

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI

EGCSE

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (6873)

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EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**Paper 6873/01****Reading and Writing****General Comments**

The paper consists of five comprehension passages. It is a test for reading and answering of questions of both explicit and implicit nature. Candidates are expected to answer all questions in two hours.

The highest mark obtained in 2021 was 40 and the lowest was 03. The paper was the first to be written since the syllabus changed and it proved to be challenging for the candidates. The most challenging questions were Exercise 1, Exercise 3 and Exercise 4. These were basically the 'new' questions in the syllabus.

The overall performance was affected by:

- (1) Lack of understanding of questions
- (2) Missing keywords in answers
- (3) Giving incomplete answers

There were a total of 25 162 candidates who wrote the paper which saw an increase when compared to 2020.

Comments on Specific Questions**Exercise 1**

- (a)** Why is an independent opinion necessary before finding a house?

Response: To weigh the options available to them.

This was a very accessible question except for those candidates who changed the word 'weigh' to weight which then changed the answer completely.

- (b)** What do people learn by renting a house prior to buying a house?

Response: They learn how to budget/ they learn how to manage their finances before being bound to the long-term commitment of paying a house loan.

This was also an accessible question as candidates were able to lift their answers directly from the passage.

- (c)** What is the overall advantage of buying a house instead of renting a house?

Response: when buying a house you will eventually own the property as opposed to renting where you will never own the property.

Candidates failed to bring out the comparison between buying property and renting. They were only able to score one mark if they gave an advantage of buying a house but they did not score for only giving an advantage of renting. The question required that both renting and buying were mentioned to bring out the overall advantage of buying.

- (d) Why might some people not be able to buy a house?

Response: It is due to the high cost of living/they cannot afford it.

Most candidates did not score the mark because they cut the answer short by leaving out '...of living' but otherwise it was accessible to most candidates.

- (e) Explain the rent-to-buy financing method.

Response: First identify a property that you like, then pay rent over time until you are in a position to afford or qualify for finance to purchase it. (all should be included to score).

Most candidates did not score because they did not explain the method but gave reasons for the rent-to-buy method. Also, if one part of the explanation was missing, the answer did not score.

- (f) How can one avoid repossession of their house?

Response: They should adequately budget for it.

Most candidates missed this question and they gave response:s like 'they should not buy the house' or they should remain flexible' which were both incorrect.

- (g) How do sales agents help the buying process run smoothly?

Response: (i) They save you time as they do the work for you

(ii) They help you make the best offer

Most candidates were not able to score because they omitted 'how' they save time for buyers as they omitted '.....as they do the work for you' and for the second response: they omitted 'help'. These details were key in the answer. However, it was an accessible question.

- (h) What advice is given to people thinking of buying a house? (give four details)

Response: (i) ask your financier to check affordability

(ii) calculate the total cost of owning a home as opposed to just monthly instalments

(iii) find a sales agent to help you

(iv) conduct your own assessment

(v) use the rent-to-buy method (any 4)

Most candidates were able to score two of the points and some of the points were a repetition. However, some candidates were giving advantages of renting instead of buying property. Other candidates ignored the instructions of giving only 4 details but went on to give more. Some were lifting answers indiscriminately thus they had too much unnecessary details and they ran short of space to give all 4 details.

All in all, it was a poorly performed exercise.

Exercise 2

Again, generally, this exercise was poorly performed by candidates even though it was not new. They tended to omit key words to answers and lifted indiscriminately. They gave very long sentences which were dropping off the spaces provided and had no relevance to the answer.

1. Importance of assertiveness

- They learn the right way to communicate
- To express thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a clear, respectful manner

Candidates were missing the words 'right' for the first point. They missed 'clear and respectful' for point 2'. This made the answers to be incorrect without those key words.

2. Ways for parents to teach their children assertiveness

- Lead by example
- Use correct body language
- Explain consent and encourage trust of intuition/ disagreeing in uncomfortable situations/pushing back on crossed boundaries
- Teach them to set emotional and physical boundaries
- Use age-appropriate and real-life situations

Candidates omitted some key words which were key to the points.

3. Challenges of teaching assertiveness

- Parents responding negatively
- Children become authoritative to parents
- Thin line between assertiveness and aggression
- Children are bound to make mistakes.

Exercise 3

(i) B

(ii) D

(iii) A

(iv) A

(v) B

(vi) D

(vii) A

(vii) B

Most candidates failed to score in this exercise as they gave wrong answers. Some showed lack of exposure to this exercise. Some gave two letters for a question and did not cancel clearly. Lack of understanding of the passages was evident in this exercise since it required precise answers in the form of the correct letters representing the different speakers.

Exercise 4

This exercise proved challenging to most candidates as some were not able to score a single mark. Those who were able to score, only scored for the first question.

- (a)** For how long has the writer not travelled?

Answer : seven years.

This question proved to be accessible to most candidates but a few were not answering for 'how long' but they were giving answers for 'when' Some were writing ' after seven years' which made the answer to be incorrect.

- (b)** For the writer, what was the most important reason for taking this trip?

Answer : she had waited patiently for her reprieve from domesticity burnout.

Candidates were omitting some words and tried to shorten the answer making it incomplete which then made them not to score.

- (c)** What kind of a place did the writer want to visit on her own?

Response: a village perched on a cliff in the Mediterranean.

