EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI

Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education

English Language (6873)

Examination Report for 2023

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EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/01
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The total number of registered candidates was 17761, which showed an increase compared to 2022 where there were 15050 candidates. Overall, the paper proved to be difficult for most candidates. 2023 saw the highest score being 43 out of 50 and the lowest score being 01 out of 50.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

The exercise proved to be generally difficult for candidates as they failed to score maximum points.

(a)   What was the companion's initial reaction when he first met the writer?
Expected response: He jumped and licked the writer's ear/her ear.

   Comment
   The question was accessible to most candidates except for a few careless candidates who used the pronoun, 'his' instead of 'her' thereby rendering their response wrong as it now referred to the dog's ear instead of the writer's ear.

(b)   Why do you think the writer's husband snapped at the news?
Expected response: The writer had not listened to her husband's advice/He was annoyed for not being listened to.

   Comment
   Most candidates lost marks for this question because they thought the response was implied. Instead of lifting it from the text, for example, most of them thought the husband snapped at the news because he was jealous of the relationship the writer had with the puppy.

(c)   What breed was Django?
Expected response: poodle

   Comment
   Most candidates couldn't access this question because of including 'red' to the answer which rendered their response incorrect.

(d) What was the writer's need that was satisfied by Django?

Expected response: a need for a third child/a need for another child/adding to the brood

Comment

The question was generally accessible to most candidates.

(e) How did the writer assist Django when he got old?

Expected response: She added a fish oil supplement to his food AND she got him some pain killers.

Comment

The question was accessible to most candidates except for a few candidates who left out the second part of the answer or those who omitted 'she got him' for the second part of the answer and made it seem as if the pain killers were also added to Django's food.

(f) Why did Django resist any kind of help?

Expected response: He was (very) proud.

Comment

The question was generally accessible to most candidates.

(g) Why are the writer's children said to 'believe in miracles'?

Expected response:

Django had fully recovered/returned to normal/He had gained weight, eyes straightened and gait returned to normal/returned to bubbly self again **yet** they had thought he might die/they had lost hope that he would recover.

Comment

Most candidates failed to score the maximum mark on this question. They were able to access the first part of the answer but did not realise the need to venture beyond the recovery to the second part as it highlights the 'miracle'.

(h) Explain why the writer started to view Django differently at the vet?

Expected response: People were glancing/looking at Django (and she saw him as wonderful as they saw him).

Comment

The question was not accessible to most candidates as they failed to associate the writer, suddenly seeing Django differently, with the way people saw him at the vet. Most candidates gave the response: *He had gained weight, eyes straightened and gait returned to normal* which was not answering the question.

(i)   **Give four details that show that the writer and Django had a strong bond.**

Expected responses:

- He was the writer's shadow.

- When depressed, he stared at her with sad eyes/rested his head on her lap.

- She received a rapturous welcome when she got home.

- He adored the writer (and the feeling was mutual).

- He kissed her face.

- She panicked when she thought Django would die.

- They take walks and afternoon drives.

- Writer never thought Django would die.

Comment

The question was generally accessible to most candidates but they failed to score the maximum mark because of imprecision. Most of them were giving incomplete responses. For example, for point number 7, they omitted, 'afternoon drives.' Others confused pronouns in point number 5 and instead of 'kissed her face' it was 'kissed his face.'

Exercise 2

The exercise proved to be accessible to most candidates. Those who did not score lost marks for giving incomplete points or for indiscriminately lifting information that did not answer the question.

Expected responses:

Benefits of motivation

- important for their future/helps build a better future

- to do well/succeeding in life

- to do well academically   (Any 2)

Characteristics of self-motivated children

- have right attitude

- do well without effort

- have good executive functioning skills

- sacrifice/can put aside all other distractions to get down to their studies   (Any 2)

Ways parents can motivate their children

- have respectful and positive relationship with their children

- set structures children cannot create themselves

- meet with teachers/discuss child's progress with teachers

- help children manage time
- sit with them while they do their work
- review their child's work and help them where necessary   (Any 4)

Exercise 3

The question was generally accessible to most candidates as most of them scored the maximum mark.

Expected responses:

(a)   D
(b)   B
(c)   A
(d)   C
(e)   A
(f)   B
(g)   D
(h)   C

Exercise 4

Generally, this question proved to be very difficult for all candidates as most of their scores ranged from 0 to 3 marks with a few scoring above 3 marks.

(a)   Why is the writer mystified by people who say they never dream?

Expected response: He feels they are unrealistic/He feels they are not telling the truth/He believes every person dreams/He considers dreams as part of life.

Comment

The question was not accessible to most candidates as they did not consider the fact that their responses should show that it is the writer's opinion not a general fact; thus the use of words like, 'feels, believes, considers, etc.'

(b)   How does a majority of people view dreaming? Give two details.

Expected response:

- do not accept dreaming as part of their lives
- as an irritating little habit

Comment

The question was generally accessible to most candidates except for candidates who left out one of the answers, thus scoring 1 mark instead of the full 2 marks.

(c)   Explain the following phrases as they are used in the passage.

