



**CARIBBEAN
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL**

ENGLISH A



Subject Report with Exemplars

May/June 2023

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2023

**ENGLISH A
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE	2
PAPER 02 — STRUCTURED ESSAY	3
Question 1	3
Recommendations	10
Question 2	11
Recommendations	16
Question 3	17
Question 4	20
Recommendations	24
Question 5	25
Recommendations	32
PAPER 031 — SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)	33
PAPER 032 — ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)	37
Question 1	37
Question 2	40
Question 3	42
Recommendations	44

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been compiled using candidates' responses to the 2023 May/ June examination in CSEC English A. The examination comprises the following papers.

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice
- Paper 02 — Structured Essay
- Paper 031 — School-Based Assessment
- Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment (private candidates)

Approximately 75 900 candidates wrote the examinations in June 2023. Candidates' responses ranged from very weak to superior.

The skills and abilities to be developed and assessed in the study of English A are categorized under two profiles: Profile 1, Understanding, and Profile 2, Expression. Understanding is defined as the decoding and interpreting of messages through the analysis of language structures and devices used in any given context, while expression is defined as the conveying of meaning through the selection of language structures and devices appropriate to each specific context. The profile dimensions are comprehensively outlined on pages 3–5 of the syllabus.

Paper 01, which contributes 29 per cent to the total examination, assesses Profile 1. Paper 02, which contributes 50 per cent to the total examination, assesses both Profiles 1 and 2. Paper 031, the School-Based Assessment, contributes 21 per cent to the total examination and assesses Profile 2 only.

PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper consists of 60 compulsory multiple-choice items arranged in two sections. Section I consists of 25 discrete items. The number of items in this section increased by five in the revised syllabus, which was tested for the first time in June 2018. Section II consists of 35 reading comprehension items based on five stimuli as follows: one poem; one literary extract (taken from a novel, short story, biography, diary, letter); one expository extract (for example, an encyclopaedia extract, report, instructions, newspaper article, texts of speeches, transcript of conversations); one argumentative extract (for example, an advertisement, a speech or a letter to the editor); one visual extract (for example, a table, chart, form, diagram, map, cartoon or an advertisement).

Profile 1, Understanding, is assessed in Paper 01. One mark is allocated to each item. In Section I, marks are awarded for the ability to understand meaning conveyed through word choice, grammar, syntax, sentence structure, punctuation and paragraphing. In Section II, marks are awarded for the ability to

- obtain information accurately
- grasp insights from reading literature
- recognize and evaluate opinions expressed in various forms.

The mean mark for this paper was 36. Candidates are encouraged to pay particular attention to reading the stimuli presented to them in the examination, particularly the narrative and expository pieces, to ensure complete understanding of the material before responding to the questions. They are also encouraged to ensure that they refer to the stimulus for each question, especially where the line numbers are used in the questions.

PAPER 02 — STRUCTURED ESSAY

This paper comprises four sections as follows: Section A: Summary Writing; Section B: Expository Writing; Section C: Narrative Writing or Short Story Writing, and Section D: Argumentative Writing. These types of writing are used to assess both Profile 1, Understanding (15 marks), and Profile 2, Expression (90 marks).

Question 1

This question was worth 25 marks and the mean score was 8.28 . A total of 5 marks were allocated to Profile 1, Understanding, and a total of 20 marks to Profile 2, Expression.

For Question 1, candidates were given a passage about the use of pesticides in food production. The passage examined the pros and cons of this controversial issue. Candidates' scores ranged from 0 to 24. No candidate scored full marks.

Question 1 continues to be problematic for many candidates. Very few candidates were able to submit the seven points needed to gain a perfect score for the content dimension of the question. Many candidates are still unable to identify the relevant points given in a passage, which highlights that there is still the perennial issue regarding comprehension.

There is the tendency for some candidates to write the summary in more than one paragraph. However, the question clearly states that the response should be written in one paragraph. Further, there is still evidence of candidates lifting sentences from the original passage. The summary presented, as a result, appears in some cases to be a photocopy of the original. In cases of severe lifting from the original, the mark awarded for language is very low.

In addition to issues with organizing the summary in a logically flowing piece of writing, there are issues with language use. The quality of some candidates' writing is affected by punctuation, spelling and grammatical inaccuracies.

Candidate's Response to Question 1 — Sample 1

LIST OF FIVE MAIN POINTS

- 1 ✓ An issue that sparks much debate is the pros and cons of the use of pesticides in food production.
- 2 ✓ Pesticides, while enhancing the appearance and production of food, can be a health threat.
- 3 ✓ According to farmers, pesticides are necessary to save crops and keep food prices low.
- 4 ✓ Imported produce usually carries higher levels of chemical than domestic suppliers and chemicals banned in the USA are used by growers.
- 5 ✓ Alternative means of growing crops which rely less heavily on pesticide use should be encouraged.

(5 marks)

You MUST write your summary on this page.

An issue that has sparked much debate is the the pros and cons of the use of pesticides in food production. Although pesticides can be used to enhance the appearance and production of food, they can pose a potential health threats. Pesticides are a major concern regarding fruits and vegetables. Farmers claim that pesticides are necessary to save crops and keep food prices low. Higher levels of chemical is usually seen in imported produce than domestic suppliers and growers used use chemicals banned in the USA. it is necessary for the government to strengthen regulations and build build up the confidence of people regarding fruits and vegetables. Therefore, alternative means of growing crops which rely less on the use of pesticides should be encouraged.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate submitted a piece that met the set criteria. He/she received full marks for content. The organization of the piece was also excellent. In addition, the candidate demonstrated excellent use of language.

Candidate's Response to Question 1 — Sample 2

LIST OF FIVE MAIN POINTS

- 1 ✓ Pesticides enhance the production and appearance of food but can also be a threat due to contamination.
- 2 ✓ While nutritionists are urging the public to eat more fresh produce, consumer groups claim pesticide could result in thousands of ~~cancer~~ ^{cancer} cases over the next 50 years.
- 3 ✓ Farmers ~~say~~ say the chemicals are ~~essential~~ ^{necessary} in keeping food prices low, with pests destroying one-third of crops in the USA yearly ^{often}.
- 4 ✓ Imported produce carries higher levels of chemicals as well as chemicals banned in the USA.
- 5 ✓ Lessening the ~~need~~ ^{need} to rely on chemicals by using alternative methods is more realistic than the total removal of pesticide.

