

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
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE® EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2014

**ENGLISH B
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions that require candidates to engage in comparative analysis of aspects of two poems. 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 in the question. However, for the other, Question 6, candidates choose two appropriate poems from those which they have studied on the prescribed list to answer the question.

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.

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 2012–2014:

Mean Scores by Profile: Paper 01, 2012–2014
(Expressed as Percentage of Profile Maximum Score)

Paper 01	2012	2013	2014
DRAMA	53.64	52.45	56.08
POETRY	46.76	53.82	48.82
PROSE	48.06	50.51	48.43

Candidates' performance declined in Poetry and Prose.

Question 1: Drama

Eighty-six (0.43%) of the 20,104 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Part (a) asked candidates to refer to lines 1–4 of the dramatic extract and state what they learnt about Tyrone and Mary. Acceptable responses included, *Mary and Tyrone are playful/affectionate; Tyrone flatters Mary or Mary falls for the flattery which seems to transform her*. Candidates did well on this question.

Candidates were asked to state Tyrone's intention at the beginning of the extract (lines 1–6) for Part (b). Acceptable responses included, *Tyrone's intention is to cheer her up or Tyrone's intention is to distract her from what seems to be bothering her*. Apart from a few candidates who used similar responses for Parts (a) and (b), candidates responded fairly well on this question.

Part (c) asked candidates what was suggested by Mary's exclamation, "Right in front of Jamie!" Acceptable responses included any of the following:

- *It suggests that she is embarrassed by the affection shown to her in the presence of her son*
- *It suggest that they are not normally this affectionate in front of their son; Mary is a coy woman*
- *Mary is a shy woman who does not like displays of conjugal affection in front of others*
- *Mary is very straight-laced about matters of (sexual) love.*

Most candidates, were able to earn at least some of the 3 marks allocated to this question.

For Part (d), candidates were required to justify whether Mary was really "fishing for compliments" as in lines 8–9. One mark was awarded for the position taken and two marks, for the justification. The flexibility of the reader-response element allowed candidates to score in this part as they were allowed to agree or disagree. Examples of acceptable responses were as follows: *No, Mary is not fishing for compliments. She appears to be a senior person and really may have trouble with her eyes; or yes, she is fishing for compliments as she can always depend on her husband and son to make her feel better (and stop her from worrying about Edmund).*

Candidates experienced difficulty with Part (e), which asked them to comment on the use of any **one** of the stage directions in presenting Mary's state of mind from lines 29–42. Most were able to identify and explain the stage directions; however, many did not **comment** on the playwright's use of the stage directions to present Mary's state of mind. Some candidates also had difficulty with identifying both aspects of Mary's state of mind. Many focused on the fact that she was worried/concerned, and did not recognize that there were changes in her state of mind. Acceptable responses captured the following:

The playwright effectively uses the stage directions to establish that Mary seems to be quite agitated or distracted. He does this by using the stage directions to show the sudden changes in her mood or mood swings (“She laughs...she changes to a brisk business air” and “she sighs with humorous exaggeration...she goes to the parlour, then turns, her face worried again”). It seems as though she tries to shake off what is disturbing her but it very quickly seems to overcome her. The stage directions show the contrasting actions which are an indication of her state of mind.

For Part (f), candidates were asked to explain the effect that Edmund has on the performance on stage.

Many candidates did not earn the full four marks on this part and gave superficial responses such as, “*Edmund adds suspense to the audience.*” Acceptable responses should include some of these ideas:

Edmund is not on stage. Yet, all the actions and even emotions displayed on stage are centred on him. Mary seems to be distracted and worried because of his illness. Her inconsistent actions seem to be because of his illness. Her husband’s actions toward his wife are also directed by Edmund or his illness. She seems to have become a “ghost of the dead” and his actions on stage are geared towards bringing her back to her former self by helping her not to focus on Edmund’s condition. This is evident in his exclamation. “You’re a fine lunkhead! Haven’t you any sense? The one thing to avoid is saying anything that would get her more upset over Edmund”.

For Part (g), candidates were asked to show how Jamie’s comment, “you can see she’s deliberately fooling herself with all that summer cold talk” might affect the audience. This was not handled well. Acceptable responses included:

Jamie’s comment at the end of the extract answers many of the questions that the audience has had about the action on stage. The reason for Mary’s state of mind is confirmed. Her husband’s actions are also explained. The audience will therefore understand that his actions are quite justified given the situation where it seems that Edmund could die. The audience may also feel a great deal of compassion for Mary as well as for Tyrone as his wife’s physical appearance, health, and state of mind seem to have deteriorated and he seems to be unable to help her, though he tries.