(i)   'enigmatic yet exciting'

Expected response: mysterious/puzzling/surreal but thrilling/exhilarating

Comment

The question proved to be a challenge for most candidates as they couldn't even give the meaning of the expression outside the context in which it was used, so it was even more difficult for them to give the writer's intended meaning.

(ii)   'lightning excursions'

Expected response: being in different locations within seconds/quick movements between places in a dream

Comment

The question was not accessible to most candidates as they failed to understand the meaning intended by the writer but gave meanings of the words in isolation.

(iii)   'another slice of life'

Expected response: different life experience/different aspect of existence/ different part of life

Comment

The question was accessible to a few candidates. Most candidates did not score because they brought back the key words as they were in their explanations without changing them into their own words.

(d)   Why does the writer feel that dreaming cannot be matched with wakefulness?

Expected response: through dreaming you can get a glimpse of another form of existence

Comment

The question was not accessible to most candidates as they failed to associate, 'wakefulness' as a synonym of 'open eyes'/'being awake' which was supposed to lead them to the correct answer in the text.

(e)   What are the writer's feelings towards dreams? Give two details.

Expected response:

- He likes/appreciates dreams
- He is excited/thrilled by dreams
- He is intrigued/fascinated by dreams

Comment

The question was generally not accessible to most candidates as they failed to express the writer's feelings towards dreams. Instead, they described dreams in their responses. For example, they gave responses like, *dreams are mysterious*, which had nothing to do with the writer's feelings.

Exercise 5

Write a summary on the activities Greta Thunberg has engaged in to fight against climate change.

Expected response:

1. took campaign to the streets of Davos in 2019 to confront world leaders about global emissions
2. travelled by train for 32 hours to reach Davos
3. spent night camped with climate scientists in -18 degrees Celsius temperatures
4. joined a strike by Swiss school children at the World Economic Forum
5. three-week strike outside Swedish Parliament/lobbying MPs to comply with the Paris Agreement
6. would strike every Friday, missing class and giving up hobbies
7. gave speeches at European Parliament and in front of legislatures/addressed conferences like the UN climate change COP 24, COP 25
8. travelled on carbon-neutral yachts
9. featured interviews on BBC Radio/part of BBC Radio's flagship programme.

Comment

The question proved to be inaccessible for most candidates as a few were able to score the maximum mark. Some even scored a zero. This was mostly because candidates were giving incomplete points as their responses, leaving out information that was important for their answers to score. There were still those candidates who wrote wrong spellings of words resulting in wrong responses.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Teachers do a lot of reading and text analysis with learners while exposing them to different subjects and texts.
2. Learners are trained to understand the writer's intended meaning in a given text or context to avoid giving meanings of words in isolation.
3. Learners are made aware that as much as it is important to write in point form, especially in Exercise 2 and the last part of Exercise 1, they should also remember the importance of answering the questions fully, not leaving out key content. The same concept should be used in summary writing.

4. Learners are trained on question analysis so that they understand that, in most cases, the questions use synonyms of the words used in the texts which will help lead them to the correct responses.

5. Learners are taught to use the correct person's point of view when answering questions. For example, instead of the first person used in a text, they are expected to use the third person.

6. Learners are taught to begin with capital letters when writing proper nouns. For example, most candidates were using small letters to begin the proper nouns in Exercise 5.

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/02

Continuous Writing

General Comments

The 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 three. The questions consist of: Exercise 1 and 2 which are guided writing tasks and Exercise 3 is free/creative writing.

The total mark in this paper is **50**. The highest score obtained this year (2023) was **47/50** which is better than the score for the year 2022. The highest score for 2022 was **44/50**. The lowest was **2/50**.

Notably, this year there were 5 candidates who scored **0/14** in Exercise 1 and there were 18 candidates who scored **0/14** in Exercise 2. There were 126 students who scored **0/22** in Exercise 3.

At face value, the paper was accessible, however, the candidates were challenged by the questions due to poor question analysis and lack of appropriate language.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

You want to go on holiday during the school vacation, but you do not have enough money.

Write a letter to your cousin about your plans and ask for advice about how to make extra money.

Your letter should include:

- The place you would like to visit and cost
- Activities you would like to do there
- A request for advice on how you could make extra money

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

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

Expectations

The task required the candidates to write a friendly or informal letter. The purpose was to inform or give details about their plans and to ask for advice about how to make extra money. The audience was a cousin, so the register was expected to be informal, and the use of a chatty tone was key. As the

candidates presented their letter, they had to show awareness of audience and independence of thought. Colloquial language was allowed whereas slang was not.

Presentation/layout/format

Salutation

✓ Candidates were expected to address the person to whom the letter is written: Dear... and write the name of the person.

Introduction

✓ Candidates were expected to establish social distance and state the clue of the purpose (reason why they are writing the letter)

Body

✓ Candidates were expected to unpack the bullet prompts or points and show adequate development of the given ideas. Each bullet prompt was to be developed adequately in a paragraph, using sound structures and following writing conventions in order for the ideas to flow naturally.