(5 marks)

The pros and cons of pesticides has been an ongoing debate because while they enhance the appearance and production of food, due to contamination, they pose a threat. ~~While~~ While nutritionists ~~also~~ encourage the public to eat fresh produce, consumer groups claim ~~that~~ pesticides could result in ~~at~~ thousands of cancer cases over the next five decades. Though, farmers state the pesticides are ~~not~~ necessary to maintain low prices, with pests destroying approximately one-third of USA's crops yearly. While the EPA sets ~~the~~ limits for the ~~amount~~ amount of residue left on to be below the danger levels, imported produce often carries higher levels and ~~prohibit~~ chemicals banned in the USA. Although many persons want a total removal of pesticides, ~~lessening~~ lessening the need to rely on chemicals by using alternative methods is a more realistic approach.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate received full marks for the organization of the summary. He/she organized the points for the summary in an excellent manner.

Candidate's Response to Question 1 — Sample 3

LIST OF FIVE MAIN POINTS

1. ✗ These What? substances can enhance the production and appearance but they can also be a potential threat to health and life
2. ✗ Contamination of food can begin in the production process
3. ✗ For fruits and vegetable the major concern is pesticides
4. ✓ As much as 50% of fruits and vegetables come from abroad where restrictions on pesticides are generally not as stringent as USA
5. ✗ Organic farming currently meet only 1% of the local demand

(5 marks)

You MUST write your summary on this page.

The pros and cons of the use of pesticides in food production are these. Substances can enhance the production and appearance of food but they can also be a potential threat to health and life through contamination of the produce. Contamination of food can begin in the production process. For fruits and vegetable the major concern is pesticides. Groups of consumers claim that pesticides use could result in thousands of cancer cases over the next 50 years. As much as 50% of fruits and vegetables come from abroad where restrictions on pesticides are generally not as stringent as USA.

Examiner's Comments

The response provided was poor. The candidate was unable to identify the five critical points needed for the summary. The summary was also very weak, demonstrating that the candidate lacked mastery of the language required.

Recommendations

- Candidates are reminded that the five main points listed in the first part of the response and at least two other relevant points must be dealt with in the 120-word summary, in order for them to gain full marks.
- Candidates must use their own words as far as possible.
- Teachers are encouraged to give students practice exercises in writing summaries, to ensure that students achieve mastery.

Question 2

For this question, candidates were expected to read a given situation and to produce a letter of complaint based on the situation. Scores ranged from 0 to 30. Candidates who performed well demonstrated an excellent command of the expected skills. Overall, the mean score was 18.06 out of 30 marks.

Many candidates were able to extract the relevant details from the original stimulus material. Further, many were able to produce the correct format for a letter of complaint. In many of the responses, it was evident that candidates were able to give the relevant details. However, only a few candidates were able to produce all the expected components of a letter of complaint, as outlined below.

- Identify the issue/grievance.
- Show how the grievance/issue affected you.
- Show how you would like the issue to be addressed.

While many candidates produced letters written in more than one paragraph, there is still a tendency for some candidates to submit one-paragraph responses. In some instances, the paragraph consisted of two or three sentences. Such a practice must be discouraged. In addition, there is a tendency for many candidates to write their responses without making it clear that there is an intended audience. The work of these candidates therefore appears to be a matter of fact.

The standard of some responses was affected by the quality of the writing in terms of sentence structure and language use. Run-on sentences were used by many candidates. The perennial issues of inaccurate punctuation and spelling continue to affect the quality of candidates' work. Candidates need to be reminded that if their response is written in one paragraph, the mark for language will be significantly affected.

Question 2.

You MUST write your answer on this page.

Perilow Street
~~Golden Grove Village~~
~~St. Johns St. Patrick~~
~~Antigua~~ Varatu

16 May 2023

For- 3
Rel- 3
Acc- 4

Mrs. Julia Braceford

Manager

Trilow Telecommunications Company

Barnabas Street

Port of Loma

Dear Mrs. Braceford,

Subject: Malfunction of recently purchased phone.

I recently purchased a brand new Samsung Galaxy S10e smartphone for
US\$ 744.99 from your company on the 16th of May 2023. Upon the purchase of this
it was functioning properly. However, three days later all the apps randomly
stopped working on this brand new phone. The phone was kept in perfect
condition and was not exposed to any instances which could have warranted
this. Therefore suggesting that this malfunction was caused by circumstances

not of my own. When this matter was reported to the sales clerk the following day, it was asked that I report this matter to you.

For the major inconvenience this has caused me over the past few days due to not having any means of communication. I am kindly requesting a full cash refund of the US\$174.99 I spent on the smartphone. An exchange would not be accepted as I have already had enough misfortune with your store.

I anticipate your prompt response in handling this matter urgently. Thank you in advance for your time and concern.

Yours sincerely,

M. Lammy

Martin Lammy

Examiner's Comments

This was an excellent response.

Candidate's Response to Question 2 — Sample 2

You MUST write your answer on the

for 0
rel 2
acc 2

Name of company: Trilow Telecommunication

Date: 9th May 2023

Name of company: Trilow Telecommunication

incorrect format

Address: 40 Barnabas Street

Date: 11 May 2023

Dear: Martin Lanny of Perilow

on the 9th May, 2023 I bought a Samsung
Galaxy S20e smartphone on the Perilow
for US\$ 714.99 from this company on 40
Barnabas Street.

Next day on 10th May 2023 the phone was
delivered to my home at 2:30 PM, my mom
went outside to collect the delivered phone
because I was not home when my mom
finished signing for the package my mom took
the phone ~~to~~ ⁱⁿ side and rest it down on
the counter till I get home from.

SCHOOL.