Candidates again, omitted keywords of the answer which were part of the description of the place the writer wished to visit.

- (d)** Explain the following figurative expressions as used in the passage:

(i) Fate intervened..... (para 2) - opportunity availed itself/ she was lucky

(ii) explosive ball of anticipation... (para 3) - great eagerness/ great expectation / great excitement

Most candidates found this challenging as they did not work out the meaning from the context of the passage. They gave meanings of the words in isolation.

- (e)** Give two advantages which the island of Skiathos has over the island of Skopelos.

- Affordable
- Less-populated

Most candidates scored here. It was an accessible question.

- (f)** What phrase in the passage indicates that the writer felt more content after the trip.

Answer : '.....a well-rounded happier me'

Most candidates got the answer but did not present it in a phrase form as per the question but they wrote it in sentence form. This resulted in the loss of the mark. Others directed the examiner to where the phrase was found in the passage. Generally, this exercise was poorly performed by most candidates.

Exercise 5

The exercise wanted candidates to give disadvantages of cell phones to employees in the workplace. However, most candidates looked at the disadvantages to both employers and employees at the workplace. This was purely a result of lack of question analysis by candidates. It led to over writing and having more words with less points relevant to the question.

1. Access to social media is banned or blocked by the employer
2. They suffer from fatigue even before they get to work
3. Productivity is affected
4. Burden both employers and employees with legal issues
5. May miss out on important information
6. Radiation from phones can endanger lives/can cause destruction
7. Can be sued for damages and losses (for leaking information)
8. Distracted from business tasks
9. Blurring of private versus public life/ employees can even get fired for something they said in private.

Some candidates found it challenging to write continuously and their points could not score as they were either incomplete or they did not make a complete thought which then disadvantaged them. Also, their knowledge of the subject made them to write 'outside' of the passage which made them not to score. Writing in their own words made candidates to come up with a different passage altogether. Many spent their time writing an introduction of the summary which cost them half the words they were expected to use. Spellings of the words 'distract and destruct' made candidates to miss the points with those words.

Recommendations

- Reading should form a great part of English language teaching so that students are familiar with written texts of all types.
- Students should be exposed to all the exercises in the new syllabus and their expectations should be communicated to candidates.
- Note-taking continues to be a problem with candidates, students should be taught to write notes not sentences for exercise 2.
- Question analysis should be taught to help students to understand tasks given in exams.

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/02

Continuous Writing

General Comments

This paper consists of three exercises: exercise 1, exercise 2 and exercise 3. Exercise 1 and exercise 2 are compulsory then for exercise 3 candidates choose one question out of 3. The questions consist of directed writing tasks: Exercise 1 and 2 which are directed writing tasks and free writing style in Exercise 3.

The total mark in this paper is **50**.

The highest score obtained this year 2021 was **47/50 which is the same high score for the year 2020**, however this does not mean that the performance was the same as last year's as this was an isolated case and more students struggled to even obtain more than **30/50**.

There was a noticeable number of candidates who scored marks below **10**: a string of **4s, 7s** and the lowest mark **00 yet in 2020 the lowest was 5**. There were also candidates who just wrote the Centre number, candidate number and name then submitted without attempting to answer any question.

Comments on Specific Questions**Exercise 1**

Last year you did not get good results in your senior secondary examination and now your parent/guardian has afforded you another opportunity to study for the examination.

Write a letter to your parent/ guardian expressing your appreciation for giving you an opportunity to attend school gain.

Your letter should include:

- Appreciation of support and encouragement given
- How you will improve your academic work
- Importance of education in your life

Your letter should be 1 page (about 150-200 words long).

You will receive up to 7 marks for the content of your letter and up to 7 marks for style and accuracy of your language.

Exercise 1: The candidates were expected to write an Informal Letter.

Expectations

Write a letter to your parent or guardian expressing your appreciation for giving you an opportunity to attend school again.

Key phrases:

*last year you did not get good results

*afforded another opportunity to study for the examination

In this exercise the candidates were expected to write an informal letter directed to their parent or guardian. The letter was expected to show that the candidate understands that the previous year they did not obtain good results therefore, he or she has been afforded another opportunity to study. Since the audience is a parent or guardian the candidates were expected to use a register that is semi-formal and use a friendly tone. The candidates were supposed to present the appropriate style for letter writing, write a letter with the salutation, introduction, body, conclusion and ending. Moreover, candidates were expected to adhere to grammatical conventions and the letter was supposed to be 150-200 words or a page long of standard hand writing.

The style/structure

***Introduction**

✓ greeting, social distance and clue of the purpose (that is the reason they are writing the letter)

***Body**

✓ development of ideas and show or demonstrate independence of thought

The key phrase or words '**in your life**' led to the expectation of specific ideas and not general ideas. Candidate were expected to write something personal about themselves/relate ideas to themselves.

***Conclusion**

✓ There should be a conclusion, whereby the candidate reconnects the ending to the purpose.

Ending - example

Your precious daughter

Zandi

Good responses

This exercise was friendly for most candidates. Good candidates wrote a friendly letter and were able to adhere to the expectations of the question. Their response:s captured the tone and the mood of appreciation. The tone was chatty or semi-formal. They were able to adequately develop all bullets at the appropriate length. The bullets were relevant to situations the students are used to, therefore many students could relate with the presented situation.