✓ Candidates were expected to show independence of thought.

Conclusion

✓ The conclusion may be influenced by the purpose. The letter was expected to have an air or sense of finality before signing off.

Sign off

✓ The letter can end or be signed off in a variety of informal ways.

Overall performance

This question was friendly to most candidates as they were able to give good responses and they adequately developed the given ideas or bullets. However, some candidates seemed to lack exposure, resulting in poor responses. The other problem was their command of language which was poor since most of them used poor expressions. Worth noting is that some candidates failed to develop the last bullet. There was no creativity and no sophisticated language. This year's cohort failed to answer the question the way they were expected to.

Good responses

A good response for Exercise 1 was one that demonstrated awareness of purpose, audience and register as well as those that addressed all the bullet points adequately. Good responses were from candidates who:

- wrote an informal letter.
- fully developed all prompts and displayed independence of thought.
- used a chatty tone or informal register.
- used descriptive words to paint a vivid picture of the anticipated place they intended to go to for a vacation and the cost.
- described in detail the activities they intended to engage in
- asked for advice on how to make extra money.
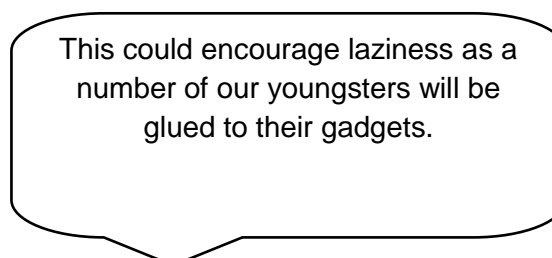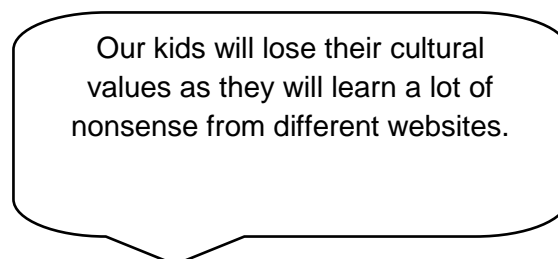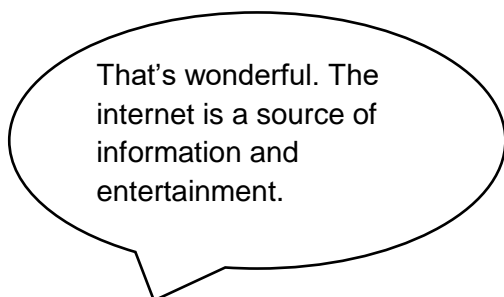
Weak responses

Candidates who wrote poor responses were those who:

- did not show awareness of audience, hence they used a formal tone.
- did not address all the bullets but focused on only one or two.
- listed and did not develop the bullets.
- did not analyse the question thus they created their own questions.
- used poor language and showed lack of awareness of mechanical awareness.
- did not paragraph their work.
- mentioned more than one place of interest to visit during the vacation which resulted to them not addressing the other bullets.
- asked for money or for a loan instead of requesting for advice.
- concluded with the last bullet instead of developing it.
- could not distinguish between slang and informal language and used slang words like *wanna*, *kinda* and *gonna*.
- used formal language and cohesive devices like firstly, second, moreover, furthermore, hence, and so on.
- used social media language e.g. *pliz*, *coz*, *u*.
- wrote lengthy introductions which led to mediocre responses as candidates failed to develop all the bullets adequately.

Exercise 2

In your community, some people feel that the internet should be free for everyone. As the chairperson of the youth in your community you have been requested by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to write an article on the issue.

Below are some comments from members of the community.

That's wonderful. The internet is a source of information and entertainment.

Our kids will lose their cultural values as they will learn a lot of nonsense from different websites.

It is a tool that allows a majority of us to do our jobs online.

This could encourage laziness as a number of our youngsters will be glued to their gadgets.

Write an article for the Ministry expressing your views concerning this issue.

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

The comments above may give you some ideas, but you are free to use ideas of your own.

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

Expectations

Candidates were expected to write an argumentative or persuasive article. They were expected to write a feature article and express their views on the issue of free access to the internet and persuade in a convincing manner. The stand of the candidate had to be clear from the onset up to the end of the article. A formal register was expected. In the body, a candidate was allowed to use any of the different styles of argumentative writing, as long as the voice was solid. Candidates were expected to show understanding of the bone of contention/controversial issue which was: **internet access should be free for everyone.**

Presentation/structure /format

Introduction

Candidates were expected to briefly give background information and stance. They were permitted to express the background information in a variety of ways. Regardless of the strategy used, the voice of the candidate had to be clear.