The mean for this question was 10.81 out of 20. This was the highest mean achieved for the three genres tested.

Question 2

Thirty-two (0.16 %) of the 20,102 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

For Part (a), most candidates were correct in identifying where (*on a train*) and when (*at night*) the event is taking place. The second portion of Part (a) asked candidates to say in what way the speaker was different from those around him. Candidates had no difficulty in stating that the speaker was alert/awake while the others were sleeping.

Part (b) required candidates to state the impressions created by the used of, “My muscles moved with steel” (line 14) and “We thunder through ravines” (line 18). The use of the word “impressions” seemed to have caused some amount of difficulty for candidates. Some candidates took a literal interpretation of the first quotation. An acceptable response for the first quotation was *acknowledgement of the merger of the living with the non-living and/or the suggestion of power created. The latter also emphasized the power of the train, its speed and especially the loud sound it makes as it rushes through the valley.*

Part (c) required candidates to explain how the poet used contrast in lines 4–5 to hold the reader’s attention. Many candidates identified and explained the contrast, but some did not go on to fully explain **how** this contrast served to hold the reader’s attention. Acceptable responses should contain some of the following ideas:

The poet contrasts the train/nature; light (from the train)/darkness (of the night); being awake/asleep. The speaker shows us the trees, the mountains, the lake, mist and rain as he lies awake while everyone around him is asleep. Why is he awake? Why the details of nature? The poet creates these and other questions in our minds through the contrasts presented. These questions are only answered at the end of the poem, "I stay up half the night/To see the land I love".

Part (d) required candidates to identify the literary device used in one of the following (1 mark) and comment on its effectiveness (2 marks): “Bridges of iron lace” (line 6) or “gullies washed with light” (line 19). Acceptable responses for the former included a discussion which captured the following:

Through visual imagery, this metaphor compares the design of the metallic structure to beautiful, delicate and patterned needlecraft—that of lace. This comparison extends the contrast between the sound of the train as it thunders in the night and the beauty and quiet of the trees, nature the land that he loves.

For the latter, this metaphor/personification portrayed *how the light of the train shines in the darkness, covering the gullies with its radiance.*

For Part (e), candidates were asked to show how the poet captured the movement in this journey.

Many candidates focused on movement as the train progressed so they gave information on the various sights that the persona experienced as the train moved along. Only a few commented on aspects of the poem which suggested movement, for example, diction, devices and rhythm. In other words, candidates seemed to relate more to content than to structure. Candidates were expected to mention for instance, the short lines, the rhyme scheme and strong stress, weak stress pattern which create a rhythm (beat) that suggests constant movement. In addition, candidates were expected to indicate that phrases and words such as “rhythm rocks”, “straining”, “thunder”, “rush”, “rattles”, “shake”, “jerk”, “shove”, produce alliterative and other sound effects that suggest the powerful engine heading to its destination.

Part (f) asked candidates to describe the speaker’s attitude in the last two lines of the poem.

Acceptable responses included:

the attitude is one of patriotism/nationalism; the love for country is such that the speaker is willing to remain awake half the night, just to see his beloved country. Not even the lulling/rocking movement of the train could get him to sleep.

Part (g) asked candidates to suggest another title for the poem (1 mark) and justify this with evidence from the poem (2 marks). This question was well done. Candidates used their creativity to find text-based suggestions for their titles.

The mean for this question was 10.41 out of 20.

Question 3

Twenty-seven (0.13%) candidates of the 20 043 who attempted the question earned the full marks. The mean score (9.99) on Prose Fiction was the lowest of the three genres.

