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Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate® Notes for English Teachers and Students

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INTRODUCTION

School-Based Assessment is an integral part of student assessment in the course covered by this Syllabus. It is intended to assist students in acquiring certain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are associated with the subject. The activities for the School-Based Assessment are linked to the Syllabus and should form part of the learning activities to enable the student to achieve the objectives of the Syllabus.

*This document provides information that can be used to guide the completion of the **CSEC®** English SBA. This includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), a graphical representation of the **CSEC®** English SBA process and some general guidelines for managing the roles performed by the teacher and the students in completing the SBA.*

PREAMBLE

Communication is generally taken to be the process of sharing information, thoughts and feelings between people through language that is spoken or written, and – when it is convenient – shown in attitude, movement, gesture and the other elements which make up body language. There are increased demands to do better in the way we communicate, an intensifying of the concept of communication so it becomes “**effective communication**”. This concept requires that transmitted content is received and understood by the audience(s) **in the way it was intended**.

CSEC® English A and B examinations have followed the traditional standards of language and testing, but we are required to go further, wider to recognise and address: the new demands and implications in the word, the new genres and media which package and transmit the word, and instant effects of transmittal. There is still the strong need for individuals to hone their communication skills, but the corporate world (the world of work) suggests that collaboration is an essential norm. Classroom situations in which students were encouraged or at least allowed to proceed in the way someone else prescribed is no longer the smart behaviour. The demand is that students develop strong critical and problem-solving skills and expanded facility in coding and decoding the language.

The English SBA prompts and allows candidates to see and use wider, yet more accessible arena from which to gather knowledge and expertise. They are encouraged to find material (that is, thought-provoking content) in other forms besides the familiar novel or play or poem, so as to allow them to discover sources and content which appeal to them. “Material” can be drawn from many sources: magazines, newspapers, the Internet, videos, songs, the content of spoken-word performances, religious sources, printed or audio.

The SBA is **not** a Social Studies project, but a personally motivated exploration into aspects of our individual or social lives. The students’ exploration and discovery, discussion and critical thought culminate in two ways: (1) a report on the plans, strategies and experiences: (“*processes, procedures and outcomes*”) shared by the group as they explored and discussed, and (2) the individual’s prepared oral response/reaction to the topic explored. The response will be presented in a genre which the individual chooses as best suited to ensure effective communication.

(A glossary of terms used in describing the SBA tasks and content is included here.)

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
CSEC® ENGLISH SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. What is the English SBA Portfolio?

The English SBA portfolio is a collection of each student's work on the investigation of the issue selected by the group. It contains evidence of the candidate's planning of the investigation, interacting with and reflecting on stimuli (pieces of material) and writing a report.

It should include:

- (a) the stimuli (pieces of material) which the student selected and with which he/she has interacted;
- (b) three Reflection entries written by student;
- (c) a copy of the Final Written Group Report;
- (d) plan of investigation;
- (e) plan for Oral Presentation; and,
- (f) copy of the scoring rubric for individual participation (see page 51 of the Syllabus).

2. What constitutes the group activity of the SBA?

Although all students have individual tasks, they also have group tasks/responsibilities. With the teacher's guidance, through discussion (brainstorming), students will generate ideas about possible themes/areas of interest.

As part of a group (4–5 students), they will:

- (a) select a theme for the group;
- (b) select a leader to better manage the process;
- (c) discuss possible selections of stimuli (pieces of materials) among group members. Group members will take personal pieces of material to the group for discussion to determine suitability; and,
- (d) assist group members in structuring the 'Plan of Investigation' (helping group members to focus on their area) – see page 29 of Syllabus.

Outcome of the group activity

- (a) For the group report, the group agrees on at least three pieces of material selected from the general pool used for individual reflection. At least one piece of material must be in print.
- (b) In the written report, it is shown how the various procedures/processes (activities) are used to select at least three final pieces of material. Include the selected pieces of material in the written report.
- (c) Develop a written report showing reasons for the selections of material (for example, shared features) and analysis (for example the connection of the material to the theme).