When I returned home from school the phone was handed to me in my hand. When my mom handed the phone in my hand I unbox the new phone I bought, when I unbox the phone and it on no apps come up on the phone I was very sad to see there no app on the phone.

Next day I went to return it back to the phone company I ask to talk to the manager and the manager pay me no mind when I want to return the non working phone.

As I'm asking for is to return the money I use to pay for the phone or kindly give me another phone for the same price.

Signature
BLMVA

Examiner's Comments

The response was unsatisfactory. The candidate was unable to identify the critical elements in the given scenario. There were also issues with the use of language. These issues affected the quality of the writing.

Recommendations

- Teachers should ensure that students are prepared for all the possible areas of assessment for Question 2 — report, letter, email, notice, memorandum.
- The format/form of the different pieces of writing must be stressed in all lessons.
- The writing process must be employed by teachers when teaching any aspect of writing. Students must be encouraged to write drafts of their work and to engage in self-editing or editing the work of their peers.
- Students must be exposed to models of good writing in their English classes so they can be guided as to what is expected in the examinations.
- Students are reminded that there must be a sense of audience when they are writing. This sense of audience will affect the language and tone employed in the writing. This element is crucial to gaining full marks.

Question 3

This question required candidates to write a story based on a picture of a family of three peering through a window. The mean score was 9.92 out of 25.

More candidates responded to this question than in previous years. However, only a few candidates produced stories that scored within the excellent range. Similar to previous years, most candidates were unable to use the picture stimulus to create stories in which the narrative elements were effectively integrated. The plots of most stories were predictable, with simplistic conflicts for the main character(s). Candidates tended to report about characters and events in a pedestrian manner. Candidates did not use words that were appropriate for creating the setting, portraying the characters and creating the atmosphere. Some candidates used the stimulus to write expository pieces about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Candidate's Response to Question 3

Once upon a time, there was a family of three that lived in a very quiet community. The mother named Andy, the father named Jill and they had a daughter named Abigail. They lived as a very happy and quiet family in the community.

One day a very loud noise of uproar entered the community and everyone ran to their windows to see what it was. It was a very large pick-up truck with big boxes on top of it, there was a man driving the truck and a van was following it.

To everyone's concern the man was moving into the community. Everyone was upset and has their own opinion on him because the community is a very quiet place and none of them liked loud noises.

But the family of three was the only people that liked the guy and went and visited welcomed him on his arrival. They were very friendly with him and their daughter Abigail would visit everyday because she loved the dog that the man had.

A lot of people in the community did not like him because he loved to play loud music and would meanwhile call police for disturbing the community. But he did not let it bother him because he was a calm guy.

Examiner's Comments

In the exemplar, the candidate was unable to effectively incorporate the essential elements of story writing. The story begins with the simplistic fairy tale opening 'once upon a time'. There is characterization in the naming of the characters, but there is no development of these characters through description or dialogue. In addition, the setting is not developed. There is a semblance of a conflict between moving into a village and being disliked by the established villagers. The semblance of a conflict is not resolved at the end of the story.

The narrative voice dominates and reports the story rather than showing the events. In addition, the language is mediocre in terms of grammar, mechanics and word choice.

Question 4

For this question, candidates were required to use the following sentences to write a story.

Adia's eyes widened as she read each word on the page. It could not be true. She started at the top and began to read the words again.

Similar to previous years, most candidates attempted this question. The mean score was 13.22. Some candidates were able to produce creative stories using different narrative genres. Overall, the responses were true to the narrative genre. However, many candidates did not demonstrate a high level of creativity and proficiency in integrating the elements of narrative writing into their stories. Candidates often used the narrative voice to report/tell about the characters and events taking place. The plots were often predictable, with no significant conflict for the central character to resolve. Many stories were set in schools and around gaining acceptance into prestigious colleges/universities overseas.

Candidates named the story's characters but did little to develop them through description and dialogue. The choice of words to create the setting, characters and atmosphere was lacking in most stories.

Organization (5 marks)

There were no significant problems with the sequencing, coherence and development of the events in the stories. Many candidates scored well on this component of the mark scheme.

Language Usage (10 marks)

The comments on language usage are common to both Questions 3 and 4.

Many candidates demonstrated limited competence in using language to effectively communicate ideas in Standard English. Although some candidates used aspects of language (grammar and mechanics, and word choice) adequately, very few candidates were able to do so with a high degree of competence. Some candidates did not possess the requisite vocabulary to express themselves.

The perennial grammar and mechanics problems relate to weak spelling, misuse of the comma and other punctuation marks, run-on sentences, weak or no paragraphing in some instances, an inability to use the past tense markers consistently, subject and verb agreement errors, and poor construction of sentences. Regarding word choice, the other component of language usage, there was an absence of strong verbs, adjectives, adverbs and use of figurative language.

Candidate's Response to Question 4 — Sample 1

..... She searched ~~the~~ ^{his} deep blue oceans and found nothing of ingenuity in his character.....
He said he loved her and she believed it. ~~For~~ ^{He} had appeared suddenly on a Mid-Summer's
eve a few years back. She remembered the way ~~he~~ ^{he} stuttered and attempted to wiping out
the napkin in his hand, embarrassed and helpless. ~~The~~ ^{The} rainfall seemed to have caught many
by surprise. He was one of the ~~swarm~~ ^{with the hustle} of and ~~hustle~~ ^{hustle} of business men running to the cafe
for shelter. He disturbed her peace as he squished ^{and oozed puddles of water} with every step he took. She had to
look up from her book and behold an ~~enormous~~ ^{enormous} man ~~was~~ ^{to} before her, attempting heat himself
by the fire's warmth. She grumbled to herself, both in annoyance and admiration of the
owner's unforgivable ~~grave~~ ^{his} to let such a man ruin ~~the~~ ^{his} wooden floors. Then the man looked
at her. She froze for a moment. They ^{froze} ^{for a moment}. An ~~awkward~~ ^{awkward} silence filled the air
in between them. He smiled ^{softly, almost apologetically} and for ~~some~~ ^{some} reason she
knew not, ~~it was~~ ^{it was} enough for her to forgive him.....
..... Much to her surprise they ~~spent~~ ^{spent} what felt like an eternity discussing life's mysteries
and hopes and dreams. She learnt that his name was Walter and he ~~wanted~~ ^{had such high}
ideals to solve ~~find the cure to~~ ^{find the cure to} the issue of global warming and ^{of} the salvation of aquatic life. All she
could do was listen as he made a passionate appeal to the eradication of CFCs and their
~~effects~~ ^{effects} to Emperor penguins on the North Pole. It was slightly comedic to her but she
wouldn't ruin his zeal. That's how it began. How she fell for a ^{brilliant yet} pitiful man named
Walter. He ~~proceeded~~ ^{proceeded} to ask her on a date, which turned into two, then three and
until she ~~had~~ ^{had} lost count. But Spring came and he had to leave. She had just