Body

The candidates were expected to be clear about which stand they advocating for or advancing. Candidates were at liberty to use any style, as long as the piece of writing was persuasive. Candidates can take a side and then acknowledge the other side, give a rebuttal that is related to the point and then cement their line of argument. The candidates should make it clear that they do not agree with the other line of argument. They should distance themselves from the opposing argument. For example, the candidates were allowed to:

- ✓ bring the opposing view, rebut the claim and then bring their view.
- ✓ can start with their views, develop them adequately to strengthen them and then mention other people's views.
- ✓ take one side and support it with evidence but with excellent use of persuasion language: emotive language, rhetorical questions and so on. The voice should be clear. (self-centred approach)

Conclusion

The candidates were expected to write a conclusion that was in sync with the stand taken in the introduction.

Overall performance

This question was poorly done as most candidates did not take a clear stand from the introduction. Others discussed the speech bubbles and sat on the fence. Most candidates did not give well developed paragraphs and failed to identify the bone of contention.

Good responses

Candidates:

- displayed an understanding of the task.
- understood the bone of contention: **the issue of free internet access for everyone.**
- took a clear stand from the introduction to the conclusion. They used their own style to persuade and advocate for their point of view.

- presented well developed ideas clearly using a persuasive style.
- displayed independence of thought.
- used good language and appropriate persuasive techniques.

Poor responses

Candidates:

- did not understand that the task was a persuasive piece of writing.
- misinterpreted the burning issue or bone of contention. They talked about internet instead of free internet access for everyone.
- gave a flat tone not showing where they stand.
- used some persuasive devices inappropriately like adversaries, opponents, proponents, critics and so on.
- wrote speeches.
- wrote formal letters with addresses.
- wrote dialogues throughout.
- wrote articles that lacked persuasive register and voice.
- took the speech bubbles or prompts as they appeared (cut and paste) without developing them.
- wrote articles that showed lack of awareness of the audience and no independence of thought.
- used poor language showing lack of mechanical accuracy: poor punctuation, rambling or sentence fragments.
- wrote explicit and vulgar language.
- wrote sweeping statements without evidence or support.

Exercise 3

Write 2-2 ½ pages (350-450 words) on ONE of the following:

1. Describe an invention you would like to see in your lifetime and how it may impact your life.
2. Teaching is more of a calling than just a profession. Discuss.
3. "I couldn't believe that my parents made me take that job". Write a story based on these words.

Question 1

Describe an invention you would like to see in your lifetime and how it may impact your life.

The task is a descriptive composition of an invention that has not been designed yet. It is imaginary. The candidates were expected to paint a vivid picture of the invention and how it would affect their life. The candidates were expected to use descriptive language. The question was in twofold, so both aspects were to be addressed: a description of the invention and the impact it would have on the candidate. The composition was supposed to be given a title, an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The title is not compulsory. "Would like to see" suggests that the invention was not there, yet in the eyes of most candidates the invention was one they had already seen. The language was supposed to be formal and paint a vivid picture in the reader's mind.

Overall performance

This question was poorly done, as most candidates did not describe the invention they would like to see in their lifetime and failed to capture both aspects of the question. However, the few that understood the question did exceptionally well.

Good responses

Candidates:

- wrote a descriptive essay.
- described an invention they would like to see in their lifetime and further wrote how it would impact them.
- used the appropriate tense to capture the tone of the descriptive essay.
- used a descriptive tone including figurative language, strong verbs, and powerful adjectives to paint a picture with words and to appeal to all the senses.
- Material was excellently developed using correct grammar.

Poor responses

Candidates:

- did not write descriptive essays; others wrote narrative essays while others wrote expository essays.
- failed to understand the term "invention" and focused on describing lifetime dreams.
- did not capture both aspects of the question since some focused solely on the impacts totally forgetting about describing the invention.
- failed to decipher the appropriate tense.

- failed to use a descriptive tone.
- used poor language.
- failed to capture to essence of the verb "would" which touches on later and possibility.
- presented material that was not adequately developed.

Question 2

Teaching is more of a calling than just a profession. Discuss.

Expectations

Candidates were expected to discuss both sides of the coin i.e. teaching as a calling and also teaching as a profession. The discussion was expected to be balanced. The candidates were expected to give background information or a general statement and then show that they would address both sides. The candidates were expected to unveil both sides and could start by discussing teaching as more of a calling or teaching as more of a profession than a calling. There were many styles at their disposal. Candidates also had the liberty to explore both sides of the coin interchangeably. Cohesive devices were expected to be used for cohesion and coherence. Also, the candidates were expected to show independence of thought and creativity.

Overall performance

This question was poorly done as candidates were not able to identify what it was they were supposed to discuss and evaluate. Some wrote discursive essays, but the content still proved that they did not understand what a profession is and what a calling is.

Good responses

Candidates:

- discussed teaching as more of a calling than as a profession.
- showed independence of thought.
- wrote balanced discussions of the topic.
- developed their material excellently.

Poor responses

Candidates:

- did not write discursive essays and wrote narrative and argumentative essays.
- wrote one-sided discussion of the topic.
- wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of teaching and teachers.
- explained what teachers are and what good and bad teachers are.

- wrote essays whose content was not clear as they did not distinguish what they were talking about.
- wrote dialogues and interviews.

Exercise 3

"I couldn't believe that my parents made me take that job". Write a story based on these words.

