

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2

1. GENERAL COMMENTS

The standard of the paper is comparable to that of the previous years. The quality of the paper was appropriate. However, as in previous years, the general performance of the candidates was not good enough. While Section A (Essay) was handled well by most candidates, the same cannot be said of Section B (Comprehension) and Section C (Summary).

2. SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' STRENGTHS

- (1) Relevant features and ideas for content of all the essays were prominent. A good number of candidates understood the essay questions and wrote extensively on them. They no longer had problems with the formal features of an informal letter.
- (2) Organisation was well done. The use of intra and inter-paragraph linkages was well done leading to the achievement of cohesion and coherence of the ideas. Candidates dealt well with questions that required two phases of attention.
- (3) Some candidates used the appropriate vocabulary and registers in writing the essays. They were also able to develop their points to satisfy the requirements.
- (4) Some were able to provide the mandatory formal features.
- (5) The exhibition of knowledge of the correct use of idioms: this enriched their essays.

3. SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' WEAKNESSES

The general performance of the candidates revealed that many of them have still not grasped the rudiments of English Language. The following weaknesses, among others, were observed:

- (1) Poor syntactic structures or faulty sentence constructions.
- (2) Poorly controlled sentences due to poor knowledge of punctuation.
- (3) Wrong spelling of words
- (4) Use of wrong tenses
- (5) Indiscriminate use of capital letters
- (6) Wrong application of subject-verb agreement
- (7) The small letter (i) was written instead of the capital (I), for the first person singular pronoun.
- (8) In summary, candidates lifted answers wrongly from the passage and provided answers outside the context of the passage.

4. SUGGESTED REMEDIES

- (1) The teaching of grammar should be a major concern of teachers of English. In this regard, the basic topics such as the parts of speech, types of sentences, clauses, phrases and their functions should be treated extensively.
- (2) The correct use of tenses should be taught exhaustively.

- (3) Students should be given more lessons in the correct use of punctuation marks.
- (4) The reading habit should be inculcated in students to increase their vocabulary stock, enhance correct spelling and enable them to write correct sentences.
- (5) Students should also do more writing exercises as part of their preparation towards the examination.
- (6) Students should be taught techniques in tackling summary questions.

5. **DETAILED COMMENTS**

QUESTION 1

Write a letter to your friend in another country telling him/her about your plans after leaving senior secondary school.

The candidates were expected to write a letter to their friends in another country telling them about their plans after leaving senior secondary school. This was a favourite question and the candidates who attempted it performed creditably. They were able to discuss in detail at least three of their plans to earn good marks under content.

The candidates were expected to write an informal letter. Most of the candidates were able to present the features of an informal letter. However, they wrote the addresses wrongly and struggled to spell the month 'August' correctly. Salutation was faulty with no comma after first name. Some wrote a lot of irrelevant things as lengthy pleasantries in the introduction. Others wrote very scanty paragraphs which were just mere raising of many points without developing them. Some even ignored the core topic and were just chatting with their friends.

QUESTION 2

Write an article for publication in your school magazine on bullying among students and its effects.

The candidates were required to write an article suitable for publication in their school magazine on bullying among students and its effects. A good number of the candidates understood the question, but some dwelt more on the effects than discussing bullying among students. Most of the candidates were able to present the features as title or heading and name of writer at the bottom right-hand side.

Generally, paragraphing was good but uncontrolled sentences created a lot of problems for most candidates. For content, some candidates gave instances of bullying and their adverse effects on students. Some followed these instances with appeals to the authorities to curb

the negative practices. The effects of bullying should have been on the victim, culprit and the school but candidates dwelt on only the victim.

QUESTION 3

Your school is noted for its academic excellence across the country but rarely participates in sports. As the Senior Prefect of the school, write a letter to the Principal giving him at least three reasons why your school should take part in sports.

The candidates were expected to write a letter to the Principal giving him at least three reasons why their schools should take part in sports. A few candidates attempted it very well and they were able to raise very good reasons why their school should take part in sports. The official letter format was mandatory, and some candidates were able to present the features. However, some candidates used informal expressions in this formal letter.

QUESTION 4

The Old Students Association is visiting your school. Write a speech you will deliver at the occasion telling them some areas in the school where their assistance is needed.

The candidates were required to write a speech they would deliver during the visit of the Old Students Association of their school telling them some areas in the school where their assistance was needed. This question was unpopular because not many candidates answered it. The question required the candidates to give a speech during the visit of the Old Students Association telling them some areas the school would need assistance.

A few candidates who answered this question had problems with organisation, expression and mechanical accuracy. For instance, the candidates were expected to start with the usual vocatives but that was not done or appropriately done. Candidates did not have good command of language and the use of appropriate speech techniques. The petition for assistance was rather directed to the headmaster instead of the Old Students Association.

QUESTION 5

Write a story to illustrate the saying: *I wish I had never met him.*

The candidates were expected to write a story to illustrate the saying: I wish I had never met him. The story may be real or imaginary. They were expected to give an account of events or tell a story which expresses regret. This was not a popular question for the candidates. Some candidates wrote stories which did not illustrate the saying and others could not write well-organised stories with good plots and paragraphs. The candidates were expected to use vocabulary that reflected the right atmosphere but most of them could

not. A few, however, were able to illustrate the saying: I wish I had never met him. Some candidates used animal characters.

QUESTION 6

This was a comprehension test. The passage was interesting and not difficult to understand. About 40% of candidates scored high marks for this question. Their answers revealed that their ability to understand what they read was good. They grasped the subject matter of the passage, as a result, they were able to identify the answers in it.

However, most candidates performed poorly. They failed to provide the answers in the right tenses.

- (b) Some failed to show the differences between Uncle Ben and the children. The use of the contrast in the answer was a problem.
- (d) Some failed to state the specific reason for Uncle Ben going to sea. They just narrated what he did.
- (f) The majority of them lacked the understanding of the question on Uncle Ben's attitude.
- (g) Though most of them got the grammatical name 'Noun Phrase' correct, they had a problem providing its function. They wrote 'object of the verb' or object of a different verb and not 'recounted'.
- (i) Few candidates got the answer 'Personification' right. The majority wrote 'hyperbole'.
- (j) Candidates gave more than one word or phrase as an answer. Most of them wrote 'experienced' without the article for 'a seasoned'.

QUESTION 7

This question tested the candidates' ability to sift relevant material from the passage and present it in a concise form. The rubrics stated clearly that candidates should use their own words as far as possible and in sentences. Unfortunately, many candidates performed poorly by lifting lengthy portions of the passage as answers. Those who wrote answers with extraneous materials, grammatical and expression errors were penalised. Since the summary passage was on social media which most of them were familiar with, they therefore resorted to writing answers which were out of context. Candidates must read and understand the passage before answering it.