~~met~~ him then he left. Of how she waited earnestly for his return. She missed his cologne
 and his ^{black and} dirty hair, his broad shoulders and his clumsy walk. Then one day
~~she~~ received a letter from him. Perhaps it arrived by mid Spring and she was overjoyed
 to find it. However the contents it held were much to her displeasure and soon she
 wished she had never met him. Adira's eyes widened as she read each word on
 the page. It could not be true. She started at the top and began to read the words
 again. ^{Tears streamed} down her cheeks ^{collecting} palms of her hands. ~~At that~~ At that
 moment ~~the~~ ^{the} reality of ~~her~~ ^{the} situation was revealed to her. Walter ~~to~~ confessed
 that he had a family abroad. A wife and two children. But he claimed he
 loved her. He poured out his heart in expressing ^{his} love for her. ~~At that~~ ^{in that} letter and
 wished to elope. But how could she? ^{Her conscience} weighed too great a deal
 for her to see him again. Then she remembered his eyes, of a deep and calming
 blue, that smile of his and ^{their} first encounter. ^{Her initially search} ~~his eyes were~~ in those
 deep blues, ~~void of~~ ^{void of} any ingenuity, was ~~at~~ ^{at} fault, and here, this page
 was ~~the~~ ^{the} crushing proof.

Examiner's Comments

The story's opening sentence creates a sense of intrigue and interest for the reader: *She searched his deep blue oceans and found nothing of ingenuity in his character.* The candidate skillfully uses the stimulus to heighten the internal and external conflict of the story. The suspense was almost palpable. Overall, the candidate manipulated the features of setting and characterization excellently. The candidate also used mature and sophisticated language with respect to grammar and mechanics.

Candidate's Response to Question 4 — Sample 2

You ever open a news page and say to yourself what's the pint in reading a news page. An article published discussed the issue. It was noted that contamination of food what Adia wrote the words again Adia eyes widened as she read each word on the page. It could not be true. She started reading the article from top and read the words again. According to the Environmental protection Agency the use of pesticide- fungicides; It could not be true. The government insists that pesticides pose little hazard to health. The EPA sets limits for the amount of residue left on foods that are well below what is troubling facts remain.

Examiner's Comments

This piece of writing did not satisfy the criteria for story writing as laid out in the mark scheme and was a very weak attempt at writing a story. The candidate was not awarded any marks. It is evident that the candidate extracted the stimulus for the short story and combined it with components of Question 1, which was the summary.

Recommendations

Content and relevance of story

- Students require exposure to a variety of narrative genres, to broaden their imagination and creativity.
- Teachers should focus on specific elements during story writing, for example, how to create a plot that presents significant challenges for the central character, which must be satisfactorily resolved at the end of the story.
- Teachers can expose students to different kinds of stories. These types of stories include those that showcase plot; stories with well-developed characters, settings and reflections; and stories that are intense and tersely written. Teachers can set story writing tasks with specific criteria so that students would be encouraged to write different types of stories. Criteria can include brevity and the inclusion of suspense, surprise endings or ironic twists.
- Regarding characterization, the development of the story characters through description and dialogue must be modelled for students.
- Teachers need to get students to set up the action of the story earlier rather than provide unnecessary background details such as preparation for travelling, school or breakfast etc.
- Students should be provided with examples of expository and narrative prose to allow them to distinguish between the differences in the techniques of these two genres.
- Teachers must encourage students to avoid writing stories that extend beyond two and a half pages.

Language Usage

- Teachers should continue to use various instructional strategies with students to provide them with practice in using the grammar and mechanics of Standard English. This should be done in relation to the issues noted above regarding the problems candidates demonstrated with grammar and mechanics in the examination.
- Candidates must understand how to choose words to create characters, settings and atmosphere in their stories.

It should be noted that stories must be written based on the picture or the sentence(s). In this regard, there is no requirement for the sentence(s) to be included verbatim or for candidates to address all the details of the picture. However, the story must have a clear link to the stimulus chosen by the candidate. Thus, candidates must avoid coming to the examination with prepared stories that do not relate to the given stimuli or that have a tenuous link to them.

Question 5

For the argumentative piece, candidates were asked to present their views on the following: ‘School security officers should not be allowed to search students’ school bags’. This question proved to be the most problematic for candidates and so this was the question on which candidates performed the poorest. The mean was 8.21. Scores ranged from 0 to 24.

Candidates made a variety of good points and had good ideas across the spectrum. There was scope for easy development of the points chosen since the information referenced came from a real school situation. Security officers operate in various countries and so candidates were able to use their situations in their responses.

However, candidates experienced difficulty showcasing their understanding the fundamental concept of the argument as a discrete genre. Candidates need to understand that the stimulus or claim gives a point of view on a topic with which they need to agree or disagree. Connected to this point is that candidates need to learn that they must provide details that support their point of view.

In too many cases, paragraphs were sketchy. While candidates who wrote their paragraph in this way were able to make reasonable points, they were unable to continue to the next stage whereby the effect would be stated. Further, too many candidates were still not using paragraphs or too few paragraphs for the development of points. Even when there was evidence of indentation, candidates did not demonstrate the other elements of paragraph writing, including using topic sentences along with supporting sentences.

