

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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

**JANUARY 2011**

**SOCIAL STUDIES  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

The January 2011 Social Studies examination offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council consisted of three papers — Paper 01, multiple-choice items, Paper 02, structured questions and extended essays and Paper 03/2, Alternative to School-Based Assessment. The number of candidates entering for the examinations was approximately 3400.

Some questions in Paper 02, particularly in the core section of the syllabus, continue to be popular but there remains a lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of key concepts defined 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. Many candidates were unable to provide relevant justifications. The candidates who were prepared for the examination wrote responses that reflected good use of knowledge and application of the skills learnt.

Some responses for Paper 03/2 generally reflected insufficient 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 Comprehension profiles only. The items were distributed as follows: 30 on The Individual, Family and Society and 30 on Development and Use of Resources. The items tested various levels of difficulty and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The mean score for the paper was 38.81 out of 60 compared with 34.23 in 2010 and 37.70 in 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 two parts, B(i) and B(ii). Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions.

#### Section A: Individual, Family and Society

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

#### Question 1

This question tested candidates' understanding of the functions of the family, the ways in which parents can prepare children for financial responsibilities and the measures that poor families can use to become self-reliant.

Part (a) was generally well done with most candidates being able to define procreation as “producing new members for the continuation of society”.

Part (b) was generally well done by most candidates who were able to identify two other functions of the family. Popular responses included socialization and providing emotional support.

Part (c) was also generally well done with most candidates correctly describing two ways parents can prepare children for financial responsibilities. Correct responses included providing children with weekly or daily allowances to encourage them to budget and save regularly from their allowances at an early age.

Part (d) (i) was not well done by many candidates. The concept of self reliance was not understood by the weaker candidates. The candidates who understood self-reliance gave detailed suggestions such as home gardening in which short-term crops such as vegetables could be planted in pots if the land space was limited.

Part (d) (ii) was generally well done by candidates who performed well in Part (d) (i). Candidates who did not understand the concept of self-reliance performed poorly in this part.

### Question 2

This question was designed to test candidates' understanding of the characteristics of formal and informal groups, the factors that encourage students to become members of a defined social group, the different types of interaction among social groups, and measures which may be used in dealing with deviant groups in schools.

Part (a) was generally well done, reflecting an understanding of the concepts of formal and informal groups, the differences between the groups and the characteristics of such groups. Weaker candidates were unable to state the differences between the formal and informal group.

Part (b) was generally well done. Most candidates gave responses that revealed an awareness and understanding of the factors that encourage students to become members of a school gang. Responses included a family environment where children are abused and unloved, and thus had a need for acceptance and recognition among peers.

Part (c) was also well done by most candidates. A detailed and popular response was that "conflict arises between members of a school gang and other students at school because gang activities such as bullying, stealing and cursing result in quarrels and fights between members of both groups". In some cases, responses were not detailed and candidates gave reasons for conflicts within the gang and not between the gang and other members of the school community.

Part (d) (i) was well done by most candidates. An example of a detailed and popular response is "creating a mentorship programme with students of similar backgrounds who have achieved in many areas of school life".

Part (d) (ii) was satisfactorily done by most candidates whose responses were based on the premise that the measures would change behaviour in the long term.

Question 3

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the concept of a floating voter, voter participation in elections, and interpretation of statistical data in the form of a table.

Part (a) was poorly answered as most candidates were unable to define floating voter. Few responses included a complete definition such as "a voter who is not affiliated to any political party, but may cast a vote for any one party".

Part (b) was well answered and most candidates were able to state two pieces of information that can be found on a voter's list. Responses included the voters' name, registration numbers and addresses.

Part (c) was well done. Candidates were able to give correct responses based on the interpretation of the information in the table.

Part (d) (i) was not well answered by some candidates who suggested programmes that did not cater to the needs of youth voters. An appropriate response was "the establishment of an agency with a revolving loan scheme where a young person can access small loans to start a small business without the type of collateral required by commercial banks".

Part (d) (ii) was generally well done by candidates who performed well in Part (d) (i), but some candidates failed to explain fully why the suggested programmes would work. A fully developed response was that unemployed youths who are desirous of starting a business face difficulties mainly because of the collateral needed by financial institutions. A revolving loan scheme with less collateral demand would create greater employment opportunities for youth voters interested in self-employment.

**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

This question was designed to test candidates' understanding of concepts related to employment, factors and procedures to be considered in being self-employed, and their ability to interpret statistical data in the form of a bar graph.

The knowledge and comprehension part of the question was generally well done. Most candidates were able to describe the pattern of employment for men and women, using the graph. A correct response was that there were more women employed than men over the years 2004–2006. Weaker candidates were unable to interpret the bars.