3. What is 'investigation'?

The Investigation involves:

- (a) choosing the issue/topic/theme;
- (b) finding appropriate stimuli using the strategies outlined in item 4 below; and,
- (c) checking the stimulus for bias.

4. What does research involve?

The research involves adding to the knowledge (what you know already) through discovery by:

- (a) using a search engine;
- (b) reading;
- (c) listening;
- (d) *observing*;
- (e) discussing ideas (brainstorming);
- (f) asking questions; and,
- (g) collecting information connected to your issue/topic/theme.

These activities help the student to find *and evaluate* appropriate information which adds to their understanding of the theme.

5. What is meant by ‘outcomes of research’?

The ‘*outcomes of the research*’ is a report on the new knowledge gained about the theme/the process/the group as members were involved in the research. Research in this context refers to the investigation in which candidates engaged.

6. What is *Reflection*?

Writing the three ‘Reflection’ entries means that the student, working individually:

- (a) chooses three pieces of material related to the theme, one of which must be print;
- (b) creates a first entry in which they record *how each of the three stimuli affected their understanding of and reaction to the theme*;
- (c) creates a second entry which *they* comment on the language techniques used, for example, *figurative language, emotional language, descriptive language, denotative and connotative language, levels of formality, use of dialect, jargon*; and,

(See the glossary for further information on language used in visual stimuli)

- (d) creates a third entry which *they* comment on how the process of doing the English SBA *on the selected theme* has helped *them* to grow. *For example, increased understanding, competence, awareness, changes in behaviour, attitude, and world view.*

This last entry of the reflection should be delayed until close to the completion of the SBA.

7. What is ‘*discuss the use of language*’?

When students discuss the use of language found in their selected stimuli (pieces of material) they will comment on the techniques (word choice, figurative language) used by the writer to communicate his/her message. The discussion should include:

- (a) identification of techniques; and,
- (b) comments on how these techniques helped/hindered the delivery of the message (information).

8. What does ‘*analysis of material*’ involve?

When the group members choose a piece of material as stimulus they analyse it considering:

- (a) What does the stimulus (piece chosen) show/say about the theme?
- (b) What is appealing about the stimulus (piece chosen). Students may comment on features such as the language, the image, the rhythm.

9. What is the 'Written Report'?

The written report is an explanation and summary of the processes that were used to select the final three pieces of stimuli and why they were chosen.

10. What is included in the 'Plan for Oral Presentation'?

The Plan for Oral Presentation is an outline of the presentation that the candidate will make to the class. It shows, in note form, the points that the candidate will make about his/her investigation in respect to:

- (a) Genre chosen.
- (b) Sources used.
- (c) Use of language in sources.

11. What does Oral Presentation entail?

The oral presentation entails the following:

Brief Overview

At the beginning the student says in Standard English:

- (a) *the theme and how it is to be presented; whether through drama/poetry/prose/role play); and,*
- (b) *the sources used and the kind of language in them.*

Creative Response

Deliver in person your creative response to the issue/topic/theme.

Please note that you may use dialect in your creative response but the majority of it must be in Standard English.

12. Should the Oral Presentation be recorded?

No, **CXC®** does not require that the oral presentations be recorded and submitted.

13. What is 'participation measure'?

The 'participation measure' refers to the teacher's and student's assessment of his/her contribution to the work done by the group.

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE ENGLISH SBA PROCESS



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Group work: the suggested group size for the English SBA is 4–5 students. Group work entails all the activities/tasks these (4–5) students do in/out of class. Some of these activities/tasks that the group engages in are brainstorming, discussions and preparing the report.

Issue/topic/theme/event: the focus of the English SBA. The area of concentration or exploration is broad enough to cover the range of options that the student can engage in (as in an issue, a topic, a theme or a sub-theme and an event. After brainstorming and focused discussions, students will settle on an area of interest worthy of investigation.

Portfolio: a compilation of each student's work for final assessment which includes but is not limited to a copy of the group report, notes of the oral presentation, the entries for the reflection and the plan of investigation.

