

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

JCE ENGLISH

2021

Paper 2 (16/2)

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

The candidates were asked to write a composition about 'an unexpected visitor.' This was a descriptive/narrative composition. Almost all the candidates understood the question and wrote about the people who visited them, when and where, as well as what they did during the visit. Their feelings also came out clearly. Correct use of the past tense was noted across all levels. The very good candidates did exceptionally well with good command of English while the average candidates used appropriate vocabulary. Generally, the candidates used correct sentence patterns, correct verb usage and appropriate paragraphing. The question was accessible to all candidates. Most of the candidates were able to provide their own details to make their stories interesting. Candidates should be applauded for a job well done as they successfully managed to write about their different encounters with the 'unexpected visitors' they had. For this question, though some candidates were not able to express themselves well, the average candidates showed an understanding of the topic.

Question 2- Letter

In 2021 the candidates were asked to write a formal letter just like in 2020. They were asked to write a letter to their Head of Department explaining how they lost their pocket money during an educational tour with their school mates. Candidates were able to write a formal letter. This showed that they understood the question. They addressed their Head of Department explaining how the money was lost. For the very good candidates correct layout for a formal letter was used, however for the average and below average candidates the format was a challenge as some punctuated the addresses or wrote the date after the two addresses. Sometimes capital letters were used for the address e.g. MAOKA CJSS, Yours Faithfully, etc. Small letters were also used for salutations e.g. Dear sir/madam and as such candidates lost marks because of such.

Generally this question was accessible for all candidates.

Recommendations

- (a) Students should be encouraged to read more to improve their vocabulary. A school library should be a place of interest.
- (b) The school must give more practice on grammar, punctuation, use of direct speech and how it is punctuated.
- (c) More practice on composition writing
- (d) Teach the correct layout of a formal letter

- (e) Give more practice on verb usage, articles, spelling and gender

Paper 3

The paper is divided into two sections; section A- Poetry and section B- Short story. The stimulus for both sections is unseen text.

Section A- Poetry: Common places by Stephen Watson (15 Marks)

The poem talks about a wayward girl who sleeps around and leaves school. It emphasises the consequences of love if not handled well, that it may lead to death as shown by the boyfriend who is jilted and commits suicide because he could not accept the fact that the girl has moved on without him.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

- (a) The candidates were to pick a pair of rhyming words from stanza 4. Most candidates got it right by writing: jilting and drinking/way and say/ had and bad/ way and day/say and day. But some got it wrong because they wrote two pairs (four words), with the first pair being wrong.
- (b) The candidates were to use stanza 1 to describe the girl's character traits. The candidates were expected to write the trait and explain using evidence from that stanza. The correct responses were (bold/impulsive carefree/wayward/irresponsible) and any of the synonyms of the traits given. The explanation were; she moves in with a man at a tender age without her parents' consent, she goes to stay with a man she had known only for a month, she does not seem to mind about the consequences of her actions towards her parents and boyfriend. Most candidates got it correct.
- (c) The candidates were expected to use stanza 2 to say how the girl had betrayed the boy (the correct response was that the girl left the boy for his best friend). Most candidates got it correct.
- (d) The candidates were expected to interrogate the phrase "He had outgrown her in every way..." and say why it is not true. The response was that since the boy ended up committing suicide, it means he never outgrew her. The evidence is found in the last two lines of stanza 4 (And so, one day we woke up to his end/He had played God). Some students got it wrong because they contradicted the statement and said he had outgrown her or that the jilting had caused death. The response was on the boy taking his own life.
- (e) The candidates were expected to give a brief summary and the question was marked as a whole (2 marks or zero). Most candidates got it wrong because they just copied down what the poet had said about love without showing the consequences of such love. The correct response was the poet believes that love is unfair/cruel/frustrating or disappointing because if not handled well, it may lead to loss of life. The response must denote death or end of life.

- (f) The question was on the candidate's feeling not the poet's feelings, but most candidates described the poet's feelings. The correct response was anger/hatred/disgust/disappointed or any synonym. And then the candidates had to give two reasons why they felt that way; she contributed to the death/her wayward behaviour hurt her parents by moving out/ and leaving school at a young age/ her first lover by running away with his best friend. Also feelings of pity/sorry/sympathy.
- (g) The question required the candidates to state the poetic device used in the line "The cruelty of love, the cruelty of" The correct response was alliteration/personification/Repetition. Then the candidates were to say why the line was used in the poem. Most candidates got this part wrong because they gave the purpose of the device instead of the expression. The correct response was; for emphasis/to stress a point.