Poor responses

Candidates who had challenges with the question wrote formal letters. These candidates used a formal tone throughout the letter. Most candidates did not show awareness of the audience. They did not develop all bullets adequately and some ignored the bullets and focused on apologising rather than appreciating the second chance.

Common errors and misconceptions

The third idea (bullet 3) was not appropriately developed but rather treated as a conclusion by most candidates. Some candidates seemed to be seeking assistance to attend school again from their guardians or they wrote as if they had received the assistance and had already written the examination. Some candidates were apologising for failing and used 3rd person narration. There were those candidates who did not indicate who they were writing to.

Some letters were just a piece of writing addressing bullets instead of connecting their writing to the audience and purpose, as a result there was no coherence in the paragraphs. Some candidates wrote a speech instead of a letter. A number of candidates also used linking words, for example, 'firstly'. The ending in some letters also showed inadequate awareness of audience and task for some, for example, '...Yours faithfully'.

EXERCISE 2: Persuasive Writing

There is an ongoing debate in society on the impact `boarding schools have on students.

Below are some comments by local people

“Students learn all sorts of vices”.

“These institutions teach values”

“They are conducive to studying”

“Students feel neglected by parents”

Write an article for your local newspaper expressing your views concerning this issue. Your article should be 1 page (150 – 200 words) long.

You will receive up to 7 marks for the content of your letter and up to 7 marks for style and accuracy of your language.

EXPECTATIONS – Argumentative Newspaper Article

There is an ongoing debate in society on the impact boarding schools have on students.

The bone of contention or burning issue in this exercise is ‘impact boarding schools have on students’

In this exercise candidates were expected to write a newspaper article with the purpose of expressing **their views on the impact boarding schools have on students. The candidates were supposed to be persuasive throughout the article and present it in the appropriate style. The candidates had to show independence of thought and use a persuasive tone using the appropriate terminology, emotive language and persuasive techniques. Candidates were expected to argue for or against the bone of contention.** Also, the voice must be heard from the introduction to the conclusion.

THE STYLE

Introduction

The candidates were expected to briefly give background on the issue at hand or background information and then take a stand.

THE BODY

The candidates were expected to show clearly which stand he or they were advocating for. The candidates were given the liberty to use any style as long as the piece of writing was persuasive. For example; the candidates were allowed to

- ✓ State their opinion using taught persuasive techniques and not acknowledge the other side of the argument however, in this case the voice should be loud and clear and candidates must have a good command of the language so that the stance is stated clearly and there is no dispute about it.
- ✓ Acknowledge other people’s views, refute them then present their own in a persuasive manner and make sure their voice is prominent. Worth noting is that, there were challenges with this style as candidates only acknowledged opposing views, refuted them and forgot to bring in their own view to cement their stance.
- ✓ Put forward their opinions and fully support them convincingly and in passing just acknowledge opposing views without further entertaining them

Conclusion

The candidate is expected to restate or reaffirm stand.

The article should be paragraphed appropriately.

Good responses

Good candidates wrote an argumentative newspaper article. They understood the burning issue and argued for or against it. Their stand was clear from the introduction to the conclusion. The tone was persuasive and there was a variety of persuasive devices used in the article. The candidate further **showed independence of thought**. Paragraphs were well developed at appropriate length.

Poor responses

Candidates did not argue for or against the burning issue. Most candidates were discussing without taking a stand. Most candidates struggled with explaining if the impact of boarding schools was negative or positive. Moreover, persuasive language and techniques were lacking, thus the voice tended to be weak or absent.

These candidates failed to understand the diction or key words in the question as most candidates had misconceptions on the meanings of 'boarding schools, vices, impact, values and conducive' yet the expectation was that at Form 5, candidates would know these words. Some candidates could not differentiate between boarding schools and private schools and this rendered their arguments irrelevant.

Furthermore, independence of thought was lacking in most of the candidates' response:s yet creativity is crucial to get maximum marks.

Notably, some candidates used insulting and offensive language as they refuted opposing views. This was alarming and should be discouraged.

Exercise 3- Extended Writing

Write about 350-450 words on ONE of the following:

Question 1: Discursive piece of writing

Leaders are born. Discuss

The instruction or command word is '**discuss**'.

This was a popular question yet poorly done. Candidates seemed unaware that this was a discursive essay. They were supposed to discuss the various aspects of the topic.

Candidates were expected to discuss the given statement, 'Leaders are born'. They were expected to explore both angles or sides of the issue, that is, leaders are born and leaders are not born.

STYLE/STRUCTURE

*Introduction

- ✓ Candidate may give background information,
- ✓ Candidate may give definition
- ✓ Candidate may give a thesis statement

Body

There are different styles of handling or tackling the task at hand:

- ✓ Candidates may focus on the first angle in the first half of the essay and then move on to the other angle
- ✓ Candidates may focus on one angle in one paragraph and then another angle in the following paragraph
- ✓ Candidates may deal with both angles in the same paragraph but not in an argumentative way

*Conclusion

Candidates may take a stand in the conclusion (give their opinion) give a way forward/suggestion

Good Responses

Candidates who fulfilled the task wrote a discursive piece of work. These candidates explored the topic: whether leaders are born or not. They explored both sides without necessarily taking a stand. If they did take a stand, this was to be at the very end when concluding the discussion. These essays consisted of well-developed ideas that showed independence of thought and of appropriate length.