For Part (a), most candidates had a fair sense of where the event was taking place, and were able to provide supporting evidence. Acceptable answers included, *near Castle Rock or in a forested area or in the fringes.*

Part (b) (i), required candidates to state why Ralph was hiding, and (ii), asked for a description of his state of mind. Acceptable responses included, *that he was hiding because he was in danger or he was being hunted by the others (“the hunters”). Acceptable responses for the second part of this question included that, Ralph was scared. He thought the hunters were pursuing him. He only felt safe when he realized that there was a feast and the hunters would be occupied with that. But this feeling of being safe was temporary as he realized that tomorrow would bring new dangers.*

Many candidates seemed to have some difficulty responding to Part (c), which asked for an explanation of the writer's use of contrast in the first paragraph. Some were not able to identify the contrast. Also, most of those who were able to identify the contrast could neither adequately explain it nor comment on how it was used by the writer. Many candidates omitted this question. Acceptable responses included:

The writer contrasts the image of the hunters whom Ralph sees at present with the image of them as he had known them; the description of Bill, for instance, as a savage "striped brown, black, and red" does not fit the picture or image of Bill in shorts and shirts. Additionally, hunters are supposed to be strong and brave, and while the image of the hunters is terrifying in that it generates fear in Ralph, these hunters ironically, like Ralph, appear to be quite terrified ("and then had rushed back to the sunny rock as if terrified of the darkness under the trees").

For Part (d), candidates were asked to identify the literary device used in, "The afternoon died away" (line 7) **or** "Ralph wormed out of the ferns" (line 8) and comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses included the following ideas:

The former is personification/metaphor. The writer compares the passage of time from afternoon to night with death. This emphasizes the fear of the unknown and of danger that Ralph is perhaps associating with the night. It also suggests the slow passing of time for Ralph which he has to endure. The latter, is metaphor. It creates an image of Ralph's crawling movement on the ground to avoid detection. The image of him moving as a worm (hinting perhaps at his vulnerability) also helps the reader to understand the possible danger that he may face.

For Part (e), two marks were awarded for candidates' giving the impressions created by "impenetrable thicket" (line 9) **or**, "He peered with elaborate caution" (lines 9-10). Again, the word "impressions" seemed to have been a challenge for candidates and many merely paraphrased or explained the selected phrase. Acceptable responses should note that

*"impenetrable thicket"—conveys the idea that Ralph is hemmed in by the thick vegetation that he cannot get through. This can only symbolize his feeling of being trapped by his hunters **or** his sense of being surrounded by 'savages' **or** the intensity of terror that he cannot think through **or** the great psychological distance between Ralph and his pursuers. The latter ("He peered with elaborate caution") suggests that this expression also emphasizes the danger that Ralph faces. He has been hiding and is going to great lengths to protect himself.*

Part (f) asked candidates to explain how the writer maintained suspense in the passage. Some candidates seemed to have difficulty identifying suspense, while others mentioned one incident that caused suspense but failed to describe how suspense was **maintained**. Acceptable responses should mention that *the writer suggests that the hunters are new to this role and seem to be as afraid as the hunted ("terrified of the darkness")*. Suspense is also maintained because though Ralph is safe because of the feast he is aware that tomorrow could present a different situation. It is this sense of uncertainty which heightens the tension and keeps the reader in suspense.

Finally, in Part (g), candidates were asked to identify the overall mood of the passage and to provide evidential support for their answer. In some instances, although they identified the correct mood (*fear/anxiety*), *candidates did not provide textual support*. Acceptable responses should include words used such as "panic", "terrified", "savage" to create the mood; *the idea of the hunt is established in the first paragraph; the setting (forest, night/darkness) enforces the mood*.

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. Moreover, students need to be familiar with appropriate literary language and use it in their writing and should understand genre-specific words, terms and concepts such as mood and suspense.

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

Shakespeare: — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Question 1

Of the pair of questions on this text, the second was more popular than the first, Question 1 sought to elicit a discussion on the pairs of rulers, Oberon and Titania and Theseus and Hippolyta. Part (a) asked for a description of the circumstances of Oberon's meeting with Titania in the magic wood. Part (b) required a discussion of what resulted from this meeting and Part (c), a comparison of Shakespeare's presentation of Oberon and Titania with that of Theseus and Hippolyta.

Generally, candidates performed satisfactorily, especially in Parts (a) and (b). Part (c), however, posed a challenge in that candidates failed to compare Shakespeare's **presentation** of one couple with his presentation of the other. Candidates fell short in discussing the playwright's craft. They did not provide an adequate comparison of the two couples. For instance, *Theseus and Hippolyta personify sobriety and mature wisdom; they represent stability and a unique union of love and reason, unlike Oberon and Titania, whose marital discord upsets the balance in nature and affects the human kingdom.*

The better prepared candidates produced well-developed essays. The mean for this question was 17.41.