Additionally, a few candidates did not seem to be aware that an argument is different from a story. Beginnings like ‘One day I went to school’ and transitions like ‘then’, for example, associated with the personal narrative, were used throughout responses. In such situations, candidates received a low score. There were the usual language difficulties for average to weaker students: incorrect use of verb tenses, spelling and punctuation errors, and run-on sentences. There was also constant misuse of capital letters. These language problems, especially poor punctuation, often had a severe impact on the quality of the responses. Many candidates were unable to write simple and complete sentences.

Candidate's Response to Question 5 — Sample 1

Despite recent events involving the introduction of illegal substances, and sometimes even weapons, into the school environment, some have suggested that school-assigned security guards should not be able to search students' bags. However, I strongly disagree with this line of thought, as past events and research suggest otherwise.

Primarily, the major issues in schools nowadays are those involving illegal items, and their assimilation into the school environment, sometimes with disastrous results. Just last month, for example, in Trinidad alone, three (teenaged) students were admitted to the hospital due to drug overdose. During this same period, in the United States, five incidents were recorded in which a weapon in the form of either a knife or a firearm, was used to severely injure, or even kill, school-aged children. Hence, based on current events alone, a greater standard of security must be implemented, hence the need to allow for the searching of students' baggage.

According to Police Commissioner James Johnson, "The role of security is to protect, and if this can be done pre-emptively, then it most definitely should!" Such a statement is supported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States, who recently published an analysis of the past 30 incidents in schools involving weaponry. Of these 30 cases, the analytical report showed that 29 would have been prevented,

had the weapon in question been found. Contrary to the common belief that security searches are inconvenient and serve no purpose, the actuality of the matter is; they can preserve the lives of our youth. What else takes precedence over the lives of our children, I ask?

Among those who oppose the implementation of bag searches, the prevalent sentiment is that it can be considered a breach of student's privacy. To this, I would like to respond that such a viewpoint is almost ridiculous, and downplays the issue at hand. No student who obeys the rules of the school would be carrying items that would constitute an invasion of privacy. Suggesting otherwise is bordering on ignorance. Even if we hypothetically consider the idea, such a statement does not hold water. The safety of every child outweighs the privacy of the individual and again I would like to ask: Does this really come before the right of our youth to grow up in safety, in an environment free from fear?

Therefore, all of the evidence gained from both past events and theoretical research has undoubtedly illustrated that school bag searches are required if we are to uphold peace in our educational institutions. Such a solution is vital to the development of our children, and I cannot see why it must not be implemented as soon as possible.

Position is clearly stated. Excellent ideas with supp. details. Cohesive - Excellent and effective use of lang. Excellent org. of ideas.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate clearly states a position. Excellent, mature ideas and relevant supporting details are also given. The essay is cohesive and there is excellent organization of ideas. There is also excellent and effective use of language. Many of the elements of argumentative writing were observed. The candidate developed each point in a separate paragraph using appropriate transitions. Links were made within and between paragraphs. The candidate also showed a very good understanding of sentence structure and used a variety of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths. The second paragraph provides a good example of these features.

Candidate's Response to Question 5 — Sample 2

How would you feel if ~~the~~ your bag had to be searched? Don't you have personal belongings in there?

It should not be allowed to search student bags.

Personal items may be stored in bags by students, students should give consent to searching bags and it is not necessary ~~access~~ to all students. This is why school security officers should not be allowed to search students bags.

Students are also humans, remember that. We have personal items that we wish not to be seen by others. It is not a crime ~~to~~ to be safe but it isn't right to search others ~~thing~~ belonging when they are unwilling.

In addition, ~~it should~~ students should also have a say in that. We may not be as mature and responsible, but if searching bags is needed, ~~at~~ the students should also give permission, for not all students are bad.

Although, you may never know who is playing victim. Students tend to cause a lot of mischief, however, not all students are bad. Search those who

are known for giving trouble, not the good ones.
Because, outside of school life is personal life
which should not be interfered with unless
necessary. And it can ~~be~~
In conclusion, personal items may be stored
in bags by students, students should give consent
to searching bags and it is not necessary to all
students. Remember, we are all humans, with
private
personal property.

Position taken. Some points made and attempts are made to discuss them but generally weak.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate's position is clearly stated. The candidate was clearly aware of the structure of an argument — introduction, body and conclusion. Some points were given and attempts were made to discuss them. However, the candidate did not state the effect/benefit of these. Generally, the response was weak.

'School Security shouldn't be allowed to search bags student school bags'

One day we went to school and we were in class where a fight broke out, the teacher wasn't in the class so yet luckily he came in when one of the students pulled a gun from his bag. The teacher then proceeds to take the weapon from the young man and sent him to the office where they called his parents and the police. The police seize the firearm and starts asking the young man questions pertaining to the weapon ~~to~~ ~~more~~ they suspended the student and start informed the school that the securities will be searching bags on entry of the school, for the first couple days the students had nothing to say on the matter until this day a girl's bag was searched and these personal items were found which made her feel unsafe and, violated etc. so she brought this to her parents and the principle but the principle was trying to be ignore the poor young girl so she brought the matter to her parents and the other students heard about the matter so the parents and the students

Of the school started to protest so the students would refuse to let the security search their bags and they would have signs saying 'school security should not be allowed to search student school bags. The parents took the matter to the school board where they got no idea didn't get any satisfactory, so they took it to the local news and radio stations where they to agreed with the parents and the ~~the~~ principle of the school resigned and the students were happy, they got a new principle got metal detectors for the security and the walk in ones. ~~the~~ Every student felt better and safer in the school and ~~the~~ where the girl became famous.

This response does not meet the requirements of the question. This is a narrative. A complete narrative must not be awarded marks.

Examiner's Comments

The response did not meet the requirement of the question as it was written as a narrative. Candidates would not have been awarded any marks for writing a complete narrative.