Poor Responses

Most candidates who were challenged by the question lacked understanding of the requirements of the question or the issue under discussion. Candidates were either writing about the qualities or traits of a good or bad leader, or narrating a story about their favourite icon, for example, Nelson Mandela. Some clearly took a stand at the very beginning and argued their case for the rest of the essay instead of discussing both sides. Other candidates chose to write about the advantages and disadvantages of leaders in general. Paragraphs were not well developed and the length was wanting in some cases.

Question 2: Narrative piece of writing

Write a story based on these words, ‘The whole room was silent; you could hear a pin drop.’

The story was expected to emanate from the given words. There was supposed to be tension in the story as depicted by the given words. There had to be suspense, a clear plot, and the use of rich language for effect. The story had to capture the reader’s interest throughout the essay.

STYLE/STRUCTURE

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

This question was fairly done though some candidates did not understand the given words, that is, ‘...the whole room was silent; you could hear a pin drop’. Nevertheless, there were a number of very good essays.

- ✓ **Good Response:s**

Good candidates wrote interesting narrative pieces based on the given words. The unfolding of events showed tension and silence and the stories were at appropriate length.

Poor Response:s

Most candidates failed to understand the given words. They either took them literally or failed to logically apply them in their story, for example, silence in an examination room or when the learner is alone in the house, this shows that these candidates mistook the silence with quietness hence, the stories lacked the tension and suspense expected from the story. Some used the words repeatedly throughout the story. Some stories were not chronological or believable. Some candidates chose to write a story that was not centred on the given words. Most astonishing were the large numbers of learners who wrote sexually explicit essays.

Question 3: Descriptive piece of writing

One of the consequences of climate change is flooding. Describe an area that has been affected by flooding. It can be an area you have seen in real life or on television.

- ✓ The candidate was expected to **describe an area that has been affected by flooding.**
- ✓ The candidate was expected to give full details and paint a clear or vivid picture of this area in the mind of the reader.
- ✓ The candidate was expected to use sensory details that appeal to the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
- ✓ The candidate was expected to use descriptive language: strong verbs and powerful adjectives

STYLE/STRUCTURE

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

In this question candidates could specify the area and it could have been a stretch of an area or a country.

Candidates could be general and describe any area without focusing on a specific area. All in all, those candidates who chose this question seemed knowledgeable on the subject.

Good Responses

Candidates described a specific area that they could either name or not. These candidates painted a vivid picture of an area that had been affected by flooding, gave full details and engaged the reader's senses

Poor Responses

Some essays lacked relevance as some candidates opted to describe earthquakes or droughts. Others got carried away explaining what flooding is and not describing any area or only describing the area towards the end of the essay. Others decided to narrate a story about a flood they experienced. Notable was the story of the flood in Mozambique that resulted to a baby born on top of a tree. Others wrote about different areas affected by floods. Others wrote about how to prevent flooding.

Overall Performance of Candidates

The candidates' overall performance was utterly poor. Most candidates had poor expressions to no language, and this impacted negatively on their performance. Some candidates did not even attempt certain questions and some essays were not of appropriate length. A considerable lack of creativity was evident in many cases. Question analysis also tended to be extremely poor.

Recommendations

- Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops to improve their skills so that candidates are not disadvantaged. Exposure is key. A lot of candidates this year seemed unaware, in particular, of the expectations of persuasive writing.
- Handwriting should be given attention as some candidates submit scripts that are not legible.
- Teachers should make an effort to expose candidates to varied reading materials as most candidates did not have a strong command of the language
- Sexually explicit scenes and vulgar language should be discouraged.
- Tidiness should be encouraged for candidates as some candidates' work was very difficult to mark.

- It is important to note that learners should be exposed and encouraged to read in order to build, expand and enrich their vocabulary. The reading culture has to be maintained as it seems to be dying out.
- Candidates should be taught to argue competently without using insulting language. Teachers should teach a variety of content so that candidates' skills are sharpened or honed to the maximum level.

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/03

Listening Comprehension

General Comments

The 2021 Examination proved to be fairly accessible to most candidates compared to that of the previous year. The subject matter was generally friendly to the candidates hence there were no foreign words which might have impeded their performance. The scores ranged from 0 to 29, with a majority of the candidates scoring average marks. Very few candidates were able to score above 20 out of the total of 30 marks.

Poor spelling, not observing the conventions of writing proper nouns and phrases, and unclear handwriting were other major contributing factors to the low marks. Some candidates were not able to contextualise their responses which ended up putting them at a disadvantage. It is of great concern that candidates are becoming poorer in spelling as the years go by. Even though, to some extent, this paper allowed phonetically correct answers, teachers are encouraged to pay more attention to their learners' spellings and find ways to assist them.

Seemingly, candidates were able to use their time efficiently as there were few blank spaces which are an indication that some candidates might have been unsure of what to write.

This component tests the skill of **listening** with understanding and listening for specific information. Candidates' responses indicated that some of them have not grasped this.

Comments on specific Questions**EXERCISE 1**

Generally, the exercise was challenging for most candidates. Candidates struggled with spelling and punctuation since they failed to punctuate their responses correctly and gave distractors in their responses instead of key details.

Question 1: Why is Tammy not going to attend hockey practice?

Response: has appointment with dentist

This question was generally well attempted. Candidates who failed to score made the mistake of taking the distractor for the answer and gave responses such as: "still in a lot of pain", "had her tooth extracted". Another incorrect response: was, "appointment with the doctor instead of dentist". There were also issues with spelling for appointment and dentist.

