

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2013

ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

Copyright © 2013 Caribbean Examinations Council
St Michael, Barbados
All rights reserved.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examination in English B consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one on each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. Each question consists of a number of sub-parts that require candidates to give approximately five to seven short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question, for a total of 60 marks. Paper 01 contributes 36 per cent to the examination.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged in three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from each section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparisons. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105. Paper 02 contributes 64 per cent to the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Short Answer

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- i) Comprehension
- ii) Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to explain how effectively these elements function in the passage.
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

The table below shows mean scores as a percentage of the maximum score for Paper 01 for the period 2011–2013:

Percentages of Mean Scores for the Period 2011–2013

Paper 01	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)
DRAMA	68.13	60.30	54.25
POETRY	55.46	53.70	57.95
PROSE	53.93	50.60	59.40

Unlike the past years, candidates' performance Drama declined while there was improvement this year in the other two genres.

Question 1: Drama

Overall, 199 (0.98%) of the 20,318 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to lines 1–4 of the dramatic extract and identify Nora's state of mind, supporting their response with one stage direction and one other piece of evidence. Although candidates were able to identify Nora's state of mind (she was sad/upset), many confused stage directions with textual evidence. Some identified two stage directions. Acceptable textual evidence included: *"Oh really! Trying to frighten me!"* and *"But—No, that's impossible!"* (line 3).

Candidates were asked to explain the dramatic function of the children in Part (b). Acceptable responses went beyond describing the children to explaining how their presence impacted Nora and even the audience. Thus, the children's presence reinforces Nora's maternal qualities (she is kind and gentle with them); their presence also reinforces her inner turmoil and the audience senses conflict when she admonishes them not to mention the 'strange man' who was at the house.

Part (c) did not pose a challenge to candidates as many were able to comment on the Christmas tree as prop. Quite correctly, they mentioned that the tree hinted at setting (time of year, that is, Christmas time) and that it acted as a kind of diversion from the tension/conflict.

For Part (d), candidates were required to use lines 23–26 to state their impression of Nora, with supporting evidence. Two marks were awarded for the impression and one mark for the supporting evidence. Two general impressions anticipated were that Nora is a multi-faceted woman/her life is busy and she will do whatever it takes to preserve her marriage. Candidates demonstrated a general knowledge of Nora's character but lacked the vocabulary required to respond adequately to the question posed. They were able to describe the tasks Nora did but fell short in terms of using those ideas to form an impression or a conclusion.

Candidates experienced difficulty stating one contradiction shown in Nora's character, which was required for Part (e), although they managed to find evidential support in some instances. Embedded in the contradiction is Nora's two-sidedness – the devoted wife and mother and the mother who encourages her children to lie; the good home-maker who cannot settle on any task or get a chance to do so and the loving wife who lies to her husband.

For Part (f), candidates were asked to explain the dramatic function of Helmer's entrance. Many candidates realized the significance of the entrance but far too many could not use the literary language to bolster their response. Acceptable responses included: breaking/heightening the tension; adding to the suspense; breaking Nora's train of thought.

Candidates displayed creativity and imagination in their responses to Part (g), which required them to imagine being Nora and use evidence from the extract to suggest how they wanted the audience to respond to them.

Four thousand three hundred and fifty-three that is approximately 19 per cent of the 20,318 candidates who attempted Question 1 earned marks between 15 and 20. The mean for this question was 10.85 out of 20. This was the lowest mean achieved of the three genres tested.

Question 2

One hundred and eighty-three (0.90 %) of the 20,343 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in identifying the phrase ('almost forgotten my dream' / 'my dream') that captured the main idea in lines 1–6.

Part (b) required candidates to identify the device in line 5 (simile) and comment on its effectiveness. The speaker compares the dream to the sun, a symbol of hope, life and possibilities. Most were able to identify the device and some gave reasonable responses regarding the effectiveness.

Part (c) required candidates to discuss the effect of the repeated word ('rose') in lines 7, 8 and 11. Acceptable responses mentioned the development of the notion of progression and or entrapment. Thus, the magnification of the wall (representing obstacles) and the way in which the word 'rose' ends line 7 and begins line 8, present the encirclement or entrapment of the speaker.