Recommendations

- It is important to establish a focus for an argumentative response, even if that focus is *I agree with the statement*.
- Students need to be taught/reminded that organization of any type of writing takes place within and across paragraphs.
- The concept of the line of an argument progressing from introduction to conclusion needs to be emphasized.
- Students can be taught to use graphic organizers to help them organize their arguments.
- Candidates need to practise accurate writing.
- Candidates need to understand that the improper use of punctuation affects meaning.
- Students can be given practice in rewriting jumbled paragraphs, to raise their awareness about paragraph unity.

PAPER 031 — SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

This paper involved the moderation or remarking of five sample scripts from each centre. Students were required to work individually as well as in groups, to complete and submit a project consisting of six sections. All sections were marked by the teacher and three of those sections (the Plan, Reflection and Written Report) were moderated.

There has been much improvement since the project's inception. However, there are still a few areas where teachers need to pay closer attention to the rubrics as set out in the syllabus.

Plan of investigation

Most students continue to score three out of a total of five marks. The major weaknesses noted were exceeding the word limit, identifying benefits to an English student which were not English specific/too general, and not identifying the areas where the skills will be used in the project.

Reflections

Teachers are reminded that the reflections are three separate pieces of 150 words each. This does not mean that if one reflection has not reached the word limit, another should exceed it to give a total of 450 words. In addition, there is no need to submit an artifact of 20 pages when only one page or even a few paragraphs were used.

In Reflection 1, students need to state the titles of the artefacts, their previous knowledge about the topic and what they have learnt about each artefact. Too many students are writing an introduction before beginning to give the main idea of Artefact 1 and therefore they exceed the word limit before Artefact 3 is reached.

Reflection 2 was not done well. Many students gave a summary of each piece or wrote about the same strategy for each piece. When devices were identified, no examples (or discussion) were given to show how the device helped to achieve the author's purpose.

Reflection 3 was done well. Some students linked it to their expectations in the plan with great success.

Written report

This section was not done well. Some groups did not select the three pieces for discussion. This meant that a score of one was awarded for language. Groups were supposed to state their theme, state the sub-topics of each member, choose the three pieces, say why they were chosen and give the process of how they were chosen. The task of each member and the process of writing the report should have also been included.

Too many groups began with a discussion of the process from its inception, including the teacher's suggestions and/or the questions used to guide their answer. As a result of such lengthy introductions, the word limit was exceeded before selected pieces were completely analysed.

Some projects are still being submitted with missing sections. This was most common with the written report. Teachers are asked to ensure that the project contains those sections for which marks were allocated on the cover sheet.

It should be noted that the English SBA is not a group project. The Written Report is the only part of the project that students should do as a group.

Exemplars and comments

The Plan

The exemplar shows a good example of The Plan. The theme, the topic based on that theme, the reasons for choosing the topic, three benefits to a student of English, and the materials and sources used were all stated. However, the response was over the limit of 100 words and so the points given for how the student would use his/her English Language skills could not be considered for grading.

The theme of my group is "Gaming" and I have chosen the topic "The positive effects of gaming on people" because people always see the negative effects that gaming has on someone, but I wanted to highlight in my investigation, the advantages of this hobby. As an English student I hope to improve my comprehension, summary writing, editing and vocabulary skills. The three artefacts that I will use for my research are a blog, a news article and another article which I plan to source from genuine websites, newspapers and magazines. I intend to use my summary and editing skills to write the written report and my reflections, and I will use my vocabulary and comprehension skills for my oral presentation.

Reflection 1

The exemplar shows a good example of Reflection 1. Although the student omitted to point out his/her previous knowledge of the topic, the titles of the artefacts were given and the student's reactions to each piece were expressed clearly.

The online article “The Effects of Crime on Mental Health” written by Nikki Blissett (July 9, 2019) delves into the underestimation of long term effects of crime which made me more open-minded. Her story highlighted emotions that rushed through her which educated me on what one could experience.

The YouTube video “How Crime Can Affect You” elaborates that everyone reacts differently to crime, now I’m aware that they might be able to push through but that doesn’t hide the fact that there are thousands out there suffering with anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, PTSD or even insomnia.

Marina Diamandis’ song, “To Be Human” analyzes humanity’s flaws and the way cultural differences can cause division. She talks about how we should be united by the fact that we all go through human experience. I now understand that everyone goes through different things individually, how else do we truly grow and learn?

Reflection 2

The exemplar shows an excellent response. The candidate identifies and comments on the devices used in the three pieces and shows how they relate to the topic chosen.

The article, “Domestic violence against women: definitions, epidemiology, risk factors and consequences” uses statistics in “Studies show that 37% of the women who have experienced violence suffer from depression”. This alarms the reader of the large incidence of psychological trauma from domestic abuse. It motivates the reader to demand action on this problem. The poem, “Abuse”, uses repetition in “He pulls my hair. He slaps my face. He kicks me on the floor.” This repetition creates empathy to the victim by showing the repeated ways the persona was physically abused. It also focuses on the violence being initiated by the abuser. The song, “I’m Ok” uses a metaphor in “Never knew just where to turn for shelter from the storm”. The ‘storm’ is referring to the uproar and danger in the home when the author’s father was abusing his spouse. The home became unsafe due to the uproar domestic violence created.

The Written Report

In the exemplar, the students provided a fair response for the Written Report. In the first paragraph, there seemed to be some confusion regarding the theme/topic and subtopics. However, tasks were assigned and a conclusion was given based on the topic. In addition, a limited analysis of the artefacts was provided by the students. The students did not state how or why the artefacts were chosen, nor were the sources used given.

The sub-topic chosen by our group is “The Human Dependency on the Environment”. At first, we experienced difficulty while choosing our sub-topics. Upon further research, analysis and discussion as a group, we came to our decision. We assessed our collective artifacts and found ONE main sub-topic, different effects on the environment, thus we came to our conclusion of what the main topic for our group report should be. Everyone’s sub-topic hinted at it but none of them directly addressed it, hence they were selected as subtopics.

In our group, each individual member was tasked with a different task for the group report. Kendra; oversaw taking notes and pointers. Sanjay and Tyler; gathered and selected the most appropriate and relatable pieces to the group sub-topic and Kristin and Faith; oversaw organizing and typing in the information into the document.