Question 2: What two things does the customer require before buying the jacket?

Response: another/correct/bigger size and another/different/purple colour

The question was generally inaccessible to most candidates as very few were able to score. The correct response: was, “bigger size/ another size” and ‘another colour’. Most candidates who failed to score simply wrote “colour” and “size” without qualifying the two. Some would modify one noun leaving out the other, resulting in them not scoring a mark. Others mistook the distractor for the answer as they wrote ‘fitting room, try it on’.

Question 3: Where exactly is the theatre located?

Response: next to the Meridian Bank

This question proved more challenging for a majority of candidates. Most candidates failed to score since they wrote ‘turn left and go past the police station’. Most of them had a challenge with spelling, punctuation and prepositions which resulted in them not scoring a mark even though they were able to identify the answer. For example, they wrote next to **meridian bank** without capital letters in the proper noun, ‘next to Maridean Bank’ instead of Meridian as well as giving just Meridian Bank without the preposition ‘next to’.

Question 4: What should the passengers bring?

Response: boarding pass and passport (both needed)

This question was not well attempted as most candidates struggled with spelling. Instead of ‘boarding pass’, candidates would write ‘board pass’, ‘boding passports’, ‘body parts’, ‘boading pass’, ‘pastpost’, ‘boarding card’.

Question 5: What has caused the traffic jam?

Response: a truck has overturned/blocked the road

Generally, this question was accessible to most candidates as most of them were able to score a mark. Those who failed to score wrote response:s like ‘track’, ‘overtake’, ‘overturned’ without mentioning the truck, ‘a truck’.

EXERCISE 2

This is a gap filling exercise. The candidates were expected to listen to a talk given by an agriculturalist, who works at the National Fresh Produce Centre, and the fill in the missing details.

Candidates performed fairly well in this exercise, with some scoring the total of 5 marks. However, the weaker candidates displayed inability to follow the interview thus missing some of the words needed in filling the gaps. Some would leave blank spaces.

Item 1

Origins of mushrooms: China

Most candidates were able to access this question as a majority were able to score. Those who could not score either had written small letter 'c' for 'China' yet it is a proper noun; or misspelt the whole word. These included: 'Shinner', 'Chain', 'Chane', 'Chana', 'Chine' with others writing '600 years ago' or '6 years ago'.

Item 2

Nutritional value of mushrooms: fibre

This item was accessible to most candidates. However, some could not come up with the correct spelling of the word. They spelt 'fibre' as: 'fibra', 'fabra', 'fiber'. Moreover, some included vitamin B as another item yet it was not the correct answer. Those candidates who opted for vitamin B alone scored no mark.

Item 3

Process of growing mushrooms: compost fungus

The item 'compost' proved to be accessible because a majority of the candidates were able to get it right. The few that could not score a mark proved to be unfamiliar with the subject matter, hence, they gave irrelevant words like 'compressed'. They also added excess information which resulted in their responses being wrong yet they heard the correct response:- had they not added these unnecessary words.

'Fungus' proved to be accessible to a majority of the candidates. The few that could not score a mark had challenges with the spelling and wrote words like: 'fugers', 'figures', 'fangas', 'fangasis', 'fungis', 'fungers', 'fungicides', 'fungu'.

Item 4

Selection of final product: preserving

This item was accessible as most candidates were able to score a mark. Those who were unable to score wrote words like: 'presserving', 'presaving', 'preserved', 'preservance', 'prizeving', 'prizerving'.

EXERCISE 3

This is another gap filling exercise. Candidates were required to listen to an interview on living a carbon neutral life and then fill in the information in the gaps. This exercise was generally accessible though somehow a bit tricky. The confusion was noticeable mainly in the last two items of this exercise. The last item 'flushing' was mentioned first in the script before "satisfaction". The responses were not sequential, and this resulted in most candidates failing to score full marks. Some candidates tried but they were let down by misspelling some words.

Item 1:**Definition**

Response: atmosphere

Most candidates were able to write 'atmosphere' correctly. There were a few candidates, though, who could not spell the word.

Item 2**Reason for a carbon neutral life**

Response: emissions

80% 2050

Most candidates could not spell "emissions" correctly. Some wrote "atmosphere" in this gap instead of "emissions". They gave incorrect spellings such as "emittment", "emission", "emishion", "emittions" etc. with regards to "80%" some wrote "18%", "8%", "20%" and some candidates merely wrote "80" without the accompanying symbol (%) which was necessary. For 2050, most candidates wrote "2015", "2050th", "2050s".

Item 3

Response: paperless, lights, solar, satisfaction, flushing

Very few could access the first response: "paperless" and "lights". Most candidates could not hear the word "paperless" clearly resulting in them failing to score the mark. They gave response:s such as "peopleless", "perplex", "fullpaper", "prepress" to mention but a few. For the second part of this response: "light", most candidates managed to score a mark.

The next response: "solar" was accessible. The only challenge was incorrect spelling which included "sola", "solo", "soler" etc

The third response: of this item “satisfaction” was challenging to a majority of candidates as they could not connect it to the sentence. Most candidates misspelt the word “satisfaction” and they gave “sertificatoon”, “sastification”, “certification” etc

The last response: “flushing” was also a bit challenging. Most candidates wrote “flush” which is what they heard instead of paying attention to the preposition “for” to make the sentence grammatically correct. They were supposed to use present continuous tense “flushing”. Other incorrect response:s they gave include “flashing”, “flution”, “forlish”.