Part (d) (i) required candidates to identify the speaker's tone in lines 1–12 (reflective/nostalgic/conversational) and lines 20–29 (militant/determined/strident) and (d) (ii) required them to comment on the appropriateness of the change. Candidates were able to note the difference in tone at the beginning of the poem and towards the end. However, the discussion fell short in terms of *why* this change was appropriate. Acceptable responses captured the hope embodied in the dream at the outset, then the wall and finally the need to encourage himself to overcome the challenges in order to liberate himself.

For Part (e), candidates were asked to state what was suggested by the use of "shadow," "wall," and "night" in (i) and for (ii), show how "dream," "sun," and "light" were opposed to (i). This was challenging to many candidates who interpreted the words in (i) in the very literal sense of a nightmare that the speaker was experiencing while he was asleep. Consequently, the words "dream," "sun," and "light" were erroneously interpreted as morning which brings sunlight, or the persona awakening from an unpleasant dream. Full marks were awarded to candidates who mentioned that the second set of words suggests hope and that the first set of words suggests entrapment and a strong sense of being unable to overcome obstacles.

Most candidates managed to respond appropriately to Part (f), which asked for an explanation of line 24: "Help me to shatter this darkness". The speaker recognizes that he is in a state of defeat and pleads for assistance (perhaps from a higher power) to destroy this oppressive darkness or wall. Most candidates did exceptionally well on part (g), both in providing another title for the poem and using text-based evidence to justify their choice. Some responses included the idea that the title heightened the persona's struggle to recapture what was lost; that it focused on the persona's past and that it encouraged reflection or introspection.

Five thousand, four hundred and sixteen (approximately 21%) of the 20,343 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15 and 20. The mean for this question was 11.59 out of 20.

Question 3

The mean score (11.88) on Prose Fiction was the highest of the three genres. Four thousand six hundred and twenty-one (approximately 19%) of the 20,319 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 15 and 20. Eighteen (0.09%) candidates earned the full marks out of 20.

Most candidates had a fair sense of what the passage was about and were able to answer Part (a) which asked for an outline of the passage. Acceptable responses took into account the fact that the old man had caught no fish; the concern of the boy and the old man's disposition/strength.

Part (b) required from candidates an identification of the mood in the first paragraph (despair/hopelessness/sadness) and to provide supporting evidence from the passage. Candidates had little difficulty with evidence from the passage. Some lost marks as evidential support given was not confined to the first paragraph.

Characterization appeared to be understood by candidates. Part (c), which asked for two aspects of the boy's character, with supporting evidence, was well handled. Any two of these character traits were acceptable: *caring, compassionate, dutiful, and obedient*. Candidates cited evidence such as the boy's helpfulness in carrying the old man's fishing and sailing gear; his being sorry for the old man; and that he reluctantly obeyed his parents' command to leave the old man.

Although candidates correctly identified the device in Part (d) as simile, they had challenges in commenting on its effectiveness. Some struggled with an explanation and commented that because a desert is a dry place, the simile is ineffective since it is no place for fishes to live. However, the effectiveness lies in its *literary* not literal meaning: a desert conjures up images of absence (of food and water); the landscape of a desert tends to be bleak and ravaged and this image is connected to the old man—nature's harsh, enduring, unproductive (fishless) landscape.

For Part (e), two marks were awarded for the effect created by the detailed description of the old man in paragraph 2, and one mark awarded for justification. Acceptable responses included how he was initially presented as thin and gaunt but as the paragraph developed he is seen as physically strong.

Part (f) asked candidates to explain why they might find the impression created by the final paragraph unexpected. Acceptable responses indicated the difference between what the reader expected based on the information given in the first paragraph as against what was presented in the final paragraph. Structurally, the final paragraph is the shortest. It ends with the refusal to be defeated; it testifies to the old man's inner strength (evident in his eyes), unlike the other paragraphs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

Teachers are encouraged to continue working with students to hone their skills in appreciating and responding to literature. In the examination, candidates are required to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the stimulus material as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.