Print: the full range of written work/anything written such as, books (fiction and nonfiction such as novels, science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, memoirs, histories, manuals), *lyrics* (poems and songs), short stories, articles, newspapers, blogs, advertisements, cartoon strips, speeches.

Use of language: ideally this applies to all stimuli that use print. It entails how the writer/author uses words to communicate or evoke a particular response in the selected stimuli. Firstly, the candidate must identify the particular language technique, for example, emotive language, descriptive language, figurative language, narrative voice, diction; the use of jargon, slang, denotative or connotative language. After identifying the technique, there should be a discussion on the effectiveness of the technique (how is this particular use of language helping or hindering the 'message' in the text).

'Become a better person': this requires some 'deep thinking'/introspection as the student is encouraged to say how the process of preparing for and doing the English SBA impacts him/her. In addressing this, the student may ask:

- Has the experience for instance, made me more aware? More empathetic? More tolerant? More knowledgeable?
- Have my skills been sharpened in a particular area? Made me more curious? Made me a better listener? Has my attitude changed in any way?

'Better' here means, even in a small way, whether I am any different now that I have engaged in this process (working with the group, learning to reflect, and managing my time) in this SBA journey.

Analysis of material: this term relates to the report written by the group in terms of the *summary of the process of selecting and discussing* stimuli. An analysis of the material is an engagement with the print or non-print materials/stimuli that the group uses to address the issue/topic/theme/event. The analysis covers relevance of material/stimuli and the artistic/visual/literary/aural features of what is selected.

Report: a written activity by the group which features how the final three stimuli (one of which must be print) were selected and why. The collective and collaborative effort will be one written piece. This report will be replicated/reproduced/copied to all members of the group so each can have this (copy) to be part of the items for his/her individual portfolio.

Participation measure: with the aid of the teacher, each student will be awarded a maximum of 5 marks. Essentially, this portion of the portfolio speaks to the individual student's general contribution to the written and oral activities that the group engages in. The 'participation measure' therefore captures how the student interfaces with other members of his/her group and the impact and scope of his/her contribution.

Indicators of group activity: The individual will have chosen his/her own pieces in response to the theme because of their appeal to him/her. However, (1) before the student does the individual reflections, the pieces are shared in the group to have a consensus on actual relevance to the theme; (2) after individual work is done, each person brings his/her three pieces back to the group. A further selection from the total (3 per person) is done, again ensuring that at least one piece is print, and together the group explores: (i) interpretations, (ii) value and values, and (iii) impact. The exploration processes may include debate/discussion, shared experiences and observations, study of social comments, assessment of reactions, etc. (Investigative material may be drawn from video, social media, print media, for example).

Plan of investigation: After brainstorming (perhaps at the general class level), students will form (smaller) groups based on interest in a particular area/topic and construct a 250-word document which includes the title; why this issue /topic/theme/event was chosen; how the 'data' (stimuli) were collected.

Stimuli/pieces of material: the range of print and non-print referenced in the portfolio submission, such as, but not restricted to, books (fiction and non-fiction), manuals, articles, speeches, leaflets, blogs, photographs, paintings, pictures, cartoons, video clips, music, features, *and* audio clips.

Reflection: an individual activity, capturing the student's thoughts in writing (as in an entry in a diary); deep thinking, then converting this process in writing; usually more effective if the student responds to *prompts* such as, 'Why do I feel this way?' 'What triggered this response?' 'Why is this feeling a positive/negative one?' 'What do I find most appealing/stirring about this material/stimulus (print/non-print)?'

The portfolio will require three reflection entries, each entry concentrating on a specific idea/aspect.

Outcomes of the research: *final selection of stimuli and the new knowledge gained about the theme/ the process/the group as members were involved in the research. Research in this context refers to the investigation in which candidates engaged.*

Oral presentation: an individual activity (about 4 minutes) in which the student presents/performs and this activity is graded by the teacher. The *brief plan of the oral presentation* of this performance/presentation is included in the portfolio.

