

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

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

MAY/JUNE 2009

SOCIAL STUDIES

**Copyright © 2009 Caribbean Examinations Council ®
St. Michael, Barbados
All rights reserved.**

SOCIAL STUDIES
GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2009

GENERAL COMMENTS

The June Social Studies Examinations offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council attracts both school and private candidates. The number of candidates entering for the General Proficiency examinations increased to 47 300 scripts in 2009. The overall performance has improved.

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 tested various levels of difficulty and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The performance in this paper compared favourably with that of 2007 and 2008.

General Proficiency

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 B1 and B11. Students were required to answer a total of 5 questions.

Section A: Individual Interaction

In this section candidates were required to respond to two of three questions. The quality of responses ranged from less than satisfactory to outstanding.

Question 1

This was the most popular question in Section A and the most popular on the paper. It tested the candidates' knowledge and understanding of juvenile delinquency and social issues affecting Caribbean families. Many candidates were able to correctly describe two factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. Factors ranged from children suffering abuse in the home to poor communication between parents and children. Correct responses for social issues that affect Caribbean families included a high level of unemployment, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to give three reasons why parents may not want their delinquent children to reside in the home. This part was well answered. Correct responses included the negative influence of the behaviour of the juvenile on younger siblings who may copy their behaviour and create greater conflict in the family and parents lacking the knowledge and skills to deal with delinquent children, thus preferring them to be elsewhere where they can receive help,

For the Application part of the question, candidates were required to suggest to youth leaders in their community, one strategy to change the behaviour of juvenile delinquents. Acceptable suggestions ranged from arranging for after school rehabilitation programmes where resource persons and previously delinquent children provide individual and group counselling and teach life skills to the delinquent children. Another recurring response included arranging parenting sessions during special Parent Teachers' Association meetings in which psychologists provide guidance and teach parenting skills. The success of these strategies was based on the change in the behaviour of the delinquent child, based on the understanding of his or her

problems and how to cope with them. For the parents, development of the skills and attitudes needed to cope with delinquent children would reduce conflicts in the family. Many candidates who attempted this question performed well.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' understanding of the concept of social groups and required identification of two groups to which children belong. Candidates were also asked to identify two characteristics of an informal group. The candidates defined a social group as two or more people who cooperate to achieve common goals. Candidates correctly identified church, family and peer groups as social groups to which children belong. Most were able to identify two characteristics of informal groups. Correct responses included that there are no written rules and there is no clearly defined structure.

The Interpretation section of the question, asked the candidates to explain three ways in which young people benefit from membership in formal social groups. Many correct responses included that participation in decision making in formal social groups leads to the development of a positive self image and confidence. Taking on leadership roles results in learning to be responsible and respecting the opinions of others.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one way in which the leader of a youth club may encourage members to work together to achieve their goals. Some candidates suggested organising competitions with other groups or clubs in which members would have to practise and cooperate with each other to achieve success, and 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 understand the goals and appreciate each member, resulting in greater cooperation.

Question 3

This was the least popular question in Section A. The knowledge component asked candidates to identify two rights of Caribbean citizens which are guaranteed by the constitution of their countries. The most popular and correct responses were the right to freedom, the right to vote and the right to a fair trial. Many candidates were able to describe two actions of the police that are considered violations of citizens' rights. Such actions included searching one's house without a search warrant and abusing citizens when questioning them about their activities.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three reasons why some citizens may not take legal action when their rights are violated by the police. Correct answers included lack of knowledge on the action to be taken; inability to pay lawyers' fees and fear of police retaliation.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to the leadership of the police force in their country one action the police may take to reassure citizens that their rights will not be violated. Answers included community policing allowing for citizens and police to discuss community business and cooperate in solving crime.