While in this paper no marks are specifically awarded for the use of language, teachers are encouraged to offer students parallel Standard English constructions to the dialect that some students use in their responses to the questions.

More importantly, however, is the need for teachers to confidently build on their obviously successful attempts to have the students offer and defend, with evidence from the text, their varied interpretations and emotional responses to the texts they read. This prioritizing of students' autonomous thought, bolstered by their obligation to produce the textual evidence for their conclusions is at the heart of the critical and creative thinking that the study of literature is meant to engender.

Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 22 of the syllabus):

- i) The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, short stories, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgments, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living
- ii) Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense in a new form information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)
- iii) The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgments in well-structured, analytical responses in written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism
- iv) The ability to produce balanced critical analyses
- v) The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02
- vi) The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text
- vii) A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

Questions 1 and 2, which are set on the Shakespeare text *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, attracted almost one-half of the total responses for the drama section. Question 1 was more popular than Question 2, and was attempted by more than half of the candidates.

This question sought to elicit from candidates, a discussion on male dominance in the play. Part (a) asked for an outline of two situations in which such issues occur; Part (b) required a discussion of how women deal with the identified situations and Part (c), a discussion of one dramatic technique that Shakespeare uses to present the issue of male dominance. Candidates demonstrated familiarity with the theme of male dominance and were able to use male/female relationships relating to daughters and lovers to discuss Part (a) and use examples of Hermia, Titania and Helena for the discussion in Part (b). A few candidates referred to the mechanicals (the all-male cast) and lost marks here. Part (c) however, proved the most challenging in terms of identification of the technique and discussion of its function. Weak candidates repeated and narrated the theme of male female relationships in the play. In some instances, dramatic irony was named but arguing its relevance was not convincing. Accepted responses include plot development, characterization (comparison and contrast), use of suspense and dramatic tension.

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays and 142 (2.13%) of the 6,554 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two (0.03%) of these candidates earned full marks (35). The mean for this question was 17.31.

Question 2

Part (a) of Question 2 asked the candidates to outline the situation that caused Helena's accusation of Hermia in Act III Scene 2, from which the quotation came; Part (b) asked for a description of the aspects of the personalities of Helena and Hermia that were brought out in this exchange and Part (c), a discussion of Shakespeare's presentation of friendship in the play.

Generally, candidates failed to recall this particular incident accurately. Some were able, to some degree, to identify the incident in the forest triggered by Puck's inadvertent enchantment of Lysander and the consequences, required in Part (a). Candidates were also able to note the similarities and differences in these women. Predictably, Part (c) which sought to discuss the presentation of friendship, (which really is a discussion of the *how*) was the most challenging. Candidates tended to recount what happened in the play without drawing meaningful conclusions about friendship (what is suggested). Typical responses to this part of the question were literal. Few candidates were able to discuss the different ideas about friendship that were suggested and or identify how techniques such as contrast, irony, and characterization were used to highlight issues about friendship.

Seventy-eight (2.28 %) of the 1,822 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Eight (0.44%) of these candidates earned full marks. The mean for the question was 16.24.

Old Story Time

Question 3

Question 3 was the most popular question in the drama section. Part (a) asked for a description of what was happening (in reference to the quotation from Act I, Scene 1); Part (b), a discussion of Miss Aggy's idea of the perfect wife for Len and finally, Part (c), a discussion of how the playwright's dramatic presentation of black/white relationships is a powerful aspect of this play.

Though both incidents have to do with women of whom Miss Aggy disapproved, many candidates referred to the river incident with Pearl and Len (instead of the photograph incident) for Part (a). Acceptable responses described Miss Aggy receiving a letter from Len which included a picture of his wife Lois, her rage and rejection of Lois and Pa Ben's advice. Most candidates handled Part (b), which asked for Miss Aggy's idea of a perfect wife for Len, quite well. Part (c) required a broader treatment than a description of black and (near)-white characters. Discussion should relate to the play as a whole, in terms of Rhone's presentation of black/white relationships. Acceptable responses for this part of the question included major characters and what they represent; interrogations of whiteness as good and black as bad or evil; the ways in which the play can be making social commentaries in terms of value systems, dramatic irony (inversions of roles).