Investigation/research: This speaks to the task(s) related to the assignment, as in the exploration of the issue/topic/theme/event which is selected; the (print/non-print) stimuli used by the individual/group.

Language used in visual stimuli: *These refer broadly to non-print such as pictures, cartoons, photographs, drawings, illustrations. The impact of the message conveyed; effect of the image; the emotional appeal; relevance to the issue/topic/theme/event chosen.*

Quality of group behaviour: This addresses the dynamics of the group (4–5 persons). Each group is expected to work together to achieve specific outcomes. Qualities such as commitment, willingness to work collaboratively, delegating tasks, being responsive and responsible in managing tasks and generally, how well the group members communicate with each other are considered. The teacher will gauge this aspect and grade the group accordingly.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN MANAGING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Since the SBA is an integral part of the evaluation of the syllabus, teachers are expected to guide and monitor students' progress and assess the finished product according to the criteria set out in the mark scheme.

The teacher is expected to:

1. *inform students of the areas available for assignment;*
2. *approve students' assignment plans;*
3. *inform students about the deadlines for completion and submission of the assignment;*
4. *advise students on the nature of the task and the scope and depth of research required to complete it;*
5. *advise students on the availability of resource material;*
6. *monitor students' progress by advising them on the quality of their work in progress and suggesting ways to improve quality;*
7. *use techniques such as review of students' progress reports and preliminary drafts to establish authenticity of their work;*
8. *collect and mark the assignments; and,*
9. *keep a record of students' marks and submit these together with samples of work as requested by CXC®.*

An EXAMPLE of how the teacher can manage this process is provided below.

Establishing Ownership of Work Done

This task was done **as a classroom assignment**, individually and independently, by each student **under the supervision of the teacher**.

It was **formatively** assessed by the teacher and was returned to the student with appropriate feedback comments.

The final version of this task was written up by the student again **under the supervision of the teacher**.

1. First version written: _____
Day/Month/Year
2. Feedback comments returned to student: _____
Day/Month/Year
3. Final version written: _____
Day/Month/Year

Teacher's Signature: _____

Date: _____
Day/Month/Year

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN MANAGING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Students may use different kinds of texts (literary and non-literary):

Biographies	Advertisements
Histories	Brochures
Novels	Cartoon Strips
Poems	Diaries
Plays	Magazines
Reports	Newspaper articles
Short Stories	Pamphlets
Speeches (public)	

Students should learn how to interrogate the text.

Example:

1. As you read the “text”, practise:
 - (a) thinking about what you are reading;
 - (b) reflecting on what you are reading *and making notes on how what you are reading gives you a better understanding of the theme*;
 - (c) asking yourself questions about what you are reading; and,
 - (d) making predictions about what you are reading.
2. Practise close reading by:
 - (a) outlining key points of what you read;
 - (b) paraphrasing what you read; and,
 - (c) predicting what you will read next.
3. Unravel how the paragraph is organised:
 - (a) A main idea followed by a set of minor points;
 - (b) Two or more contrasting ideas; or,
 - (c) A sequence of activities.

4. In “listening and speaking”, you must always:
- (a) speak to the purpose;
 - (b) keep the audience in focus; and,
 - (c) notice the context in which you are participating.

An example of how the student can manage this process is provided below.

Student Schedule

Schedule for conducting English SBA assignment

Major Activities	Estimated Time for Activity	Persons Involved
1.	Weeks: Days: Hours:	
2.		
3.		
4.		

Name of Student: _____
 Signature of Student: _____
 Date Submitted: _____
 Day/Month/Year

Approved by Teacher:
 Name: _____
 Date: _____
 Day/Month/Year

MANAGING SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Small Group Activities

In conducting my English assignment, I plan to collect relevant data by:

1. **searching** Internet sources and **printing** relevant pages;
2. **questioning** persons in schools, homes, market places, and the community and **recording** their responses; and,
3. **collecting articles** written in newspapers over a given period and **analysing** their content (name activity).