Expectations

Candidates were expected to write a narrative piece of writing that was **based on the words above**. The candidates were expected to be one of the characters in the story or to tell somebody's story. What is implied by the words in the question was that, one of the characters in the story was forced to take that job. There are different ways of introducing a story that were at the disposal of the candidates and the candidates had the liberty to use them: flashback, chronological order, use of dialogue, and character disposition. The story was supposed to be centred around the given words. Candidates were to have clear characterisation, setting, plot and theme. The story was supposed to be told from a first person point of view or third person point of view. There was supposed to be an element of disbelief. Strong verbs and powerful adjectives, figurative language, creation of suspense and tension had to be used to make the story interesting. The story was supposed to have an element of finality. There was supposed to be use of good language usage throughout the whole story. There was also supposed to be creativity, variation of sentences, usage of strong verbs and powerful adjectives (show language for effect).

Overall performance

This question was fairly done as most candidates were able to write a story in line with the theme.

Good responses

Candidates:

- wrote a narrative essay (good responses took the descriptive narrative approach).
- captured the theme of the story and wrote realistic stories.
- included all the elements of a story: characters, setting and a clear plot.
- used rich language (including strong words, figurative language, adjectives and adverbs).
- Material was excellently developed.
- observed mechanical accuracy.

Poor responses

Candidates:

- did not write a story but described what a job is.
- did not capture the theme of the story.
- wrote a story that was a twist of what they were expected to write. For example, it was the candidate who wanted to take the job and the parents did not want but in the end the candidate was victorious.
- wrote a story that was different from the theme and liked or loved the job, which was not the expectation of the question.

Recommendations

- Candidates should be encouraged to read extensively in order to expose themselves to a variety of writing strategies.
- Candidates ought to be exposed to the learning of grammar in context so that they are exposed to the appropriate language used in a variety of contexts.
- Mechanical accuracy should be encouraged: proper use of dialogue, direct speech spelling, and punctuation.
- Candidates need to be capacitated on development and techniques of writing a story.
- Writing using a pencil and then overwriting with pen should be discouraged.
- Candidates need to be trained on paragraph development.
- Candidates need training on persuasive styles that work to their advantage.

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/03
Listening Comprehension

General Comments

The 2023 paper proved to be a bit challenging for the majority of candidates compared to that of the previous year. Exercises that were accessible to the candidates were Exercises 1, 2 and 3. Exercises 5 and 4 proved to be a challenge to them. As a consequence, no candidate could attain a total. The highest was 28 with marks ranging from 0-28, yet the previous range was 0-29 marks.

Poor spelling, not observing the conventions of writing proper nouns and expressions and unclear handwriting were contributing factors to the poor performance of the candidates. It is of great concern that candidates are becoming poorer at spelling as the years go by. Teachers are therefore advised to pay more attention to their learners' spelling competencies and find ways to assist them. Seemingly, most candidates were able to use their time efficiently as there were a few blank spaces, which would have been an indication that some of them might have been unsure of the correct responses.

This component tests the skill of listening with understanding, selecting and organising your responses and listening for specific information. Candidates' responses indicated that some of them had difficulty attaining what the assessment objectives demand.

Exercise 1

General comment

For Exercise 1, candidates were expected to listen to a series of short sentences and then answer each question on the lines provided in the question paper. This was a generally accessible exercise where a majority of candidates were able to score most of the items. However, there were notable challenges with Questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

What is the name of the world's largest building?

Expected response: New Century Global Centre

Comment: This was a highly inaccessible item and only a few candidates were able to get it right. The challenge was basically in accessing the right answer and candidates came with responses like, *New Surgery Global Centre, China, Chedda*. Those that were able to access the answer, however, could not score because they did not observe the conventions of writing proper nouns.

Question 2

What quality is needed on stage when lessons are posed?

Expected response: confidence/you must be confident.

Comment: This was a generally accessible question and most of the candidates were able to score, those that could not score came with responses such as: *Confident* which could not score if used in isolation*, confindent, confidant* and all these responses could not score because the question demanded that they give the **noun** 'confidence'.

Question 3

How do elephants show respect for the dead?

Expected response: They bury their dead/cover the dead <u>with leaves</u>

Comment: This question was generally accessible to a majority of candidates. There were issues of spelling such as: '<u>*burrie*</u>' *their dead,* '<u>*barry*</u>' *or* '*they show grief'*. The last response could not score if the candidates did not mention the burial of their dead.

Question 4

What do Paralympic athletes demonstrate to the world?

Expected response: (True meaning of) determination.

Comment: This item was also generally accessible except for a few who could not spell determination and gave responses such as, *dertermination, dertemination, ditermination*. The major challenge was basically the incorrect spellings used by candidates.

Question 5

Why did Hanco switch from singing in Afrikaans to English?

Expected response: Afrikaans market is smaller/dream of tapping into the international music scene

Comment: Most candidates were able to access this item and score. Those who could not, failed because of the omission of some parts of the response or incorrect spelling of words like '*market'.* Some could not spell the word '*market'* correctly.