Part (b), which required reasons why persons do not want to be self-employed, was also well answered and a popular response was that "some persons may not want to be self-employed because they are unwilling to take the financial risks involved in setting up businesses and the loss that would result if the

business failed”. Other suitable responses included an unwillingness to undertake responsibility for others’ welfare.

Part (c), which targeted understanding of the difficulties likely for a young person in becoming self-employed, was well done by most candidates. Difficulties identified included inability to provide collateral to ensure loans and lack of a viable business plan.

Part (d) (i) was well answered by most candidates. This addressed the strategies that could be used to create jobs. A popular strategy was that the government should build factories in various areas with high unemployment rates to process local agricultural produce such as oranges, banana, plantain, yam, cassava and peppers.

Part (d) (ii) was well answered by candidates who did well in Part (d) (i). A justification for the strategy highlighted in (d) (ii) was that of the multiplier effect for employment as more persons would become involved in farming because of the available market and the greater number of jobs which would be created in the manufacturing process and the delivery of the goods.

#### Question 5

This question tested candidates’ knowledge of the uses of major natural resources in the Caribbean region and their comprehension of the proper and improper practices related to sustainable development and the uses of forest resources.

Part (a), which tested Knowledge and Comprehension, was generally well done with most candidates identifying recreational uses of forests such as bird watching, camping, hiking and photography. The weaker candidates identified uses that were not recreational such as the removal of forests for building houses.

Part (b), which required candidates to identify activities which contribute to the removal of forests, was generally well done and yielded responses such as the development of housing estates, large-scale mining operations, large-scale agriculture such as banana and sugar cultivation.

Part (c) was also well done by most candidates. Candidates were required to give reasons for conservation of forests. Correct responses included “the conservation of forests reduces soil erosion and helps to maintain soil fertility. Farmers will achieve high yields without large application of fertilizers thus reducing cost of production”. Weaker candidates did not develop their responses.

Part (d) (i) was not well answered by most candidates. A popular but undeveloped response was that government should pass legislation. Some candidates mentioned “introduce measures to preserve forests” but responses were not detailed.

Part (d) (ii) was not well answered as candidates did not develop their responses with justifications of why the measures would succeed.

### Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' understanding of concepts and terms associated with regional integration, challenges facing the Caribbean region, and the role of individual citizens and business organizations in the integration process.

The Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question was not well answered. Few students could define 'trade liberalization' as the movement towards the removal of trade barriers among members of the World Trade Organization. Some candidates simply wrote the removal of trade barriers. Few candidates also defined 'trade bloc' as a group of countries that have special trading arrangements among them so that they can trade freely with each another.

The second part of the Knowledge and Comprehension section was not well done as candidates wrote of difficulties Caribbean countries face when trading with member countries and not when trading with countries outside of the region which was the required response.

The Application, Evaluation and Problem-Solving section of this question was not well done by most candidates. A good suggestion of how a manufacturers' association can help to improve Caribbean trade was that manufacturers can establish businesses in different Caribbean countries using local raw materials within the region and thus produce a variety of goods for export. Some of the weaker candidates wrote responses which were outside the control of manufacturers such as passing laws to prevent competition from larger, developed countries.

### Question 7

This question tested candidates' understanding of the major stages in the integration movement, functions of the Heads of Government Conference, and the role of individual citizens in the integration process.

The Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question was well answered. Most candidates could correctly identify attempts at integration such as Federation, Carifta and CARICOM. Most candidates also correctly identified two member countries of the 1958 Federation.

The second part of the Knowledge and Comprehension section was, however, not well done by most candidates who did not know the purposes of the Heads of Government Conference.

The Application Evaluation and Problem-Solving section was well done by most candidates who cited examples of cooperation among Caribbean governments following the earthquake in Haiti.

An example of a suitable justification was that the provision of skilled manpower would assist in the provision of timely and appropriate care for the sick or wounded after a disaster.

## **Section C: Options**

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

### Question 8

This question tested candidates' knowledge of modes of communication, factors influencing the use of modes of communication, and the impact of communication technology on business operations in the Caribbean.

The Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question was well done by most candidates who could identify the electronic modes of communication and the socio-cultural factors preventing Caribbean citizens from using the available modes of communication. However, some candidates highlighted geographical and economic factors rather than socio-cultural ones, such as poverty and lack of income, ignorance of the technology and low educational levels.

The section on modern communication technology and business operations was satisfactorily done as most candidates made the connection between communication technology and business operations regionally. Weaker candidates ignored the concepts of business operations and regional location of businesses, focusing instead on descriptions of technology.

The Application, Problem-Solving and Evaluation part of the question was well done by most candidates.

Candidates were required to suggest measures that governments could take to increase the use of technology. Measures generated included allowing access to loans at low interest rates, collaborating with the private sector to provide Internet centres and introducing IT classes at adult learning centres.