Generally, response:s to this exercise were not sequential in the interview which resulted to students failing to score a mark.

EXERCISE 4

Question 1: How are the sound waves created?

Response : when vibration is transmitted through the air/ when something vibrates

This was an accessible question as most candidates scored. Only a handful failed to score due to using wrong prepositions like “on” and “in”. Others who could not score are those who had challenges with the spelling of “vibration/vibrate”.

Question 2: What happens when vibrations reach the ear drum?

Response: people can hear sounds.

There was quite a challenge as many candidates missed this one because they gave “hear” and omitted “sounds”. Others who had a challenge were those who wrote “here” instead of “hear” as well as those who wrote the past tense of hear and wrote “heard” which could not score.

Question 3: Name two objects that sound can travel through.

Response: Expected response:: stone, glass, brick, water (any 2)

Was clearly one of the accessible questions in the paper as most candidates could correctly give any 2 of the above mentioned response:s.

One challenge was spelling. For example, “ston” for “stone”, “grass” for “glass”, “brake” for “brick” and some gave completely wrong response:s such as “wave” and “light”.

Question 4: What is the difference between high and low pitched sounds?

Response: High pitched sounds are made by rapid variations whilst low ones are made by slower vibrations

This proved to be the most challenging in the exercise because candidates failed to use contrasting connectives but used “and” which nullified their answer. Some used a comma to separate the differences between the two items.

Some who also failed to score are those who raised spellings like that of rapid and vibrations. Others who could not score are those who substituted “lower” for “slower” and “higher” for “rapid”.

Question 5: How can a pitch of a sound be changed?

Response: Expected response: increasing or decreasing the volume of the materials / loosening or tightening the material

This one was slightly challenging to quite a number of candidates. Others missed the mark because they used “and” instead of “or”.

Some who could not score were those who left out “decreasing” or those who missed “increasing” instead of using both in their response:. Some candidates left out “material” and “volume” and those could not score.

Some of those who could not score are those that missed spellings of; loosening, tightening, vibrations, materials, increasing, decreasing.

EXERCISE 5

The exercise proved to be challenging to most candidates as a majority could not score a total.

Question 1: Where is the African Penguin found?

Response: Southern Coast of Africa

A majority of candidates heard the answer but had a challenge answering accurately as demanded; for example, South coast of Africa, Seven Coast of Africa, Sourthen coast of Africa, Southern Coast of South Africa.

There were, however, those who could not score a mark because of not observing conventions of writing proper nouns, instead they used small letters at the beginning of each word of the proper noun.

Question 2: How does the Benguela current favour African Penguins?

Response: brings a lot of food

The question proved to be accessible to a majority of the candidates as most were able to score a mark except for those who came up with incorrect responses like; they bring a lot of fish, produce food, bring food and bring fruits.

Some candidates could not score a mark because they used the pronoun, “they” incorrectly which implied that, it was the Penguins bringing the food yet, it was the “current”.

Question 3: What helps the body temperature of the African Penguins to be always constant?

Response: pink glands above their eyes

The question proved to be challenging as only a few of the candidates scored a mark. For example; pink glands on their eyes, around the eyes, on their eyes, in their eyes, pink glans, pink glens, pink blanks, pink blinds, pink blinds.

The candidates here were expected to use the correct preposition which was, “above”, and stick to the correct spelling of, “gland”.

Question 4: Mention two features that enable the African Penguins to swim.

Response: Webbed feet, short tail and wings which look like fins (any two)

This proved to be a challenging question as most of the candidates could not score a mark, for instance; web feet, web fitted wings, wept feet. Weep feet, short wings and fins.

The candidates could not score mainly because of incorrect spellings and giving one detail instead of two.

Question 5: Give a phrase which shows that African Penguins are at the verge of extinction.

Response: “population is dwindling”

The question proved to be a challenge to a majority of candidates. For example; Population is dwindling, population is dwingling, dwindling, draggling, rambling, it can swim at a speed of 4 to 7 kilometers per hour, it can hold its breath for a long time.

The candidates could not score because of their inability to identify the phrase and writing incorrect spellings for “dwindling”

Question 6: What are the two dangers faced by African Penguins?

Expected responses: humans catching more fish reducing food for Penguins), oil leakage(from ships which contains harmful chemicals).

While this was a generally accessible question, candidates could not score the maximum marks because they missed one item. There were also those who could not score a mark because of either not including the qualifying adjective, “more” or the preposition, “from” thus answers such as; humans catching fish, they catching more fish, humans poaching and hunting fish were observed.

On the other part of the item, candidates gave responses such as; oil leakage, lackage, linking, leackage, oil split which resulted to them not scoring a mark.

Recommendations

- Teachers should encourage learners to use clear and eligible handwriting.
- Learners should avoid too much cancelling/overwriting.
- Candidates who lost marks were those who attempted to write figures in words. It is better to avoid this.
- Teachers must help learners improve on spelling.
- Learners should be encouraged to proof-read their work.
- Teachers should teach the listening skill; more listening tasks should be given to learners.
- Teachers can use reading passages for listening tasks and then create relevant questions for listening purposes.
- Learners should be encouraged to look at the questions before they hear tracks instead of taking notes indiscriminately and thus picking wrong options/details.
- Teachers should teach basic grammar rules, that is, punctuation, proper nouns etc.
- Teachers should train learners to underline keywords.
- Listening should be taught as early as Form 1.
- Teachers should not be lenient on issues of grammar, spelling during class practices.