Four hundred and sixty-seven (4%) of the 11,980 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Eight (0.07%) candidates earned full marks of 35 on this question. The mean for this question was 18.92, which was the second highest mean for a question in this section.

Question 4

This was the least popular question on this paper, as only 250 candidates attempted it.

For Part (a) of the question, candidates were asked to outline the situation that caused Pa Ben to make the comment quoted in Act II, Scene 3. Many could not remember the incident (Len's visit to Pa Ben's house in a bid to save Lois from his mother's harm). Part (b) asked for a discussion of two of the three listed cultural practices (story telling, church going and belief in the supernatural). Even though prompts were provided in the wording of the question, many could not see these folk forms as dramatic technique. Part (c) asked candidates to comment on two themes brought out by these presentations. Acceptable responses included, (but were not limited to) history, or the past, religion, culture, identity, race, and class.

Two of the 96 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. No candidate earned full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 13.82.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were, "It is the Constant Image of Your Face" and "Dreaming Black Boy". Slightly more than half of the candidates attempted this question. Part (a) required candidates to outline the hopes and desires portrayed in each poem; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the poem found to be more appealing; and for Part (c) the task was to discuss one device from each poem which portrayed hopes or desires.

Part (a) assessed candidates' knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall, assess and summarise the information. Although candidates were more knowledgeable about "Dreaming Black Boy", most responded well to this part of the question. The personal, yet text-based responses, provided for Part (b) were refreshing and informative. Part (c), which focused on literary devices (the writer's craft), posed a challenge for many candidates. In many instances devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support. Many did not link the device with hopes or desires. Acceptable responses included appropriate identification of devices and such devices and establishment of the connection between such devices and the hopes or desires.

Words that were commonly misspelt included *repetition*, *racism* and *prejudice*

Fourteen hundred and forty-four (approximately 14%) of the 10,304 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Fifty-four (0.52%) of these candidates earned the full mark of 35. The mean for this question was 20.13.

Question 6

This was the general question and candidates were required to choose from the prescribed list two poems that focused on the theme of conflict to answer the question set. Any relevant poems could be used but popular choices were, "Forgive My Guilt", "Once Upon a Time", "The Woman Speaks to the Man who Has Employed her Son.", "This is the Dark Time, My Love", "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Epitaph". Part (a) required candidates to describe this conflict (whether external or internal); Part (b) asked candidates to comment on how the conflict is treated or addressed in each poem and finally, Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which is used to explore this conflict.

Part (a) was handled well for the most part. In this part of the question, candidates were expected to name the poems selected but sometimes they did not quote titles correctly. For Part (b), some candidates had difficulty with the word "comment" as they thought it meant solving the conflict.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of conflict. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices and treated the discussion as a continuation of Part (b).

Four hundred and forty-five (approximately 5%) of the 9,617 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Twenty-one candidates scored full marks on this question. The mean for this question was 16.80.

Prose Fiction

Songs of Silence

Question 7

The questions on the novels in the revised syllabus on which this examination is based are Type A questions. These questions require close individual study of each text rather than the comparative treatment of two novels. *Songs of Silence* continues to be unpopular although for this sitting: the number of candidates attempting the questions set on this text increased marginally.

Many of the candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated interesting insights. Part (a) of Question 7 asked for an outline of two of these three chapters: “The Idiot,” “Miss Minnie” and “Morris Hole”. Part (b) asked for a discussion of how the writer presents the confusion in the adolescent’s world in the chapters selected in (a); and for Part (c), a justification of the chapter which is more appealing.

Many candidates went beyond the level of “outline” in Part (a) while others went to the extreme of storytelling. A few candidates misread the rubric and commented on all three chapters. Candidates’ ability to organize and summarise significant events in the chapters was the main skill tested. Candidates found Part (b) challenging in that they did not deal with the writer’s *presentation* of confusion as some neither identified nor discussed a technique. Acceptable responses included the use of proverbs and the story of Marlene’s mother and Pa Brown to frame her relationship with Ezekiel; relying on village gossip to explain strange incidents; the episodic, staccato-like collage of images and/experiences mirroring the confusion in Marlene’s mind; the use of imagery, dreams and the river.

