CAPE® COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Subject Report
May-June 2025

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION®

May-June 2025

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

The Communication Studies examination comprised four papers as outlined below.

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice
- Paper 02 — Essay
- Paper 031 — School-Based Assessment
- Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment

These four papers assessed candidates' knowledge, understanding and competence in the following modules.

- Module 1 — Gathering and Processing of Information
- Module 2 — Language and Community
- Module 3 — Speaking and Writing

There was a slight decrease in the number of candidates registered to sit the 2025 CAPE Communication Studies examinations; the number this year (2025) was 13446 compared with 13744 in 2024 and 14040 in 2023.

The performance in 2025 reflected a slight decline in overall pass rates, with approximately 93 per cent of candidates achieving Grades I–V compared with 94 per cent in both 2023 and 2024. In 2025, performance in Module 1 showed a notable decrease, with approximately 48 per cent of candidates attaining Grades A–C, compared to 56 per cent in 2024 and 44 per cent in 2023. Performance in Module 2 showed a significant decrease with 53 per cent of candidates attaining Grades A–C in 2025 when compared to 61 per cent in 2024 and 55 per cent in 2023. The performance in Module 3 experienced a significant increase, with approximately 59 per cent of candidates attaining Grades A–C, compared with 43 per cent in 2024 and 54 per cent in 2023.

PAPER 01 – MULTIPLE CHOICE

Paper 01 consisted of 45 multiple-choice questions. The first seven questions tested candidates' listening comprehension skills. The score on this paper was weighted up to 90. The mean score was 59.71 out of 90 or approximately 66 per cent.   The highest score on the paper was 87.86.

Paper 02 consisted of three sections corresponding to the three modules, each with one compulsory essay-type question. Each question was marked out of 25 and the total weighted up to 150.

The weighted mean on this paper was 74.94 out of 150 (approximately 50 per cent), compared with 75.75 out of 150 (approximately 51 per cent) in 2024 and 75.15 out of 150 (approximately 50 per cent) in 2023. The highest score achieved on the paper was 136.

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Question 1
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Candidates were required to analyse an expository passage titled When Languages Die. They had to identify the writer's main message and purpose, identify and comment on the writer's use of any two organizational strategies or literary techniques, and comment on the credibility of the information presented.

Candidates inexplicably had challenges identifying the writers' main message and purpose. Several candidates failed to score the full two marks for each sub-task. Many responses were too compressed to adequately capture nuances in the writer's messaging and purpose for writing. The main idea could have been expressed in the statement that *the loss of indigenous plants results in the loss of indigenous languages as well because plant medicinal attributes are exclusively documented in specific indigenous languages*. Additionally, an example of the writer's purpose is *to inform, tell, explain, sensitize, illustrate, teach the audience that there is a potential loss of indigenous plant medicinal insights when indigenous languages are lost.*

The tasks to identify and comment on the use of strategies and techniques were worth two marks — one for identification and the other for comments on how their use helped to achieve the writer's purpose. Although the overall performance on this question declined by approximately four per cent, most candidates performed creditably in correctly identifying the writer's use of strategies and/or literary techniques, thereby scoring the first of two marks.

A significant number of candidates failed to score the second mark because they were unable to offer satisfactory reasons as to how the use of the strategies or techniques helped the writer's purpose. Many offered vague and meaningless reasons such as 'making the message more credible' and/or 'reliable'. Responses regarding the writer's use of statistical data, for example, should have included statements such as the following.

- Statistical data is empirical evidence that makes the information more believable since it is based on research.
- The use of such data illustrates that the connection between indigenous plant medicine is undeniable/indisputable.
- The use of quantitative data suggests that the magnitude of language loss and the corresponding loss of indigenous plant medicinal knowledge.

The final task of evaluating the credibility of the information presented was worth two marks. This part was fairly done by most candidates but many gave canned and simplistic responses such as the 'information is credible because the writer used statistics' or the 'information is credible because the information is current and was produced within a five-year period'.

Teachers need to sensitize students to the fact that statistics by themselves do not prove credibility. Their use can only suggest that the information is researched and factual. It is a fact that people have been known to lie with statistics. Similarly, it is not enough to claim that information is credible simply because it is current. It is more acceptable to proffer that information produced within the past five years is more likely to be up-to-date and accurate than information that is dated. A more reliable guide for the credibility of information is the source of the information.