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/04

Oral Communication

General Comments

The performance of candidates showed a slight decline from that of 2020. However, most candidates were above average due to the familiarity of the subject matter, in some instances. Exposure to the basics of the language proved to be a huge advantage once again.

Three out of the five cards (Card A – Wealth, Card B – Going on Holiday and Card C - Relationships) were popular and done fairly well. Card D – Self-Love and Card E – Intelligence, were least popular.

Question Analyses**Card A – WEALTH**

Card A was the most popular and easily accessible because candidates know a lot of wealthy people around them and also aspire to be wealthy themselves. This card proved to be very friendly to learners and those examined on it did very well. However, card A somehow failed to achieve the intended differentiation between the **wealth** and **richness**. The given explanation of wealth in the card was a lot more similar to richness. It was interesting though to note that some candidates were able to separate the two.

Card B – GOING ON HOLIDAY

This card was also accessible, but proved not so friendly to some candidates. Those candidates who are exposed to vacations did exceptionally well. A small portion of candidates managed to tackle this card properly. The card proved to be the most challenging for candidates as they confused going on holiday with honouring a public holiday. Students from the countryside seemed to be the most affected and disadvantaged by the card. The card was somehow discriminating as it was only tackled well by a candidate who had firsthand experience with the topic. It seemed like our students do not go on holiday at all. The observation was that the COVID-19 Pandemic might have interfered with touring aspects as school trips outside the country have not been effected for years now. Non-exposure to the concept affected the general performance. Candidates talked about the Reed dance holiday, Christmas holiday or even just visiting town.

Card C – RELATIONSHIPS

Particularly a friendly card to most candidates. The subject matter of the card seemed familiar one way or the other to all candidates. A majority knew exactly how to respond to all prompts where relationships are concerned. However, candidates were sabotaged by examiners who led the conversation, forcing candidates to disclose their personal affairs which turned out to be awkward. This

affected the performance to a great extent as personal experiences might have made the candidate a bit tense and not at ease, resulting to the candidate clamming up.

Card D – SELF-LOVE

From face value the card seemed friendly but as the bullets developed candidates had difficulties expressing themselves. The deeper they went into the conversation they faced challenges in tackling the bullets. A majority of candidates dwelt much only on hygiene. This card was a little challenging and examiners would need to constantly probe and unpack the bullets for the smooth running of the examination. Where examiners simplified the prompts it became easier, but where the examiner did not, the candidate got stuck trying to figure out what to say.

The candidates did however have a lot to say but the interpretation of self-love swayed to being selfish, proud, self-centered or not paying attention to others.

The card seemed to be gender biased though in that, the girls could relate better to ideas of self-love whereas the boys did not have much to say.

Card E – INTELLIGENCE

Card E was the least popular amongst them all. Most candidates who received this card did not perform very well. The conversations were generally short. The examiners themselves could not quite assist the candidates in as far as unpacking and clarifying the bullets was concerned. The examiners seemed to avoid this card as it was the least used in most Centres. Some examiners pushed the conversation towards a political angle, and candidates who were not ignorant in such matters managed the conversation well enough. A certain portion of candidates interpreted intelligence as being smart and associated it with education and this angle got them talking at length.

Points of concern regarding examiners

- In some instances, examiners failed to lead or prompt candidates towards the right direction. Some Examiners had challenges in following the marking criteria. They either inflated or were too severe when awarding marks. Examiners should refer closely to the marking criteria for each and every candidate for proper allocation of marks.
- If there are two or more examiners in the Centre, they should first coordinate their understanding of the marking criteria beforehand.
- Also worth noting is that examiners had a tendency of offsetting candidates by asking them difficult questions like defining the topics in their own words.
- Some examiners' line of questioning demanded candidates to either agree or disagree hence making it difficult for candidates to express their own viewpoints which were not of the teacher-examiner.

Conduct of the Oral Exam

Conducting the exam has greatly improved except for a few challenges that were noted.

Part A

This is where the Examiner is expected to begin the recording by giving the candidate's name and number. Examiners were inconsistent in a few Centres, in that some examiners gave a wrong examination number or a wrong name to a particular candidate. Sometimes they allowed candidates to introduce themselves, of which they would do, but then forget to give their examination numbers. Examiners are urged to always use the Attendance Register to verify candidates' names and numbers. A number of examiners also failed to use this part to briefly explain what was going to happen in the course of the exam. In some Centres, where there were two or more examiners, the examination was not well coordinated. You would find that one examiner would follow the procedure correctly while the others did not. Examiners are advised to coordinate their understanding of the Examiner's Notes before conducting the examination so that a common standard is applied to all candidates.

Part B

This is the Warm-Up Session. It was a challenge for some Examiners. Some sessions were conspicuously long while others were shorter than the stipulated 2-3 minutes. Some examiners mentioned all the cards or rather the contents of each card in this section, which is discouraged. Examiners are advised to discuss general issues that will put candidates at ease and help them get used to the examination situation. After that the examiner should then decide which card will be given to the candidate. However, it is worth noting that most examiners were able to use the warm-up effectively.

Part C

Handing the Assessment Card to the candidate was not done satisfactorily by some Centres. At this point the Examiner should mention which card has been selected for the candidate. This process should always be on record, and the Examiner must pause the recording. This should be indicated by saying 'the recording will now be paused'. This allows the external moderator to know that the candidate was given time to study the card.

Part D

The Main part of the test which is assessed, showed a great improvement. Some Centres failed to adhere to the stipulated time, which is about 6-9 minutes. The conversations were conspicuously long or rather too short. Examiners are reminded to expertly control candidates so that they do not stretch the conversations for too long. In case of short conversations, it was partly because the Examiners did not clarify the prompts for the candidates or those particular candidates had difficulty in expressing themselves.

In some instances, Examiners simply read the prompts as they were on the card then asked the candidates what they thought about them. When the candidates were confronted with such, they had difficulty in expressing their views without the examiner's guidance. Others were made to make long presentations without the examiner's assistance in making the conversation flow. This is strongly discouraged as the test is supposed to be a conversation between the candidate and the examiner, not a presentation. Examiners should always remember that they are there to guide each candidate through the conversation and should always appear interested in what the candidate is saying. The expectation is that the examiner should then allocate marks accordingly.

Some Centres did not arrange the recordings on the CDs numerically as they appeared on the attendance register. The summary form should also follow that order. A few Centres submitted CDs with incomplete recordings, with missing candidates or no sound. Having said that, Centres are urged to listen to the CDs and create a back-up before submitting them to ECESWA.

Paperwork

This year a number of mistakes were encountered and they included the following:

- Using a pencil when filling in the summary form – always use ink.
- Wrong calculation of marks on the Summary Forms – it is advisable to cross-check if the calculations have been done correctly.
- Some candidates had no marks in the Summary Forms yet they appeared in the recording and also on the MS1. The distribution of marks on the Summary Forms is very important for moderation purposes.
- Absent candidates were not marked appropriately in the Attendance Registers and Summary Forms – always make sure that absent candidates are marked appropriately, do not leave blank spaces.
- Always submit the Attendance Register and the duplicate should remain at the Centre as a form of back-up copy.

Centres are reminded to always submit all relevant material to ECESWA – marked Attendance Register, completed Summary Form, all recorded CDs with labels and MS1 Form. The MS1 Form must have numerical scores transferred correctly from the Summary Form (do not convert into percentage) and shaded appropriately and neatly.

Recorded CDs

Generally, recording has greatly improved. However, there were still a few Centres where problems were encountered. These included the following:

- Some CDs were inaudible (volume too low especially the candidate's part) – Centres are urged to check their CDs for audibility before submission.
- Other Centres submitted empty CDs – Examiners should always check their recordings before submission.

- Some Centres did not submit all the candidates' recordings while for other Centres some conversations did not run up to the end – Centre must ensure that all candidates appear on the recording before submitting to ECESWA.
- In some Centres, there was a lot of background noise, either from the recording equipment or external noise.
- For a few Centres, the recording was just one long file for all the candidates, instead of separate files for each candidate, labelled with his/her examination number and name. This helps to see that all candidates are present in the recording.
- Examiners/teachers are also encouraged to label candidates (exam number and name) in the recordings for easy identification.
- Examiners are advised to arrange candidates in the CDs in the order in which they appear in the Attendance Register.

Conversations

In this section as well, there was great improvement, except for only a few instances as compared to other years. These included some of the following:

- Indicating candidate's number and name was not consistent in some Centres;
- In some Centres, explanation of the exam procedure was not applied in the same way to all the candidates - Examiners are reminded to consult the Examiner's/Teacher's Notes to ensure they conform to the expectations of conducting the exam. It is expected that a common standard procedure is applied to all the candidates;
- Some examiners did not use the warm up sessions to select the appropriate card for the candidates. Examiners are encouraged to use this part of the exam to select the appropriate card for the candidates;
- Some warm up sessions were rather too long, resulting to the main part of the exam being short;
- Some examiners conducted the oral exam as if it was a question and answer session, or a presentation - this is supposed to be a conversation. However, Examiners are reminded that the purpose of the oral session is to examine candidates, as such, they should be given more time to talk than the examiners themselves;
- Examiners are encouraged to ask 'open' questions which allow candidates to respond at length and that they should not interrupt with their own views;
- Some examiners/teachers did not simplify the prompts for the candidates, sometimes resulting to weak candidates being stuck and not knowing how to proceed with the examination. It is important to simplify the prompts to the candidates so that even the weak candidates can be able to say something on the issue being discussed. It is also equally important to unpack and simplify the stem of the question to ensure that each candidate understands what it means;

- If it becomes apparent that the candidate finds the topic difficult or inappropriate, it is permissible to move into more productive areas, rather than to stick rigidly to the Examiner's prompts;
- Examiners are encouraged to read and follow the guide stipulated in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes.

Conclusion

Examiners are applauded for the wonderful job done in the 2021 English Language Oral Examination. Nevertheless, examiners are encouraged to continue with the spirit of working as a team whilst preparing the candidates and conducting the exam together. Moreover, Centres that have two or more examiners are advised to conduct internal workshops beforehand so that a common working criterion is applied by all examiners when awarding marks. Last but not least, examiners are encouraged to seek advice every time they face internal problems when conducting the exam before submitting relevant material to ECESWA.