### Question 9

This question tested candidates' understanding of the concept of consumers, good consumer practices and factors influencing consumer practices.

Performance on the Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question was weak. Most candidates gave an incomplete definition of a consumer. The complete definition should have included the idea of "individuals or groups of individuals, or institutions that use goods or services".

Generally, candidates were able to outline benefits of good consumer practices. The weaker candidates simply outlined good consumer practices and had difficulties in distinguishing between wants and needs to give correct responses.

The Application, Evaluation and Problem-solving part of the question was well answered by most candidates. An example of a good response was the buying of local goods such as onions, potatoes, carrots and local fruits rather than imported items which may be more attractive and sometimes cheaper than local goods. The weaker candidates failed to make the link between consumer action and reducing the high import food bill.

### Question 10

This question tested candidates' understanding of the impact of the tourism industry on the physical environment of the Commonwealth Caribbean, challenges facing the tourism industry and the measures that influence the development of tourism.

The Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question was well done with responses ranging from destruction of corals by visitors, removal of sand from beach front and improper sewage disposal which results in the growth of algae that destroy reefs.

The ways in which government can protect the physical environment were generally well known by most candidates. A correct response was that of the enforcement of environmental impact assessments to investigate the effects of development on the physical environment and the formulation of strategies to reduce the negative impacts. The weaker candidates did not develop their responses and some responses were beyond the control of cruise ship operators. An example of this response was "the passing of legislation by cruise ship operators".

The Application, Evaluation and Problem-Solving part of the question was not well done; most candidates failed to develop responses.

### **General Comments**

- Candidates were unable to define fundamental Social Studies concepts.
- Candidates had difficulty in responding appropriately to questions with words such as *suggest*, *explain fully* although the instructions explicitly state what is expected.
- The responses to Question 6 continue to show limited knowledge of CARICOM.

### **Suggestions to Candidates and Teachers**

- 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 for them to do well on the exam.
- Candidates can improve their knowledge of concepts by engaging in concept-mapping techniques.
- Candidates must be taught to develop the skill of transferring knowledge across themes and topics.
- Candidates are advised to use their syllabus and become familiar with the required objectives, unifying concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed, content coverage, and avail themselves to 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 was to test candidates' knowledge of the research process, their interpretation of data from a case study and their ability to analyse data to make recommendations.

#### Question 1

This question tested candidates' understanding of the topic, selection of a research question for a study, definition of terms used in a study and a research instrument that would help the researcher to gather information.

Topic (i) The effects of dancehall music on adolescents' behaviour in my community

Topic (ii) The views of citizens in my community on capital punishment

Many candidates had difficulty formulating research questions. Some examples of good research questions written by candidates are:

- What is the relationship between dancehall music and the behaviour of adolescents?
- What are the effects of capital punishment on the level of violent crime?

#### Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of sources, their ability to write questions for a questionnaire, and the ways to describe the statistical data provided by the sample.

Performance on this question was weak. Many candidates displayed a complete lack of knowledge on the concept of sources and ways of describing statistical data.

#### Question 3

Candidates were tested on the concepts of population and sample, methods of selecting a sample and reasons for choice of sampling method. Performance on this question was also poor, producing the overall lowest mean. Most candidates lacked knowledge of the terms 'sample' and 'sampling methods'.

#### Question 4

This question tested candidates' analysis and interpretation of information presented in a case study. Questions ranged from the main focus of the study, statements of fact about the study area, instruments used by researchers to collect statistical data, characteristics of sample and findings of the study. Candidates performed well on this question which produced the second highest mean. Weaker candidates had problems analysing the findings of the study.

### Question 5

This question tested candidates' ability to display the data from the case study in the form of a table and a bar graph, state advantages of displaying the information in a bar graph and to state one recommendation which the researchers were likely to suggest based on their findings. Many candidates performed well on this question and were able to display the data accurately, state the advantages of the bar graph, and make recommendations relevant to the study. An example of a correct response for using a bar graph was that the information is clear and easily understood. The weaker candidates were unable to construct a bar graph using the information from the case study.

### **General Comments**

There has been an improvement in the display and analysis of statistical data.

Areas of weaknesses which still persist include:

- Formulating a research question
- Stating data sources
- Describing statistical data
- Identifying a sample and method of sampling
- Describing a method of analysing data
- Writing a finding

### **Suggestions to Candidates and Teachers**

- Candidates can improve their performance on this examination. To do this they must seek adequate tuition that would allow them to prepare thoroughly for the exam. The performance on the paper demonstrated a clear need for adequate preparation of candidates for the examination.
- The gap between theory and practice must be reduced. During instruction it is necessary to provide opportunities for students to practise formulating research techniques. One method of assisting students 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.