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Question 2
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Candidates were required to analyse a narrative extract from V.S. Naipaul's Miguel Street by
- identifying and explaining the narrator's use of dialectal variation
- identifying with examples two grammatical features of the dialectal variety used by the character Hat
- explaining the author's use of any two language registers used in the passage.

Most candidates were able to correctly identify the author's use of Caribbean/Trinidadian Creole English and give valid reasons for its use in the extract.

Sadly, several candidates had serious challenges in correctly identifying grammatical features of the dialectal variety used by the character. Many candidates had no viable notion of what grammatical features were, others identified labels for such features such as "zero copula structure" but were unable to provide correct examples from the passage, proving that they had insufficient knowledge of the features. Teachers need to invest time and effort in properly grounding students in the fundamentals of Caribbean Creole English syntax.

Grammatical features used by the character, Hat, include the following.

- Use of subject pronoun in object position — "He is a man, like any of we."; "Let we wait and see"
- Use of base verb with third person singular present tense subject — "He don't have to tell me where he gone"
- Lack of auxiliary/use of past participle as past tense/present perfect verb — "He gone looking for he wife"
- The use of the subject pronoun to mark/signal/indicate possession — "he wife"

The final task required candidates to account for the character's use of language registers in the extract. This was creditably done by most candidates, but significant numbers struggled to correctly list, with brief explanations, examples of casual, formal, private and frozen registers. This basic failure contributed to a 14 per cent reduction in performance on this question when compared to the previous year's performance. The following registers and explanations could have been given.
- Intimate register – Between Hat and Popo who became very close with each other and started to divulge to each other personal information.
- Casual register – Between the Popo and the men in Popo's workshop; they interacted but did not have a close personal connection.
- Frozen register – Newspaper headlines about Popo's actions; these followed a standard format for which no immediate feedback is required.

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Question 3

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Candidates were required to imagine themselves as part of a community action group whose members have been given the responsibility to inform local senior citizens about the benefits of online banking, and persuade them to make greater use of this facility by performing three tasks. These included

- clearly stating/customizing one message point that they would communicate to the elderly on the benefits of online banking
- explaining three separate promotional strategies which could be used to motivate the elderly to engage with online banking
- specifying a timetable of activities which could be implemented over a two-week period to motivate compliance.

Most candidates were able to correctly produce a relevant message point. Better responses were the ones in which the candidates offered a brief explanation as to why the message point is suitable for the target audience. Acceptable message points are provided below.

- Internet banking is less expense than physically going to the bank, for example, transportation
- Convenience of conducting business at home and at any time
- Privacy of transactions
- Safety – protection from contagious infections, for example, Covid-19 or from being a victim of criminal activity
- Independence – they can manage their own financial affairs

The second task of explaining three separate promotional strategies which could be used to motivate the elderly to engage with online banking was less efficiently performed by many candidates. Several of them simply listed three possible strategies without any explanation of how such could possibly motivate an engagement with online banking. Still others mistakenly made reference to rhetorical techniques (logos, pathos, ethos and kairos) as promotional strategies. The result, in both cases, is that such candidates lost valuable marks – one mark was given for the correct identification of each of three promotional strategies and one mark was given for a brief explanation of how each could motivate senior citizens to try online banking. Strategies and explanations could have included the following.

- In-person Training at a community centre or in a church group: this could be used to build trust and confidence through the use of experts and familiar persons in the community.
- Family members mentoring: this could help build trust and confidence
- Online training: this would serve a two-fold process, training while building expertise and confidence in using the online platform.
- Use of recorded tutorials: Could be used at anytime/anywhere and replayed for consolidation. Also these would be convenient for those that are not mobile
- Giving prizes as incentive to participate

The final task required candidates to specify a timetable of activities which could be implemented over a two-week period to motivate compliance. Disappointingly, significant numbers of candidates scored one out of two marks or no mark at all for this task. Candidates who performed creditably were able to explain how the three promotional strategies identified in task two could be deployed over the two-week period. Some candidates seem to lack the basic knowledge that a timetable is simply a series of activities performed over a set period. Teachers need to spend the time giving students sufficient practice in answering the different aspects of examination questions.

Despite these shortcomings, this question performed 14 per cent better than it did on the 2024 examination.