Section B-Short Story: The Ivory Dancer by Cyprian Ekwensi (30 marks)

The story was about a young lady called Akunma who was the village dancer. She was betrothed to a young man called Chibo. But when another young man arrived in the village of Nwankwo (Peters), Akunma left Chibo for him because he promised him marriage. It was this young man, Peter who caused a stir in the village through his actions which rubbed off a lot of people, the wrong way.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 2

- (a) The candidates were to describe Peters' qualities that made him to be loved by the village girls. Almost all the candidates got it correct. The response was; Peters has been to university or college/ he wore a tie/he wore spectacles/ and his father talked about sending him to England.
- (b) The candidates were to say why Akunma told the chief that she could not dance that night. The responses were; because Peters' relatives were coming to ask for her hand in marriage/ Akunma had promise Peters that she would not dance in public as Peters felt that it was indecent.
- (c) In this question, candidates were to describe Akunma and support their description by getting information from the text. This question was a bit difficult for candidates because some of them described well but gave wrong evidence that did not go hand in hand with the trait they had written. The correct responses were; naïve/impressionable/impulsive/submissive/inconsiderate/abusive/optimistic/impatient/caring/loving. Some of the evidence was she leaves Chibo for a man she knows nothing about/ she leaves Chibo thinking Peters would speed up the marriage issue/she happily talks about Peters with Chibo who was her fiancé/ she is ready to stop the dancing that she has been doing for the village for some time/ she danced to save Peters' life.

- (d) The question required the candidates to give evidence that showed that Peters was an heir and an opportunist. Most candidates were able to answer correctly the part of heir but failed to respond well to the other part probably because they did not understand the word 'opportunist'. The expected responses were; He leaves Akunman for the chief's wife and because it will give him access to the chief's treasures/He convinces Akunma that the chief is after his life so that Akunma can focus on dancing while he runs off with another woman.
- (e) The candidates were asked to give the central idea of the whole story (theme) and also explain why they think that was the theme. The correct theme was; Not all that glitters is gold/ the devil you know is better than the angel you do not know/Betrayal/Do not trust anyone. Some candidates wrote "Do not judge the book by its cover" which was wrong because it is a twofold expression that denotes good **and** bad. Then for Peter/Peters left Akunma for chief's wife/chief's wife left chief for Peters. The theme also expresses that it was wrong of Akunma to leave Chibo for Peters since she has been with him for some time and that she know nothing about Peters.

Essay

The candidates showed a lot of understanding for the story given but most of them could not score well because they misspelt the names of characters. Schools must understand that proper names must be copied out as they appear in the text. The candidates wrote Chipo instead of Chibo, Akunna instead of Akunma. As such, most candidates were only able to score on the Chief. The expected essay responses were

Akunma-has been in love with Chibo to the extent of getting engaged to him but when Peters comes into the village, Akunma leaves Chibo for him, e.g his love and promises do not last long as he runs away with Chief's senior wife. Chief says Chibo is the one we know you are betrothed to...you cannot just throw him aside like that.

Chibo -feels lesser of a man as he thinks that Akunma has rejected him because he is not modern and not educated. Chibo's plans of marrying Akunma are a thing of the part as Akunma is now betrothed to Peters. Chibo is pained by the fact that Peters has dumped Akunma after spoiling his (Chibo's) relationship with her, e.g Peters is from university....why should all the girls, including, my fiancé, not run after him? He is modern, educated, he wears broken glasses, he wears a tie and he is about to go to England.

Paper 4

Introduction

The 2021 listening comprehension and summary paper comprised of two passages, (Listening and Summary passages). The Listening Comprehension passage was entitled culture: Central – Urban migration. Both passages were quite accessible since the subject matter of the two passages was familiar. Generally the candidates performed fairly well especially above average and average performers.

Question by Question Analysis

- (a) The question was a simple recall question which required candidates to state the name of the person who said the words: “A nation without culture is a lost nation”. The majority of the candidates scored including the low achievers.
- (b) The question required that the candidates state the event the government of Botswana was hosting. It was a lift question which required less effort to answer. Candidates across all performance levels did well.
- (c) The question was a recall question requiring the candidates to list aspects guests were exposed to. The majority of the candidates scores two (2) marks while few got one (1) or zero.
- (d) A remarkable number of candidates scored while the others either wrote Tshekedi Khama instead of Meshack Khama. Such candidates lost a mark because of distorting the name.
- (e) Above average and average candidates scored a mark. It was also a simple recall question.
- (f) The majority of the candidates were able to pick the reasons Botswana was ideal for business.
- (g) The question was generally handled well with both average and above average candidates scoring.
- (h) The question was generally handled well with both above average and average scoring.
- (i) Most candidates were able to identify the characteristics of Botswana culture.
- (j) Candidates were able to identify the name of the person who gave a vote of thanks.
- (k) The majority of the candidates were able to pick organisations which were appreciated at the event.

Summary

The summary question required candidates to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in urban areas. The passage had a series of advantages and disadvantages. The downside of the question was that the number of advantages and disadvantages to be given

was not stated. The majority of the candidates managed to score five points for content. The style was a challenge in that some candidates just listed the advantages and disadvantages in the form of a shopping list instead of continuous writing.