Part (c) was primarily reader-response, (with the requisite textual justification). Candidates managed reasonably well as they demonstrated familiarity with the text.

One hundred and nine (9.9%) of the 1,041 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Six candidates scored full marks on the question. The mean for the question was 21.57.

Question 8

By referring to two characters in the novel, Question 8 asked for a discussion of the statement, “Forbes presents silence as a refuge in the novel Songs of Silence.” Many candidates identified suitable characters who portray silence, for example, Paul’s mother in ‘A Story with No Name’, Marlene the narrator, and other characters such as Miss Minnie, Effita, Nathan and Little Fool Fool. Candidates were also conversant with the concept of silence as refuge. For candidates to have gained maximum marks there needed to have been stronger identification and discussion of devices/techniques to present the many nuanced silences in the text. Acceptable responses included symbolism; interplay between what is said and what is not; and contrast and comparison.

Forty-eight (5.15%) of the 912 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. One candidate scored full marks. The mean for this question was 19.38.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Twice the number of candidates attempted this question, compared with the number attempting Question 10. Part (a) asked candidates to trace the rise of Ivan Morton; Part (b), a comparison between the leadership style of Ivan and Bee and Part (c) required an analysis of the ways in which the tension between Ivan and Bee dramatise the clash between the old ways and the new.

For Part (a), many candidates gave details about Ivan without showing how he developed. By missing the concept of *trace*, candidates ignored the chronological element embedded in the task (many did not even mention Ivan the boy). Because the text is not chronologically sequenced, this might be part of the challenge faced by candidates. For Part (b), candidates were knowledgeable about the leadership styles but the details supplied sometimes were not germane to the question. In some instances, candidates did not draw inferences from details given. For example, when Ivan moved into the Richardson's house, what did his actions suggest? How might that inform his leadership? Part (c) was handled commendably. Candidates saw the tension represented by these men in terms of the old ways (tradition, roots, the folk) and any threat to that way of life. Many were sensitive to the tension portrayed in the comparison, the writer's use of suspense and many candidates mentioned the near explosive scene when Ivan told Bee that his people could "act white" as a means to survive.

One hundred and seventy-four (2.59%) of the 6,582 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Three candidates scored full marks of 35. The mean for this question was 16.62.

Question 10

Referring to Bee telling Eva, "I going to break this law," candidates were asked to discuss the ways in which the *Wine of Astonishment* explores the idea of resistance and rebellion. Although weaker candidates resorted to storytelling, the idea of resistance resonated well with candidates as there was little difficulty identifying incidents and characters involved. Some candidates listed points (as with pros and cons) a practice that is not encouraged. In some instances, candidates lacked the vocabulary to express themselves and knowledge and usage of certain words (as in *passive*, *active*, *non-violent*, *non-insurrectionary*, *retaliate*), which could have helped. Additionally, candidates lacked awareness of basic historical fundamentals about the plot, such as (the American presence in Trinidad at that time). Popular responses included the collective resistance of the church led by Bee and the Bolo/Prince confrontation.

Forty-eight (1.44%) of the 3,186 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two candidates achieved the maximum score on this question. The mean for this question was 15.33.

Short Story

Question 11

The Short Story section patterns the poetry section in that Type B questions are asked. Additionally, the short stories to be used are specified in one question, while for the other question; candidates choose two appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question posed.

The two short stories specified in Question 11 were, "Blackout" and "To Da-duh, in Memoriam." It asked candidates to make the connection between setting and plot. Candidates were asked to describe the setting of each story in Part (a). Part (b) offered options for the candidate to show how the writer used descriptive language or dialogue or contrast to develop the story. Part (c) asked for an explanation of the significance of setting in the development of each story.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward. Some candidates disregarded the rubric for Part (b) and discussed more than one technique. Acceptable responses for this part included the use of descriptive language to evoke mood; description of landscape; dialogue to reinforce attitudes and perceptions; and contrast (from the perspective of character, setting, intentions).