The most common justification of the strategy was based on the belief that if the police and citizens learn to cooperate, they would begin to trust each other and the citizens would be willing to come forward and identify the criminals in their society.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

This section is divided into two parts. Part 1 consists of two structured questions and Part 2 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 death rate and natural increase. Many candidates correctly defined death rate as the number of deaths per 1000 persons in a population within one year. Some candidates incorrectly defined death rate as the number of persons who died in a population. Some candidates also confused death rate and infant mortality rate. Responses such as the number of babies per 1000 deaths in a given population were incorrect. Some candidates also gave correct answers to natural increase as the increase in population due to an increase in birth rates over death rates. Responses such as the difference between birth and death rate were incorrect. Candidates were also asked to describe two factors that may have caused the death rate to decline in some Caribbean countries in recent years. Correct responses included increased access to health facilities such as hospitals and health clinics, improvement in lifestyles such as proper diet and regular exercise and eradication of infectious diseases.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to calculate the natural increases, using the table showing birth rate and death rate figures for two countries. While some candidates gave correct responses, others revealed a lack of understanding of the concept of natural increase. Candidates were also asked to give two reasons why a developing country should strive to reduce its high birth rate. Correct responses included the inability of the country to provide the social services, such as education and health, to satisfy requirements of an increasing population.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to the government of their country one way to encourage the citizens to have smaller families. Some responses did not attest to the democratic nature of the Caribbean countries especially in the justification section. Popular responses included conducting workshops with resource persons to teach citizens about family planning methods and introducing legislation to limit families having not more than one child or in some cases two children. Many justification statements were based on the belief that if persons are aware of the difficulties involved in raising large families they would not have large families.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' knowledge on water pollution. For the knowledge section many candidates were able to name two water pollutants. Correct and popular responses included oil spills in seas, fertilisers seeping into water bodies and discharge of raw sewage in rivers and seas. The Knowledge component also asked candidates to state two ways in which air becomes polluted. Correct responses included burning of garbage which releases poisonous fumes into the air, fumes from motor vehicles and smoke from factories. Some candidates wrote on pollution and not specifically air pollution.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three ways in which air pollution affects the quality of life of Caribbean people. This section was not well done as some students did not link the effect of air pollution to quality of life. Correct responses observed that it increases respiratory diseases such as asthma and bronchitis.

For Application, candidates were asked to suggest to community groups one strategy to reduce air pollution. Strategies warranting full marks included conducting workshops with resource persons to educate citizens on the causes and dangers of air pollution and how to reduce it.

Common justifications were based on the 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 zero. It was based on Caribbean integration. The Knowledge section asked candidates to give three areas of cooperation among CARICOM member states. The most popular responses were education, through CXC or UWI, and law, through the Caribbean Court of Justice. Some students were unable to give examples.

The Interpretation section was poorly done as most candidates were unable to give three reasons why the smaller Caribbean states may experience problems when trading with the larger states. Appropriate responses included inability to compete with the larger territories because of high costs of production and difficulty in meeting quotas because of low levels of production.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to CARICOM leaders one activity which would demonstrate how CARICOM states can integrate more effectively. Suggestions included greater discussion and agreements on improving trade relations between the countries at the Head of Governments' meetings and removing immigration restrictions on travel in the region for CARICOM citizens.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to write an essay and to begin by describing three factors that lead to rural-urban migration. Most popular responses were lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, lack of educational facilities such as colleges and universities and lack of infrastructure and services such as electricity and running water. The Interpretation section which asked for three reasons why the government of a country may discourage migration into the urban areas was not well done. Some students wrote on international migration. Many candidates associated migrants from rural areas with poor, unemployed people lacking in knowledge and skills and unable to get employment. Best answers stated that migration resulted in excessive overcrowding in urban areas resulting in the creation of slum and squatter settlements and the depopulation of the rural areas.

The Application section was also poorly done as candidates were asked to suggest to urban residents, one strategy to improve relations between themselves and migrants to their communities. Some students gave answers which ignored the concept of improving relations between themselves and the migrants. Popular responses included encouraging the migrants to participate in Neighbourhood Watch meetings which would help them to know the community and its members. The justification was based on the premise that knowing what is expected in the community would improve relationships.

Section C- Options

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

Question 8

Candidates were asked to identify two ways in which family members use energy in the home. They identified cooking, washing, ironing and using electricity bulbs for lights. The Knowledge section also asked candidates to describe two ways in which family members conserve energy. Most students answered the question correctly, mentioning turning off lights when not in use, and use of cheaper sources of electricity such as solar energy.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to give three explanations of how a country may benefit when citizens conserve energy. Some candidates had difficulty in linking energy conservation with benefits to the country. Popular responses included that a lower energy consumption level results in less importation of fuel and thus savings in foreign exchange.