Exercise 2

General comments

Candidates were expected to listen to a presentation about animal censuses in Kenya and then fill in the details in the question paper. This was a highly accessible exercise where most candidates were able to score a total.

Biodiversity

Expected responses: <u>air</u> and <u>land</u>

Comment: Most candidates were able to access these items and those who could not gave responses such as, *ill* for *land*, *ear* for *air* which could not score.

Purpose

Expected responses: <u>size</u> and <u>distribution</u>

Comment: These items were quite accessible to a majority of candidates except for a few who had challenges with spellings for distribution and wrote *distrebution, destribution*, which resulted in these items not scoring.

Pandemic

Expected response: <u>poached</u>

Comment: This item was a bit challenging to a number of candidates as they gave responses that could not score a mark as a result of incorrect spelling and came up with spellings like *potched* and *pouched*.

Government

Expected response: <u>conserve</u> and <u>ecological</u>

Comment: While this was a fairly accessible item, some candidates could not score as a result of incorrect spelling wherein they came with words like, *conseve* and *econological* which could not score a mark.

Exercise 3

General comments

Candidates were expected to listen to a talk about the layers of soil and then fill in the details in the question paper. The candidates' performance was average though some could not score any mark.

Definition

Item 1

Expected response: organisms

Comment: The item was accessible to most candidates. Those who could not score a mark had a challenge with spelling, hence they wrote *oganims, organizms, orgarnism.*

Soil profile

Item 2

Expected response: clay

Comment: This was challenging because the candidates could not contextualise, hence they wrote irrelevant answers such as *grey, gray, cley* etc.

Item 3

Expected response: germinate as the correct response.

Comment: This item was the most accessible, but a few candidates could not spell the word 'germinate'. Instead, they gave responses such as *geminat, germinat and germinal.*

Item 4

The word <u>humus</u> was a challenge to most candidates. A few candidates were successful in writing the correct spelling of the word. Wrong responses included words such as *humers, humans, homous and hurmers.*

Item 5

Expected response: grass

Comment: Most candidates were able to score a mark in this item. Only a few candidates failed to score a mark due to the incorrect spelling of grass.

Item 6

Expected response: twigs

Comment: Candidates who gave the wrong spelling of the word such as *twiges, twigz, twiggs, ticks* and the distractor, trees, did not get a mark*.*

Item 7 and 8

<u>Expected response:</u> <u>dense</u> and <u>harder</u>

Comment: This item was fairly done but some candidates provided incorrect spellings such as *dancer, danse, dens* etc. On the other hand, 'harder' was more accessible as most candidates proved not to struggle with the spelling of the word. However, both details were required for the mark.

Item 9

Expected response: granite

Comment: Most candidates misspelt the word. They gave words such as *granide, bromad, brominant, bride.*

Item 10

Expected response: sandstone.

Comment: This item proved to be the most challenging part of this exercise as only a few candidates managed to score a mark here. In most cases, candidates gave answers such as *substone, somestone, signstone, grindstone and sandstorm.*

Exercise 4

General comments

Candidates were expected to listen to an interview with a respiratory specialist, Dr Jonathan Gule, about indoor air pollution and then answer the questions in the question paper. Generally, the exercise was inaccessible for most candidates. Most were unable to score. Some were unable to identify the answer at all, yet others were let down by spelling.

1. Give one example of how indoor air pollution is spread.

Expected responses:

- from tiny particles emitted when we cook or clean
- spores released by mould when it is damp
- chemicals embedded in furniture   **(any one)**

Comment: An average number of candidates were able to score. Those that failed to score wrote incomplete sentences with others writing wrong spellings for some words in their responses. For the first option, some candidates wrote the answer but omitted some details. Some omitted 'tiny' and only wrote 'particles' while others omitted 'emitted' in their responses. There were those who only wrote 'cooking' or 'cleaning' without explaining the 'how' part.

Others substituted emitted with spread. Others wrote wrong spellings of emit and particles which included the following: *emite, ermit, emitte patecles, partacles, partecles.*

For the second option, others missed 'spores' and wrote *spares, spose*. Others left out 'mould' in their responses and only wrote *spores released* or *spores released when damp*. All these responses did not score.

For the third option, candidates who did not score wrote wrong prepositions like *on, of, by, from* instead of 'in' and wrote *invaded/inverted* in place of 'embedded'. Other spellings that were wrong, resulting in failure to score, were: *funiture, feniture.*

2. What sickness can be caused by indoor air pollution?

Expected responses:

- asthma
- bronchitis   **(any one)**

Comment: These answers were accessible. However, most candidates were let down by incorrect spelling again. Common responses included**:** *asma***,** *asmar***,** *asmer***,** athsma**,** *bronchaitis***,** *bronchiotis***,** *bronchutis***,** *bronchitize***,** *bronchitice***,** *bronchiatis***.** These responses did not score.

3. What is the advantage of using electricity for cooking?

Expected responses:

- It is environmentally friendly
- It emits less pollution (than gas)   **(any one)**

Comment: This answer was accessible for most candidates. Those who failed to score wrote wrong spellings like: *envaromental***,** *envuromental***,** *enviromentary***,** *freindley***,** *polution***,** *emites***,** *emmites***,** *emittes***.** These resulted in candidates forfeiting the mark.