The matter of deciding the three artifacts, however, wasn’t as much of an issue. We opted for a pamphlet, which stated different ways that climate change affects the globe, an article discussing how pollution affects the quality of life and a video, discussing the changes and effects of climate change. These artifacts all stated a similar main point. This supported our argument of why we need the earth to be “healthy” and how different reactions to the environment may affect us whether it be positive or negative.

As a group we worked poorly at times as there was a bit of procrastination, however, when we came together and properly focused on our work we got the things we needed to complete done.

PAPER 032 — ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

Since the introduction of the SBA component, Paper 032 has been written by candidates as an alternative to the SBA. Although there was some improvement in candidates' performance over the previous year, candidates still appear inadequately prepared to answer some questions. In too many cases, candidates lifted chunks of information from the texts given without showing clear understanding of the information.

For Paper 032, candidates were presented with three texts which focused on obesity.

Question 1

In Part (a), candidates were required to outline the main idea or issue presented in each of the three texts.

Candidate's Response to Part (a)

Text 1: In the article, the main issue is the high number of obese individuals within Caribbean countries, especially young children. This is a problem, because it threatens their future, also opening them to many other health issues. Organizations must therefore join.

Text 2: The general or main issue in the cartoon is the way many or most obese patients feed their condition, instead of attempting to reverse it. Because by looking at the image, it can be imagined that the boy accepts his situation and lives a lifestyle that supports his condition, as he is there with poor posture, on his computer, when he can be exercising and eating healthy.

Text 3: The poem's main issue is an individual who is comfortable being fat, has no problem with her weight and visiting the reader to see her in her comfort.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate captured the main ideas and provided supporting evidence. The candidate saw the relationship between obesity in adults and lifestyle habits, as pictured in the cartoon. The candidate captured the idea that the person is comfortable in her own skin despite others' view of her obesity. Not many candidates saw the connection between the issue and a black woman's obese body.

Some candidates had difficulty determining the main idea of all three media. Even those who were able to glean the main idea did not score full marks as they did not understand the requirement regarding the word *outline* and therefore provided no supporting statements in outlining the main idea. Many candidates were able to identify the rising number of incidents of obesity in young people in the developing world as the main idea in the newspaper article but some failed to mention any supporting evidence as required.

Some candidates captured the main idea that obesity in adults is a result of sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating habits, as shown in the cartoon. However, some candidates did not make the connection and focused on body shaming as the issue. In the case of the poem, many candidates were able to identify that the persona was comfortable in her own skin but failed to relate this to the celebration of the black woman's body. In many cases, candidates were unsure if the persona was male or female. This showed that such candidates misunderstood the poem.

In Part (b), candidates were required to choose one of the three texts and to assess the appropriateness of the text for the purpose of communicating an idea or issue.

Candidate's Responses to Part (b)

- The text shows that obesity affects everyone, especially children. There are also statistics to show the rise and fall in each country when it comes to obesity. Therefore, I think newspaper articles are the best way to reach a lot of people and spread awareness on obesity. Therefore, I think the newspaper article is the best way to react to a lot of people and spread awareness on obesity.
- The text, the cartoon, is appropriate in communicating the issue because it provides a visual image of obesity along with humour where the man said, "It too looks like your computer may block cookies, but you don't." Immediately, the audience sees the message the illustration is trying to get across about eating "a lot of cookies" and the image of the fat man.
- I chose Text 3 because speaking about obesity via poem would capture the attention of the audience, big or small, due to the rhyming of words and the use of simile, so it would give the audience excitement and capture their attention.

Examiner's Comments

In the first response, the candidate clearly establishes why the article is appropriate for conveying the message. In the second response, the candidate explains why the cartoon is appropriate for addressing the issue of obesity. Many candidates chose to assess the appropriateness of the poem. In the last response, the candidate shows why the poem can be deemed appropriate.

The term *appropriateness* created a challenge for some candidates. These candidates simply repeated the main idea without stating whether the chosen text was appropriate for conveying the information. In cases where candidates understood what the question required, the responses were comprehensive and explicit. What was clear, however, was that some candidates produced generic responses, failing to provide examples of the points they were making. For example, generic responses regarding the article included statements such as wide readership or the use of statistics, etc., without any elaboration.

In Part (c), candidates were required to select two of the texts and to choose one language technique used in each and explain its effectiveness.

Candidate's Response to Part (c)

Title of text: Imitation (poem) — repetition is used.

“Come and see me sometime” is used as repetition to tell the person they are speaking to that they are proud of how unbothered they are.

Title of text: Obesity in the Caribbean — comparison is used.

The writer compares Caribbean children's obesity/weight with the rest of the world by saying it is “three times higher” than the rest of the world. He does this to show how serious the issue is.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate identified the techniques and commented clearly on their effectiveness.

While candidates were, for the most part, able to identify one language technique from two of the media, most were unable to explain the effectiveness of these techniques. There were, however, too many candidates who were unable to name any language technique. Such candidates offered quotations from the texts as techniques. The concepts of appropriateness and effectiveness as well as the definition and explanation of language techniques require greater attention in the classroom.

Question 2

In Part (a), candidates were required to explain three factors other than the composition of the audience that a speaker must consider when making an oral presentation.

Candidate's Response to Part (a)

- A speaker should consider eye contact. This creates a sense of connection between the speaker and the audience.
- Body language — when you are in front of an audience, the way you move your body can make your presentation more effective.
- Tone of voice — the way you speak has a great impact on your audience. Voice modulation can make your presentation more effective.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate correctly identified three factors and explained their importance.

Most candidates seemed aware of considerations for oral presentations. However, several of them failed to provide an explanation of the factors that the speaker should consider, which formed the second part of the question.

In Part (b), candidates were required to list three points they would discuss in the oral presentation.

Candidate's Response to Part (b)

- The high levels of obesity in CARICOM countries compared to the rest of the world, especially among children.
- The importance of blocking out unhealthy foods that could affect the body.
- The importance of still loving yourself whether you are overweight and accepting who they are even if they want to change themselves or not.