The Application section asked the candidates to suggest one strategy that a consumer organization may use to promote energy conservation practices. Strategies include organising consumer exhibitions to demonstrate the use of energy saving appliances and educating people on how to receive loans to purchase equipment. Incorrect responses include consumer organizations making laws to force consumers to conserve energy. Justification given for the action was that people would conserve energy if it resulted in lower electricity bills and savings for the family.

Question 9

This was the least popular question in Section C and was poorly done. It focussed on the ownership of the 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 two examples of mass media as the radio, television, internet and the newspaper. Candidates were also able to state two functions of the mass media. These included education, entertainment and information.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three benefits to be gained by citizens through government ownership of the media. Candidates gave responses that included greater emphasis on local programmes which would educate citizens about their cultural heritage and also greater emphasis on citizens participating in the affairs of the country through “call-in programmes” in which they address concerns to government ministers.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest one action that a government may take to improve media services to the public. A popular response was ensuring that operators of television and radio stations have broadcast licences and are fined if they operate without such licences. The justifications were based on people obeying rules and regulations because of the fines involved and the embarrassment when they are punished.

Question 10

For this question, the candidates were asked to write an address for a town hall meeting on developing tourism. The candidates began by listing two activities that Caribbean countries promote for eco tourism or nature tourism and two activities for heritage tourism. Many candidates listed hiking through forests, scuba diving and bird watching for eco tourism and visits to museums and cultural festivals for heritage tourism. Many candidates were able to state two factors that may attract health-conscious tourists to the Caribbean. Such factors included the gyms for exercise, health cuisines and a clean environment.

The Interpretation section asked candidates to explain three ways in which Caribbean countries benefit from a variety of tourism products. Correct responses include greater employment opportunities for citizens, more foreign exchange generated to assist in development, and the development of different resources in both rural and urban areas.

The Application section asked candidates to suggest to the Ministry of Tourism in their country, one strategy that may encourage citizens to invest in the tourist industry. A common response was providing workshops for citizens in which tourism experts will provide pamphlets and advise citizens on the benefits of investments and available loan arrangements. Justification was based on the premise that people will invest in the industry if they know that there are benefits to be gained and that affordable loans are available.

Paper 03/1: School Based Assessment

The popular research topics were 'Crime', 'School Indiscipline' and 'Teenage Pregnancy'.

Many of the projects had clear problem statements such as 'How does crime affect people in my community?' 'Why is there an increase in indiscipline in my school?'

There were however many problem statements that were not clear, and some questions required yes/no responses. Formatting research questions requires guidance and frequent practice. Some questionnaires were too lengthy and in some projects, candidates had difficulty handling the volume of data produced.

Generally, data were presented in three different forms. The figures were well drawn and displayed accurate data. In some projects however, different types of bar graphs were presented as the three different forms, and many of the figures were not labeled. This made the data difficult to read. Different forms could be bar graphs, tables and pie charts. Students must be given practice with different ways of displaying data such as graphs, pie charts and tables, so that they will become familiar with their use.

There was marked improvement in the explanation and interpretation of data. Candidates used terms such as '... the data mean that ...', or '... this may have been as a result of ...'. They made comparisons and drew inferences and made adequate references to the data in the interpretation. The weaker responses however failed to link the interpretation section to the original problem statement. Most candidates presented findings and recommendations from the data, but very few of them presented any implementation procedure.

Most projects were well presented in neatly bound in folders. However there were too many submissions that were presented as loose pages. A greater attempt, for example securing the pages, should be made to improve the presentation of some projects. Students should be encouraged to submit their projects in folders that are sufficiently sturdy to keep the pages together.

Plagiarism continues to be a concern. Three SBAs were plagiarized from the model 'Efficiency of Garbage Collection ...' presented in the text book 'Modules in Social Studies', by Ramsawak and Umraw, and a fourth had taken the topic and substituted some data. Penalties were applied to these projects.

Recommendations

1. Students who plagiarize miss a valuable opportunity to practise a variety of thinking skills and demonstrate their creativity in producing a project. Teacher should emphasize to students the value of the SBA in preparing them for future research activities.