I wish to conduct these activities working with a small group of students who plan to do similar assignments or activities. The members of the group are:

Name	Assignment
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Name of Student: _____

Date: _____

MANAGING LARGE GROUPS ACTIVITIES

Suggested Ways of Working with Large Classes

1. Teacher-led discussion classes where students share knowledge and generate knowledge while cultivating good speech habits. Care must be taken to include as many students as possible in the oral aspects.
2. After one session of managed discussion, the class writes the main issues and views shared – without comment.
3. Brainstorming sessions on topics which draw out ideas for later in-depth big discussion.
4. Division into long-term small-groups with individual responsibilities for executing aspects of an assignment.
5. Individual assignments and instructions with guidelines for completion and assessment rubrics. This allows attention to be devoted to individuals while small groups are working in the room.
6. Creation of small groups – (one for each period of teaching). The teacher works with one group per period to give them help in reading or completing an assignment and spends time with each group in the week. This is particularly useful in helping with essay writing, for example, structuring an essay.
7. Introduction of tasks to be done. Involve the class in outlining the related activities.

Together:

- (a) construct an appropriate timeline; and,
- (b) encourage students to accept responsibility for speaking to particular parts.

GUIDANCE TO THE STUDENT FOR THE WRITTEN REPORT

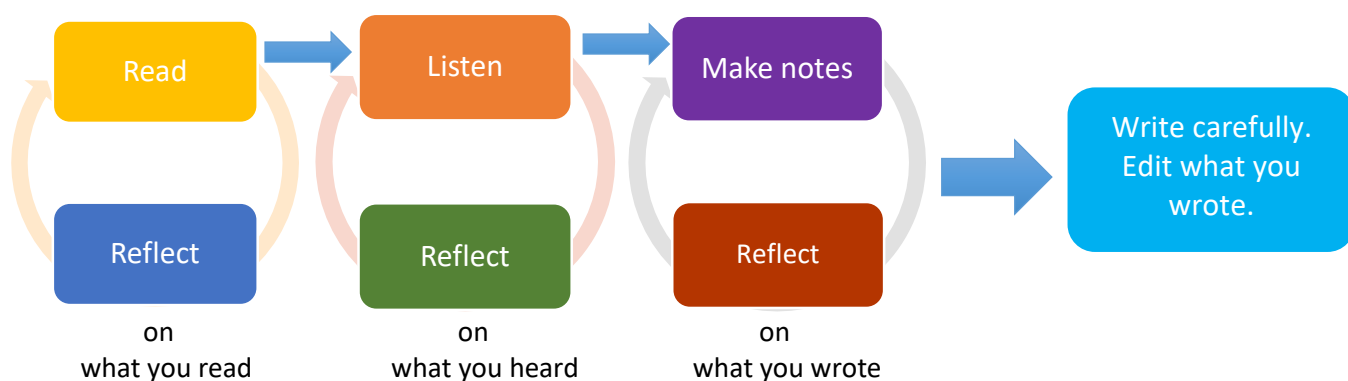
Written Report

What should be done to enhance performance on the Written Report?

In the group meeting:

1. Take notes of what group members say about the '*stimulus*' being selected.
2. Summarise the content of the text; cite the 'text' accurately.
3. Write sentences (quotations) which support what members **think** or **feel** about the 'texts'.
4. Use (in discussions) personal experiences to tell what members think or feel about the texts used in the group.
5. Write opinions boldly. However, find facts and opinions expressed by other persons to support your opinions.

Follow this rule:



GUIDANCE TO THE STUDENT FOR THE ORAL PRESENTATION

Oral Presentation

What should you do in order to enhance your performance on the Oral Presentation?

1. ***Study and be guided by a copy*** of the Scoring Rubrics for Oral Presentation.
2. **Read and discuss** within your small group the concepts defined for each of the three facets and the behaviour expected for each level of the facets.
3. ***To be most effective in communicating with your formal audience:***
 - (a) *practise* before a full-length mirror at home;
 - (b) *practise* before an adult (preferably, a parent), giving you feedback; and,
 - (c) use an audio recording of an oral presentation, listen to the recording two or more times, and perform a self-assessment using the Scoring Rubric.