4. Which <u>word</u> indicates that cleaning products are dangerous?

Expected responses:

- hazardous
- volatile   **(any one)**

Comment: This answer was inaccessible as an average number of candidates scored and an average failed to score a mark. A majority of the candidates who failed to score had challenges with the spelling of 'hazardous' and wrote words like: *hazardars***,** *harzadous***,** *hazardeos***,** *harzardous***,** *hazardeous***,** *hazarders***,** *hazzadous***,** *hazadous***,** *volutile***,** *voletile*. These did not score.

5. What is the ideal procedure for cleaning?

Expected response:

- spray the cleaning product closer to the surface <u>and</u> wipe with a dry cloth
- wipe again with a damp cloth

Comment: This question proved to be challenging for most candidates as they failed to understand the words **ideal** and **procedure**. They simply wrote haphazardly instead of writing the steps accordingly. To score the first mark, they needed to write both spray the cleaning product closer to the surface <u>and</u> wipe with a dry cloth, which they failed to do. They only wrote one, leaving out the other. To score the other mark, they needed to write the second step which they also failed to do. Other answers that failed to score included *spread* instead of 'spray' and *wap, whipe, whap* for 'wipe' *demp, dump, wet* for '**damp**'. Others wrote, *spray the cleaning product* leaving out *closer to the surface.* Some started, *with damp cloth then dry cloth* yet they were supposed to write vice versa. By so doing, they failed to score since what they wrote was not the <u>ideal procedure</u> anymore.

Exercise 5

Candidates were expected to listen to a lecture about comets and then answer the questions that followed.

General comment

This exercise appeared to be the most challenging of all the exercises in this paper. A majority of the candidates in this exercise scored an average mark of 3 out of 7. Most of the candidates were not familiar with the terminology used in the lecture about comets.

1. **What are comets?**
   Expected response: Dirty snowballs (in space)

   Comment: Most candidates could not score because they failed to understand the word 'snowball'. This word seemed to be unfamiliar to the candidates. Hence, they came up with words like *snobbles*, *snopples* etc.

2. **What happens when the sun heats the nucleus?**
   Expected response: causes ice to melt/the dust particles to spread out

   Comment: Most candidates were able to identify the response save for those who came out with *eyes* instead of 'ice'. This clearly indicates that they did not understand the content. In the other aspects of the response, the candidates omitted either 'dust' or 'particles' yet they were key parts of the response.

3. **What is the plasma tail made of?**
   Expected response: made of ionised gas particles (blown away by the solar wind)

   Comment: The question proved to be accessible to most candidates. Some failed to score because they could not spell 'ionised' correctly, most writing *ironised*. Other candidates omitted key elements of the response, for instance either 'gas' or 'particles'.

4. **Why do comets from the Oort cloud take longer to complete an orbit?**

   Expected response: they are from the furth<u>est</u> edge of the solar system (gravitational boundary)

   Comment: This question was a bit challenging to a huge number of candidates. Most failed to write the superlative form of the adjective 'further' i.e. 'furthest'. They also did not get the spelling of 'edge' correctly. Instead, they gave the word 'age' as part of the response.

5. **What are meteoroids?**

   Expected response: Meteoroids are <u>small pieces of rock</u> (less than 10 metres in diameter) <u>that have broken off an asteroid</u>

   Comment: This question was not accessible to most candidates. A majority of them gave only the first part of the response 'meteoroids are small pieces of rock'. However, others failed to score a mark because they wrote the wrong spelling of 'pieces', writing, for instance, '*peaces'*, '*peices'*. Most candidates did not score both marks because they did not write the second part of the response.

6. **What does the phrase 'shooting star' suggest about Meteors?**

   Expected response: they <u>travel quickly through the atmosphere</u>

   Comment: This question was challenging to most candidates. A majority of them were unable to score a mark because they gave an incomplete response, as they did not state the path of the Meteors. The phrase 'through the atmosphere' was key in the response.

Recommendations

- Extensive reading is key as most candidates could hear the answers but failed to write the responses correctly due to poor language skills.
- Learners should be taught inferential skills since when looking at the paper, there is more of listening and then inferring rather than just picking answers.
- Teachers should give constant practise so that learners get used to the listening paper rather than waiting for the exam.
- Grammar and principles of grammar should be also taught in schools.
- Teachers should teach learners how to listen. They should teach the listening skill rather than just making them to listen and then grading their work.
- Teachers should encourage learners to use clear and legible handwriting.
- Candidates should avoid too much cancelling /overwriting.
- Teachers should encourage learners to listen to the introduction of each exercise so that they understand the context.

- Teachers are encouraged to familiarise the learners with the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' strategies when it comes to the listening (Top-down listening uses background knowledge and contextualises words to aid comprehension. Bottom-up listening uses sounds, words, and other small units to create meaning).