Examiner's Comments

Three points for the oral presentation were clearly identified.

Most candidates were able to list three relevant points for an oral presentation based on the issues in the texts. Some candidates, however, included points that were too general and which could be applied to other issues other than the issue of obesity.

In Part (c), candidates were required to think of a group of persons who may be interested in the issues outlined in the oral presentation in Part (b). Candidates were also asked to list three characteristics of the group to which the presentation would be made and three techniques that could be used to keep the group interested in the presentation.

Candidate's Response to Part (c)

Characteristics of the group

- Obese people, especially those who are looking for work
- Job owners or managers who supervise overweight people who work for them
- Lastly, parents, especially those of obese children

Techniques

- Providing visual aids such as pictures and videos that stimulate the interest of the audience.
- The speaker can participate in a question-and-answer feedback segment so that the audience has a better sense of understanding.
- Role play: Picking on those who share their experiences based on the issue at hand.

Examiner's Comments

The candidate identified the characteristics of the groups and correctly listed the techniques.

There was some measure of misunderstanding of this question among candidates. Most candidates did not think of one discrete group, for example, children and then describe features of this group. Rather, they thought of a group and considered parents, students, government officials, etc. to be features of that group.

Question 3

For this question, candidates were asked to create an original response based on one of the ideas or issues listed in Question 1 (a). They were required to use drama, poetry, song, prose or any other suitable form.

Responses were assessed using the following criteria.

- Relevance of content
- Organization of ideas
- Effective use of language
- Vivid word choice
- Unique voice/style

The question was handled fairly well by those candidates who attempted it. Poetry seemed to be the genre of preference and some candidates, under examination conditions, were able to produce some competent, entertaining and at times humorous poems on the issues presented. Even when the vernacular was used, candidates did so with a degree of comfort while using poetic language (similes, metaphors etc.), rhyme and repetition. Many of the responses (prose, poetry and drama) reflected candidates' deep thoughts and awareness of issues related to obesity. In some cases, even where candidates performed poorly on Questions 1 and 2, they were able to sufficiently manipulate the elements of writing and composing to produce competent answers. However, candidates seemed to lack skills in the organization and sequencing of ideas as some of them hardly used paragraphs in their prose responses.

Candidate's Response to Question 3

Sample 1 — Poem

Do Better

Obesity is a problem we must change, or we will see our final days
The numbers are increasing more and more everyday
I hope there is a change before it is too late.
Young people being the ones worst to suffer makes me sit and wonder why?
Parents of today must do better
Stop obesity before obesity stops you
Do better, do better, do better
Not only for you but for the people you love too
Diet and exercise is the key to a long and healthy life, so
Do better, do better, do better
Or you may die.

Examiner's Comments

The poem is simple but captures the essence of safeguarding one's health. The issue presented by the writer is one with which many people can identify. While the issue of obesity is addressed, the hallmark of this piece is the call to action, highlighting the fact that obesity can be controlled and can be defeated.

Sample 2 — Prose

Ever since Little Leah could remember, she had shrieked with excitement at the mere mention of breakfast, lunch dinner and especially dessert. Everyone in her family truly believed that she would run a 500-metre race or even a marathon, if the reward would be an all-you-can-eat buffet stock full of pies pastries and pizza. When Little Leah started attending high school, she was told all the fat jokes and was given more unsettling nicknames than compliments. "Yo, Big Fatty Leah!" "How come ya ain't buying any lunch today?" "You on a diet or something, man?" a male classmate had jeered at her without rest. Little Leah would often laugh it off but she hid her true emotions behind a mask each and everyday for the entire school year.

On days when she had no classes, the once bubbly girl would look at the spread of what used to be her most favourite desserts and just simply ignore it without any hesitation. She seldom craved any snacks and instead stared at the bathroom mirror with plain disgust in her maroon eyes. One day, as she walked home after the self-defeating comments she was burdened with, her ears picked up on a familiar melody that she had forgotten years ago. "There is a hope waiting for you in the dark. You don't have to change a thing, the world can change its heart." "No scars to your beautiful ...", Leah whispered underneath her breath. Tears began to trickle down her skin after her favourite childhood song's hook. The realization had hit her that she should appreciate the vessel that she was given to live in on this planet Earth. At that very moment, she promised herself that she would begin her journey to self-love. Little Leah finally smiled ear to ear like an innocent child again. When she arrived home, she asked her mother for her favourite pie, instead of refusing to eat one bite. "Love yourself like you love others."

Examiner's Comments

In this short piece, the candidate demonstrates economy in the use of language. The candidate clearly establishes the attributes of the persona and allows the interactions with others to ignite the actions in the narrative. The reader empathizes with the protagonist who has to endure the taunts of her schoolmates. One also notices the internal conflict that she endures, a conflict that leads to her deciding to accept who she is. This conflict leads her to realize that self-love is important in a cruel world.

Recommendations

- With respect to Question 1 (Parts (a), (b) and (c)), instructors are encouraged to place emphasis on terms such as *main idea*, *appropriateness and effectiveness of treatment*, and *language techniques*. To avoid confusion, students should be taught that the word ‘that’ should be included in the sentence which is given to state the main idea whereas the word ‘to’ should be included in the sentence that is given to describe the purpose. For example, *the main idea in the newspaper article is that obesity in children and adolescents is becoming a major problem in the Caribbean*.
- With respect to Question 2 Part (a), instructors should explain the phrase ‘other than the composition of the audience’ as too many students are still listing age/sex/race as factors to be considered when making an oral presentation. Students should also be informed that the factors required are those related to delivery and not the content of the presentation.
- For Question 2 (c), instructors should ensure that students understand that they must provide characteristics of the groups they identify, that is, what features of the mentioned group would make the members interested in the presentation. For Question 3, candidates who wrote poems seemed to be at a greater advantage than those who wrote prose. Attempts at prose, especially short story and argument, would be enhanced by effective paragraphing. Instructors need to ensure that students are familiar with the basic elements of paragraph construction.
- It should be made clear that responses to Question 3 must be original.