Plagiarism also defeats the values goals of Social Studies – honesty, diligence, pride in ones' self etc. It is an unlawful action. If these points are explained clearly to students, there may be fewer cases of plagiarism.

2. Students who attempt novel SBA topics should be commended; however teachers should guide such students in the selection of manageable problem statements at their level. For example 'Do children who grow up with their fathers have a higher level of intelligence?' proved a difficult problem statement for the candidate to manage. Likewise, 'What are the reasons why people voted in the last general elections?'
3. When group projects are submitted, teachers should instruct students to show some individuality in their submissions; for example in the data presentation, recommendations and implementation tasks.
4. It is important to write clearly the title of the project on the cover page.

5. In marking the **final copy** of the SBA, teachers write many comments on the projects. In order to maintain clear moderation principles and eliminate any possible bias that may occur, teachers should not write comments on the projects, but possibly keep these comments separate.

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 analyze data to make recommendations.

This examination consisted of five questions. Questions 1 - 3 tested candidates' knowledge of basic research concepts and the research process. Questions 4 and 5 tested their application of research concepts and skills.

Question 1

The topic choices were as follows 'The Impact of Video Games on Students' Academic Performance' and 'The Growing Number of Street children in my Community.' Candidates seemed interested in both topics as they were equally popular in selection.

The majority of candidates formulated clear questions from the topic, for example 'Why is the number of street children in my community growing?' 'What is the impact of video games on students' academic performance?' In comparison with the previous year, candidates presented fewer yes/no questions as research questions. They were able to state plausible reasons for conducting the investigation, but many candidates were not able to identify a data source.

Question 2

Candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge of research concepts of population, sampling method, bias in research and limitations of a study. Few candidates described the sampling procedure although the term random was mentioned by some. In many of the responses performance could have improved if candidates had described **how they selected** the **random** sample. More candidates were aware of possible limitations than ways of introducing bias into the research.

Question 3

This question tested candidates knowledge of the concepts of research instruments, research ethics, as well as their knowledge of various ways of displaying research data. It also tested their knowledge of formulating questions for a questionnaire. Generally, candidates could formulate questions for a questionnaire. However many candidates still lack knowledge of the concept of research instruments. Possibly more frequent use of the term during instruction may assist students in developing familiarity with it.

Question 4

This question required application of research concepts and recorded an average level of performance. Many candidates were not able to formulate an acceptable research question from the problem in the case study and they also had difficulty identifying two research instruments that were applicable to the case study. This confirms difficulty with the concept of **research instruments**.

Question 5

This question required candidates to interpret data provided in a case study. The overall performance was fair. The main areas of weakness were candidates' inability to differentiate between findings and conclusion of the case study and to calculate the statistics to complete the table.

Recommendations

The following research concepts must be taught and studied adequately – instrument, population and sampling procedure. Candidates must learn how to choose a sample and also how to express findings and conclusions after studying data. Good performance depends on thorough preparation.

General Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers and students need to recognize that the questions set in the examination require candidates to have a clear understanding of the terms and concepts stated in the syllabus. A wide variety of textual materials as well as updated materials on topics must be utilised. Guided research, concept teaching, cooperative group work and field work are an integral part of the learning and teaching Social Studies. Both teachers and students must be cognizant of the democratic processes in the Caribbean and the need to foster the values, skills and attitudes needed for Caribbean citizenry. This is highlighted in the application and justification of questions. Although life experiences are valuable, these experiences are not sufficient for the demands of the syllabus. Justification must be based on the concepts and the unifying themes of the Social Studies Syllabus. The following are useful reminders for teachers and candidates:

1. Candidates need to be familiar with the objectives, contents and unifying concepts as outlined in the syllabus and to have a clear understanding of what knowledge is required of responses to questions.
2. All instructions stated with regards to answering questions should be followed.
3. Candidates should be clear about their choice of questions in each section of the paper.
4. Candidates should select questions from the options for which they were prepared.
5. Students need to be guided in doing research, understanding concepts and analysing and clarifying values where necessary.
6. A democratic classroom environment is necessary to model the democratic processes, values and attitudes integral to teaching and learning Social Studies.