Part (c) posed a challenge in that candidates displayed limited knowledge of the significance of setting to the development of the story. Acceptable responses included the ways in which the setting (as in “Blackout”) provides the background and reasons and attitudes of the positions taken by the two characters (the sense of superiority of the woman as against the nationalistic pride of the man). The two settings in “To Da-duh, in Memoriam” become the representation of the two main characters (rural Barbados and cosmopolitan New York) and the conflict between native tropical elements and the modernizing effect of the metropolis.

Here is an example of a good response to Part (c):

The white woman is in mental darkness and fails to see the ‘light’ that the man is showing her that all men are created equal. In the end, it is not he who needs to take a ‘light’ from her (cigarette or otherwise) it is she who must take a ‘light’ (knowledge and acceptance) from him. Also, in ‘To Da-Duh in Memoriam’, the story starts off with the narrator not being able to see, as the airport is dark and somewhat crowded, obscuring her view. She eventually sees Da-Duh, as she is standing in the light in her white dress and trying to find her way to them. Similarly, the [narrator] was in ‘darkness’ thinking that her world of technology was all there was, and was better, only to come to Barbados and see the flaws in her lifestyle and the emptiness of it...setting is significant in both stories and the ‘darkness’ can be taken both literally and symbolically as it represents the need for some kind of ‘light’ in order to see clearly.

Twenty-four (0.67%) of the 3,410 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. One candidate earned the full mark of 35. The mean for this question was 14.49.

Question 12

In this question candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list and in Part (a), to describe the love relationship portrayed in the two stories: Part (b) asked for a discussion of how the attitudes displayed by two characters affect the outcome of the relationship and Part (c), an identification of and commentary on one device used by the writer to convey his/her view of the relationship. Some candidates lost marks because they included inappropriate texts (such as poems, drama texts and novels). Apart from naming and discussing devices, candidates generally demonstrated a degree of weakness in writing the comparative essay.

Eighty-four (1.68%) of the 4,973 candidates who attempted this question earned marks between 30 and 35. Two candidates earned full marks for this question. The mean for this question was 15.79.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

On the whole, many essays were well structured, coherent and cohesive. Teachers should be commended for their hard work. However, more attention needs to be given to the acquisition of knowledge of literary terms and dramatic techniques, the ability to discuss their use by the playwright and to comment on their effectiveness. We urge teachers/instructors to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

1. Text selection and text choice ought to be discussed in class as one aspect of preparation for the examination. Sometimes textual choice (as in poems and short stories) limits the depth of the discussion and textual evidence needed for strong arguments.
2. Many candidates lost marks because they crossed genres for example, using a Drama text to answer the question in the Prose Fiction section. No marks can be awarded in such instances as this is a genre-specific examination.
3. The tendency to narrate, evident in responses in the Prose Fiction section, continues to weaken the analytical element in essays.
4. Teachers are also encouraged to continue to reinforce and teach essay-writing skills, strengthen vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing and sentence construction. They are encouraged to find opportunities to give small writing tasks such as exercises which target introductory paragraphs and finding textual evidence to develop one point (even a paragraph at a time) to assist weaker students to develop the required skills.
5. Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to concepts such as 'dramatic function' and 'writer's craft'. Candidates need to demonstrate that they are aware that the writer deliberately selected words or plotted events for particular effects.
6. Even as students are encouraged to see other versions of the texts under study, they must be constantly reminded that only the texts, as they appear on the syllabus, are being tested (and not the film version, for instance).
7. Students should know the skills required when they are asked to define, discuss, trace, describe, determine, comment on, or show. Teachers must prepare students by dedicating time to closely examining the nature of the response expected by each of these and other key words used in questions.
8. While it was clear that students were exposed to hearing and or reading the poems, for instance, teachers are encouraged to take them one step further; they should be empowered to master the language to describe, explain and analyse with greater clarity those experiences shared and gained through listening and speaking.
9. Teachers must remind students of the potential of Literature. It is not merely a tool or an instrument of the writers' style, but is also the 'lived' experience. Literature can help students to explore, question, form judgments and reinforce certain values and attitudes. This dimension, the kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts.