

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI

EPC

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2020

General Comments

In 2020, most candidates performed fairly well. However, some performed below average due to lack of understanding of the question asked and hence lost a lot of marks. Of note, a few candidates completely ignored the questions given and answered unknown questions. These candidates scored zero marks in the whole paper. A proper analysis of each question led to some candidates' excellent performance. Excellence was characterised by wonderful pieces of work with an awesome display of creativity, good development of ideas, language proficiency and exciting if not breath-taking storylines. Without a doubt, the educators' hard work had a watermark and it is duly commended. There is a continuous trend noted over the years whereby candidates usually change instructions and composition types which leads to a huge loss of marks. Analysing key words properly is vital for every question.

PART ONE: Letter Writing

In this section there was only one compulsory question worth a total of sixteen marks: eight marks for content, relevance and development whilst the other eight marks were for language, style and accuracy. This was a situational text which candidates had to unpack and use the given setup. Generally, candidates who fulfilled the given task scored a lot of marks, whilst those who could not fulfil the task completely or otherwise ended up recording low marks.

A majority of the candidates did exceptionally well since they were able to unpack the question and used the guidelines given. However, some candidates only attempted a part of the question and ended up attaining lower grades.

Part One

You have not been doing well in your school work and your guardian or parents are worried about you

Write a letter to them and apologise. Explain why you have been dropping in your performance. Also, tell them how you think you can improve your grades.

Expectations

This was an informal letter to be written to the parents or guardian. Candidates had to apologize for the poor performance, explain the sudden drop in performance and give a strategic plan on how the grades could be improved for a better outcome.

Most candidates did exceptionally well as they convincingly stated all parts of the given task showing a well-developed plan and paragraphs. However, some candidates only answered a certain part of the question and left out other parts. For example: there were cases where the candidates only apologized and neither gave a reason for the bad performance nor how the grades would be improved. This resulted in a loss of marks. In some instances, candidates performed below the expected standards because they missed the meaning of certain key words in the question namely: '**grades**' and '**performance.**' The word '**grades**' was mistaken for literal classrooms hence candidates would state how they would improve them like painting and buying school furniture. '**Performance**' on the other hand was mistaken for a live act of either music or certain art.

Few candidates did not give a reason for the sudden drop in performance but only mentioned that they did not know why they performed badly. Some even blamed the parents for the bad performance. Looking at the strategies to be employed to fix the grades, most candidates gave brilliant and well thought of reasons like: 'I will install an application timer,' 'I will set study goals, and I will only allow myself to use my phone as a prize after achieving these goals.' However, it proved challenging to some candidates as some ended up asking the parents to assist by coming up with ideas on how one could improve.

PART TWO: Composition Writing

This section comprised of three questions. These were the three types of compositions namely: the narrative, the descriptive, and the discursive. Each piece of creative writing was allocated twenty marks. Ten marks was for content, relevance and development, whilst the other ten marks was for language style and accuracy.

Question One

One day you discovered that you had a secret magical power. Write a story of what happened.

This question proved interesting since it was tackled by a majority of the candidates. The expectation was that candidates should tell a story about secret magical powers which they discovered they possessed one fateful day. The elements of a story had to be there to bring life, imagination and excitement. Also, the story had to develop from one aspect to another. The discovery of the magical powers and the secrecy around them had to be evident.

Candidates who did exceptionally well were those who clearly gave beautiful pieces of writing on their discovery of having superficial powers and kept the reader's attention from beginning till the end as the characters came to life and the imaginative senses were awakened.

Most candidates who tackled this question wrote exciting and well-articulated stories. Again, great exposure in reading widely became an advantage. Candidates who watch cartoons on television were also able to bring out the magical aspect beautifully and clearly. Perfect vocabulary was also used in these narrations. For example: candidates used words like: 'teleport' and 'telekinesis'. ease of language proficiency was also noted and displayed by candidates as proper use of idioms and exclamations edified the dramatic action and intensity of the situation at hand. Candidates used idioms like: 'I pulled the rabbit out of the hat.' Such compositions were phenomenal. Contrary to this, uncommon idioms were also noted like 'the sun was baking the day.'

On the other hand, some candidates could not bring out the superficial powers of the story clearly. Some could tell about the discovery of a magical power but omit what the power was or what they could do with it. In some cases, the candidates ended up narrating stories about miracles performed through the power and spirit of God. Some were a direct translation of Bible stories like: praying for a demon possessed person. This led to loss of marks. In a few cases, some candidates confused the secret magical power for either an undisclosed story or to performing magic generally. There were instances where candidates would assume that the magical power was an item maybe found under the bed. A few candidates wrote stories that were completely irrelevant. The lack of comprehension and unpacking skills led to bad pieces of writing. Educators are encouraged to impart this skill during the teaching-learning process.

Question Two

Imagine you woke up one day and there were no rules. Describe what happened and how you benefitted.

This was a descriptive composition whereby candidates had to describe using the imagination what happened on the 'no rules' day and further tell how this worked out towards their advantage. A descriptive piece of writing has more descriptive words which aid in the arousal of all the senses hence imagination gives way to the creation of a vivid picture of events.

A few candidates attempted this question and the performance was below average for most of them. The few candidates who did exceptionally well wrote superb compositions and displayed a clear understanding of a descriptive piece and the key words from the question. Interesting topics were created like: Free at Last. These candidates showed ease of style as some defined the word 'rule' in the introduction, and gave striking sentences like: 'When I think of this day, I smile like a five-year-old seeing ice cream.' Candidates clearly showed how they caused havoc in toy shops, school and at home bringing out a great sense of humour and hilarious episodes where they benefitted a lot.

However, some candidates did not show how having no rules on that day worked to their benefit. Some even talked about the consequences of not having rules in the country like killings and political unrest. This led to a loss of marks. In some cases, candidates mistook the word 'rule' for an item or tangible object you can move around the house hence some would tell of disappearing rules or not having a manual for something. In severe cases, candidates talked about missing rulers from their school bags. This led to compositions that were blatantly irrelevant and these included those who were completely out of the given task like 'A Snake in the Box.'

Question Three

Being an only child is the best. What is your opinion?

It was a discursive/argumentative type of composition. Very few candidates chose this question. It was done fairly well but most did not bring out clear arguments which showed lack of skill on this type of writing. Candidates were expected to give their opinion and show clearly why such an opinion had value. They were also expected to use persuasive language style.

Those who wrote brilliant pieces explicitly showed benefits of being an only child like: getting all the affection from both parents and having a better advantage like getting good education. Some argued convincingly that having siblings balances one's social standards and behaviour, eliminating cases of depression. Proficient use of language devices was evident and this is greatly applauded.

However, for some candidates unpacking the question or analysing the given scenario was a challenge. Some wrote fully fledged stories about them being the only children in the family. Quite a few wrote about the importance of respect and obeying rules between parents and a child. These candidates lost a lot of marks because they did not adhere to the demands of the given task. Some candidates changed the question completely and wrote about being the best child in a school or community. They described the child like: 'She is among the top five in Eswatini.' A few candidates mistook the phrase 'only child' to mean being left alone at home.

PART THREE: PRACTICAL WRITING

You visited a beautiful place which you would like to take your friend to.

Write a postcard to your friend telling him/her about this beautiful place, what you think your friend would enjoy there, and why this place has remained unforgettable to you.

Expectations

Candidates were expected to write a postcard to a friend and describe the beautiful place once visited. candidates were also required to give a list of things which the friend would enjoy from the place and explain why the place remained unforgettable. Ten marks was allocated for content and four marks was for the presentation of the work. Unpacking the question was very important as well as creating a postcard and displaying all its features: the faces, stamp, right address, date, salutation, the message and ending. A clear presentation of the work resulted in high scores.

A few candidates did well in this section. They were able to draw a postcard and **not** a poster. These candidates also unpacked and answered everything on the task. Splendid descriptions of the places were noted like: 'The place is lush green during the day but dark and romantic at night.' They also mentioned unforgettable moments like waking up to an amazing view of the gardens each morning and to the beautiful scenery. However, most candidates missed the mark by drawing a postcard and not writing everything required by the task like: a postcard to a friend who is going to live in a desert. Some drew posters for rules and a lot of others. This showed that candidates were not familiar with writing a postcard or they completely ignored the instruction.

Some errors noted Language Usage

- Spelling mistakes
- Coining new words (e.g. apologizement)
- Wrong use of punctuation marks
- Improper use of connectives
- Sentence fragments
- Tenses
- Improper use of the possessive for plurals (e.g. parent's or parents' for parents)
- Improper use of connectives
- Wrong pronouns used

Conclusion

An excellently planned piece of writing displays competency and proficiency in the language hence creativity and imagination come out clearly and naturally to answer the given task. An improvement in some parts of the paper has been noted but candidates need exposure to all forms of writing for them to write a well-balanced piece.

Consequently, the following is recommended

- Brainstorming and planning should be encouraged
- Constant practice and exposure to different genres is advised
- Teach skill of creating meaningful topics
- Creativity and imagination should be encouraged

General Comments 111/02

This paper was reasonable to all the candidates as it was about mountain gorillas in part 1 and newspapers in part 2 which is something familiar to all candidates. A higher number of candidates displayed confidence in expressing themselves. This paper was composed of three sections; Part 1: Listening Comprehension, Part 2: Reading Comprehension and Part 3 which was the Dialogue. Its purpose was to test listening, reading and dialogue writing skills. Candidates were required to respond to a variety of questions such as multiple choice questions, fill in sentences, questions that needed one word answers, phrases and short sentences. A majority of candidates showed a satisfactory performance. A handful of candidates had challenges with Part 2 mostly the language usage part and part 3 dialogue. Most candidates struggled with grammar and spelling in almost all the parts of the paper. This caused them to lose more marks. Most weaknesses were exhibited in the following areas;

- Failure to comply with the rubric.
- Tendency of writing long, winding sentences that were directly lifted from the passage.
- Failure to respond accurately to questions.
- Mixing tenses such as past with present tense, singular with plural, incorrect use of pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions.

Comments on specific questions

This section of the report gives an analysis of the performance of candidates and discussion of questions which were answered by candidates.

Part 1: Listening Comprehension

In this section, candidates performed well although a handful of them did not do well. Grammar and spelling are still a difficulty preventing candidates from performing exceptionally well in the examination.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 were a challenge to most candidates whereas questions 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 proved to be easier.

QUESTION 1

How long is the Congo Basin?

Expected response: 900 km

Most candidates got this one wrong because they gave wrong units such as kml or kg instead of km.

QUESTION 2

Where do mountain gorillas live?

Expected response: in the forest high in the mountains,

Most candidates ended up giving forest or mountain as the answer instead of forest high in the mountains.

QUESTION 3

How much do adult males and females gorilla weigh? (Give two details)

Expected Response: Male: 200kg; Female 110kg.

Most candidates did not perform very well in this. They wrote the following wrong responses: 200kg, 10010kg, 200km and 110km.

QUESTION 4

How long can gorillas live in their natural habitat?

Expected Response: 35-40 years.

This question proved to be difficult for the candidates as most of them were unable to give a specific answer which was 35 to 40 years but also 50 years of captivity. This made their answers wrong.

QUESTION 5

Why are gorillas known as herbivores?

Expected Response: they eat fruits and plants.

Most candidates performed well in this question except for a few who used their prior knowledge to define a herbivore without using the information from the passage.

QUESTION 6

Candidates were expected to fill in the correct words in the spaces provided in the sentence. Most candidates were able to fill in the words correctly but spelling was their greatest weakness.

Expected Response: spread.....large....

QUESTION 7

Which wild animal eats gorillas?

Expected response: Leopard.

Most candidates gave correct responses but some went on to give a crocodile as another animal which made their responses wrong.

QUESTION 8

Why do people destroy the gorillas' natural habitat? (Give **three** details).

Expected Response:

- 1. to make way for farming.**
- 2. open up land for farming.**
- 3. building their homes.**

Most candidates got this one correct, however, a handful of the candidates confused answers for question 9 with question 8.

QUESTION 9

Why do humans capture gorillas? (Give **two** details)

Expected Response:

- 1. For their meat.**
- 2. sold to zoos.**
- 3. kept as pets. (any two)**

QUESTION 10

Why should humans be kept away from gorillas during a disease outbreak?

Expected Response: they can infect gorillas with diseases and viruses/ can pass on diseases to gorillas.

Most candidates were able to respond well to this question but some mistakenly thought it was the gorillas that would infect humans with a virus.

PART 2

READING COMPREHENSION

This section was fairly done by most candidates who had comprehended the passage but some displayed lack of reading with understanding which is pivotal in this section. Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 10 and 12 were well answered by most candidates. Most challenging questions were 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11.

QUESTION 1

How do people get newspapers? Give two details.

Expected response: Delivered to their homes.

Buy them from the shops.

Read them from the library.

Most candidates were able to identify the answer for this question. However, some candidates would pick from the passage the phrase 'people pay monthly to newspaper producers'. This didn't answer the question.

QUESTION 2

How are the newspapers today different from those of long ago?

Expected Response: their content has changed over time.

This question proved to be difficult for most candidates as they were unable to identify the relevant answer to the question. Most candidates compared the materials used long ago and the one used now.

QUESTION 3

What materials were used to print newspapers? Give two details.

Expected Response: on textile material like cotton and linen made from recycled pieces of cloth.

QUESTION 4

What made paper cheap?

Expected Response: there was a rise in the industries that produced paper.

Most candidates gave incomplete answers which didn't give them a mark. Some said 'it was the rise of industries'

QUESTION 5

How did rail and steamships help journalists?

Expected Response: 1. they were able to travel easier and faster.

2. They were then able to faraway places and get news

3. The journalists could attend interesting events and get news from there

QUESTION 6

What contributed to the growth of newspapers? Give two details.

Expected Response: The price of paper dropped and getting information from faraway places became easier.

QUESTION 7

What was Fleet Street famous for?

Expected Response: Printing and publishing newspapers (in the 16th century)

A majority of the candidates performed well in this question as they were able to identify the answer from the passage.

QUESTION 8

For question 8, circle the letter with the correct answer.

Expected Responses:

i) **B**

ii) **D**

iii) **C**

Most candidates struggled with vocabulary in this question thus getting wrong answers. Some did not follow the instruction to circle but were putting a cross against the chosen option.

QUESTION 9

In paragraph 4 the writer says, '.... the street was considered as the Centre of the news.' What does this mean?

Expected Responses: A place where people could read news/ a place where newspapers were produced/ a place with a lot of newspaper houses/ a place where news were produced/ a place with a lot of newspaper outlets.

QUESTION 10

Why do you think it was important to preserve the newspaper buildings?

Expected Response: For historical purposes/ to get information about the past.

Most candidates got the answer correct as they were able to relate preservation of the newspaper buildings to historical importance.

QUESTION 11

How do good reading habits add educational value?

Expected Response: they provide knowledge on general information/ improve language skills and vocabulary.

This question proved to be a challenge with most candidates as they would rephrase the question and bring it back as the answer.

QUESTION 12

Do you think newspapers are important in our lives? Give reasons for your answer.

Expected Response: Yes/No with valid points.

Candidates did well as they were expected to give their own ideas in as far as newspapers are concerned. Only a few didn't do well as they failed to take a stand first then support it.

LANGUAGE USAGE

Rewrite the following sentences and underline the adjectives found in them.

- (i) The bear is listed as an endangered animal.
- (ii) Ngwane Street is the longest in Manzini.
- (iii) Siphon writes meaningful sentences.
- (iv) Marry has a collection of expensive dolls.
- (v) Nomsa is wearing a sleeveless t-shirt today.

Part 3: Dialogue

This dialogue was free style. Candidates were expected to give their knowledge about newspapers in whatsoever way. Candidates were expected to make a dialogue which showed that they indeed understood the context and the content of what they were talking about from the passage they had read. Coherence and cohesiveness were very important when making this dialogue. Candidates were expected to display that they knew who their audience was which would later help them choose the right language for this dialogue. Most candidates were able to write fair dialogues with fair content but were let down by their language which continually made the meaning doubtful.

Recommendations

The performance showed by the candidates demonstrated that educators need to coach and train candidates with the necessary skills in the following areas:

- listening skills so that they can be able to listen with purpose in the listening comprehension part
- reading comprehension strategies and skills. This can help candidates understand what and why they are reading. Lack of knowledge of the reading strategies made it very difficult for the candidates to comprehend the reading passage.
- the different types of questions and how to answer them. This will enable the candidates to identify an answer from the passage relevant to the question.
- dialogue writing skills with emphasis on the rules for writing a proper and a good dialogue: cohesion and show that the people are talking together.
- Train the candidates so that that they are able to recognize key words in a question which will guide them in presenting relevant responses.
- Encourage candidates to avoid using slang language
- Encourage candidates to read and listen to instructions