Question 2

Part (a) of Question 2 asked the candidates to describe the nature of the complaint in Act 1 Scene 1, when Egeus approached the court of Theseus regarding Hermia; Part (b) asked for a discussion of the effect of this incident on the course of events and Part (c), a discussion of Shakespeare's presentation of male dominance of women in the play.

This was the most popular of the four drama questions. Candidates demonstrated superior knowledge of the text, especially in Parts (a) and (b). However, many candidates resorted to storytelling of the incidents identified as examples of male dominance in Part (c). It appears that candidates were not effectively prepared to answer questions dealing with dramatic presentations/dramatic techniques.

The mean for the question was 21.74.

Modern Drama: Old Story Time

Question 3

Question 3 was the second most popular question in the drama section. Part (a) asked for a description of a situation in which one character was portrayed as mostly good and one that was mostly evil; Part (b), a discussion of the character who made the drama more exciting as a result of this portrayal and finally, Part (c), a discussion of how the playwright used the final scene to reinforce the idea that good triumphs over evil.

Generally, candidates were quite knowledgeable of the text although for Part (a) some selected scenes instead of 'a situation'. Candidates referred to characters such as George, Len, Miss Aggy, Pa Ben and Lois. Part (b) was the most challenging as candidates generalized and related incidents from the play without elaborating. Also, opinions, when given did not have supporting details. Some candidates deviated from the characters discussed in Part (a) and so lost marks. For Part (c), some candidates did not focus enough or at all on the final scene, though they used aspects from other parts of the play. A few gave their personal religious views on this final scene, without the requisite textual reference. Those candidates who gave effective responses noted *the ways in which this final scene brings together the major characters; the effectiveness of the flashback to answer pertinent questions, especially for Miss Aggy's benefit; the symbolism of the circle and the confessions and reaffirmation of love and loyalty.*

The mean for this question was 19.65.

Question 4

This was the least popular question on this paper, as only 1 227 candidates attempted it.

For Part (a) of the question, candidates were asked to describe one instance when the educational appeal of storytelling was highlighted. Some candidates found the concept of "educational appeal" problematic as they were unable to identify the 'teachable' moments in the play. Educational appeal was taken to mean 'education', as in Len's academic achievements. Part (b) asked for a description of one instance when humour was used to entertain the audience. Candidates did well in this part as there was no shortage of examples of, for instance, *Pa Ben's witty interaction with his 'on-stage' audience; the biting exchange*

between Lois and Miss Aggy, among others. Part (c) asked candidates to show how Rhone used the art of storytelling to appeal to his audience. Acceptable responses included, (but were not limited to) *song and dance; proverbs and sayings; suspense; preparing for the storytelling event*.

The mean for this question was 16.14.

Poetry

Question 5

The named poems in Question 5 were, “Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge” and “South”. Approximately 25 per cent of the candidates attempted this question. Part (a) required candidates to describe the places being described in the poems; Part (b) asked for a comparison of the speakers’ attitudes to the places portrayed and for Part (c), the task was to discuss one device from each poem which was used to create an effective portrayal of the places.

Some candidates confused “South” with “A Contemplation Upon Flowers” and “God’s Grandeur”.

Part (a) assessed candidates’ knowledge of the poems by asking them to recall and summarize the information. Candidates were more knowledgeable about “Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge,” and most responded well to this part of the question. Candidates found Part (b) challenging and many struggled with the vocabulary to capture, describe or define “speakers attitudes” (such as *reflective, nostalgic, and appreciative*). Part (c), which focused on literary devices (*the writer’s craft*), posed its usual challenges. In many instances, devices were mentioned but the discussion was vague and lacked textual support. There was some confusion regarding the simile (which many candidates continue to misspell) and metaphor. Many did not link the devices with the effective portrayal of the places being discussed.

The mean for this question was 16.78.

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 a memorable event or experience to answer the question set. Part (a) required candidates to describe the event or experience in each poem; Part (b) asked candidates to compare the speakers’ attitudes to the event or experience and finally, Part (c) to discuss one device from each poem which is used to present this event or experience.

Part (a) was handled well for the most part. Popular poem choices were, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”, “Forgive My Guilt” and “Dreaming Black Boy.” In this part of the question, candidates were expected to name the poems selected but sometimes they did not quote titles correctly. Candidates demonstrated limited knowledge about the following poems: “Orchids”, “A Stone’s Throw”, “Theme for English B” and “It is the Constant Image of Your Face.” For Part (b), some candidates had difficulty in determining the speaker(s), therefore, they were in many instances, unable to address attitude.

