Describing the method of analysing data
8. Giving reasons for choice of method
9. Writing a conclusion

Suggestions to Candidates

- Candidates can improve their performance on this examination by seeking adequate tuition that will allow them to prepare thoroughly for the exam. The performance on the paper demonstrated a clear need for adequate preparation for the examination.
- During instruction, it is necessary to provide opportunities for candidates to practise formulating research questions. As with any other skill, practice is necessary to achieve efficiency.
- One method of assisting candidates with their preparation is to allow them to engage in small supervised research projects that will focus on the basic concepts being tested in the examination.