Part (c) aimed to connect the devices chosen for discussion to the theme of the memorable event and experience. Some candidates mentioned but did not elaborate on the use of the devices. Some did not identify the devices.

The mean for this question was 16.83.

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. However, some of the candidates who attempted questions on this text demonstrated interesting insights. Part (a) of Question 7 asked for a description of two occasions in which readers get a rich picture of rural life. Appropriate responses could include *Effita's warnings of death; the No-name Lady's habits; school activities; children's games; church services and village gossip*. Part (b) asked for one technique used by Forbes to create this effect. Candidates were expected to make references to, for instance, *the use of the child's voice or perspective; re-creation of diction and register of characters; recounting colourful conversations; symbols, metaphors, humour and proverbs*. Part (c), asked for candidates to comment on the lessons that readers might glean from these presentations. Some candidates had challenges with the word *glean*.

The mean for the question was 18.11.

Question 8

Question 8 asked for a discussion of the statement, “The narrator’s references to school life allow us to understand the complex social influences and the varying outcomes of schooling in rural Jamaica.”

The term “complex social influences” seemed to have interfered with candidates’ understanding of the question. Candidates did not treat this as an argumentative essay in which the onus was on them to provide textual evidence to support the position taken. Strong textual evidence could have been taken from chapters such as “The Idiot”, “Miss Minnie” and “Little Fool Fool, Fathers and Travelers.”

Two candidates scored full marks. The mean for this question was 15.00.

The Wine of Astonishment

Question 9

Part (a) asked candidates to describe one incident in which Eva played a major part as Bee’s wife; Part (b), a discussion of her role as character in the novel as a whole and Part (c) required candidates to say how she differed from the other women in the novel. Generally, candidates did well but found Part (c) challenging as they merely narrated Eva’s qualities, with little emphasis on the actual **difference** between Eva and the other women and providing textual reference to support the points made. Acceptable responses for this part of the question should focus on the fact that *Eva is the most developed of the female characters; she may be compared with other women such as Eulalie, Ivan Morton’s wife, the other women who are portrayed as victims and objects*.

The mean for this question was 16.63.

Question 10

Candidates were asked to discuss the following statement: “The major conflict in *The Wine of Astonishment* is between tradition and change.” Responses to this question ranged from poor to superior. Mediocre responses confined themselves to narration of the plot without analysis of the text, with little knowledge of background to the context. There was the tendency to focus mainly on Ivan or Bolo. Superior candidates were able to successfully analyse the events as told by Eva and demonstrate the link between conflict, tradition and change as well as provide evidence to support their responses. While most candidates

understood the nature of both tradition and conflict there were those who concentrated heavily on either tradition or conflict.

The mean for this question was 16.56.

Short Story

Question 11

This section is similar to 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, “Septimus” and “The Man of the House.” Part (a) asked candidates to describe how the mother of each boy demonstrated her special care for him. Part (b) asked for an explanation of the ways in which each boy went astray and Part (c) asked candidates to comment on the message each story conveyed about the boys.

Candidates found Part (a) reasonably straightforward. For Part (b), acceptable responses included *the principle of sharing that Septimus' mother tried to instill in him and for the latter story, how the boy failed to live up to his responsibilities*. In Part (c), candidates experienced some difficulty in comprehending the word “conveys”. The message in the first story is *the power of strong family values in changing and sustaining one's character*. For the latter, the message is that *it takes more than goodwill to assume the responsibilities of manhood*.

The mean for this question was 16.11.

Question 12

In this question, candidates were asked to select any two stories from the prescribed list that shared the same theme and in Part (a), to describe what happened in each story; Part (b) asked for an explanation of how each story illustrated the theme. Some candidates failed to precisely define/describe the theme and consequently, many contrived their own (such as in “black” and “food”). Part (c), asked for a comparison of the authors’ treatment of the theme in the two stories. Candidates knew the stories selected, for the most part. However, **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.

The mean for this question was 18.20.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

On the whole, many essays were well structured, coherent and cohesive. Teachers and students should be commended for this achievement. 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 to continue to emphasize and recognize genre-specific terms and to engage students in analysing their effectiveness.

Teachers and students should note that the January 2015 sitting will be the last of this current cycle of texts.

The new cycle of the syllabus will begin in June 2015.

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’. Students 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 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, this kind of applicability, is what sometimes emerged in superior scripts.