- Teachers are encouraged to familiarise the learners with the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'

EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/04

Oral Communication

General Comments

This is a paper that is school-based. That is to say, it is tested and graded by teachers at school level. This year, the overall performance of candidates was above average. Most candidates performed well because of the familiarity of the subject matter in most of the cards. Exposure to the basics of the language proved to be a huge advantage once again. Candidates with a good command of the language seemed to navigate better through the cards. Even though the examination was rather friendly, the performance which could have been very good was lowered by the fact that most Examiners did not accurately adhere to the marking criteria, thus giving learners lower marks than they rightfully deserved.

CARD A – A Special Person was the easiest and most accessible**.** The card proved to be open to all the candidates. It did not discriminate, since every person usually has a special person they can easily talk about. **Card B – Deforestation** was also accessible, as candidates were able to talk about places that were deforested and went to the extent of fully explaining the causes, effects and impacts of deforestation. **Card E – E-Learning** was generally accessible too. Most candidates had experience with e-learning one way or the other and understood the idea. **Card D – Plastic Bag Ban** was the most difficult card to tackle as candidates couldn't quite relate to the regulation that seeks to prohibit the distribution of plastic bags. **Card C – Saving Money** was also quite challenging as most candidates, especially those from the rural areas, expressed lack of the money to save anyway.

Question analysis

Card A – A SPECIAL PERSON

Card A was the most popular of all the five cards. Most candidates who received this card performed exceptionally well. The conversations were quite long and informative. Candidates were at ease to talk about different angles of the most special people in their lives. Many were able to give reasons why each chosen person was special. The candidates were also able to respond to change in direction of conversations, talking about how the special person influences their lives and elaborating on the significant roles the special person plays in society.

Card B – DEFORESTATION

Card B was also accessible. Candidates were able to talk at length about places that were deforested and about the causes of deforestation. Candidates were able to respond relevantly and at length using information from related subjects such as Agriculture and Geography. Most candidates who were given

this card performed well since they displayed vast knowledge on the subject matter. They were thus fluent in conversations. They mentioned development of infrastructure, and many other new developments that led to deforestation in their home areas and around the country.

Card C – SAVING MONEY

At face value, the card seemed accessible, but the candidates had difficulties unpacking the concept of saving money. Non-exposure to the concept affected the general performance. The discriminating factor was that underprivileged candidates do not have the experience of having money to save and they could not come up with strategies to save it. This then affected their ease in the conversations. There also was a slight tendency to change the rubric altogether. Examiners made the question sound like candidates needed to talk about how to make money instead of how to save it. They talked about how to start businesses and how to work extra hard so as to make more money. On the other hand, a portion of the candidates who are exposed to a healthy financial background were able to talk about the importance of saving money. They shared their experiences about saving pocket money, using piggy banks, opening bank accounts and also mentioned *stokvels.* Care should be taken, however, to then loosely translate non-English words like stokvels to standard English language should they be used in the conversation.

Card D – PLASTIC BAG BAN

Card D was least popular and at times misconstrued because on average, candidates swayed to talk about the plastic bags in general rather than the ban. This card proved to be the most difficult card to tackle, even for the examiners. The examiners also had challenges with the card as they failed to lead or prompt candidates towards the right direction. Candidates could not relate much information about plastic ban, let alone give alternative ways to enforce the ban.

Card E – E-LEARNING

Card E was the most popular amongst them all. Most candidates who received this card performed remarkably well. The conversations were quite long and informative on how learners perceived e-learning. Candidates who were given this card were at ease to talk about their personal experiences on e-learning and were able to voice out their opinions and even their observations on e-learning. Candidates seemed to have a very fresh memory of e-learning during the COVID-19 era, which most didn't hesitate to mention. Also, some instances of the political unrest period came up and candidates explained at length how e-learning came to the rescue. While candidates from across the four regions of the country managed to tackle the card well, those from the urban centres had more first-hand information about e-learning, probably because they have more exposure to electronic gadgets. These candidates used the appropriate vocabulary associated with electronic gadgets such as cellphones, laptops, radios, internet, data and the like. Still, candidates from all backgrounds articulated the advantages and challenges very well.

Points of concern regarding examiners

Teachers/Examiners are commended highly for the wonderful work they do in this component. There are some issues that are worth noting though:

- Some examiners did not adhere accurately to the marking criteria, thus giving learners lower marks than they rightfully deserved. Some examiners had challenges with following the marking criteria. They were either too lenient or too severe when awarding marks. Examiners should always refer closely to the marking criteria each time they allocate marks for each candidate.

- In some instances, examiners failed to lead or prompt candidates towards the right direction. They are thus advised to familiarise themselves with the cards before beginning of the exam (three working days before the start of speaking tests at the centre) in order to be able to conduct the tests with ease.

- Also worth noting is that examiners had a tendency to do candidates a disservice by asking them tricky questions, channelling them to their own (the examiners') school of thought.

- 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 that of the teacher-examiner.

- Some examiners dominated the conversations, thus depriving candidates the chance to elaborate and give their own independent viewpoints.

- Some examiners were 'too absent' in conversations, thus causing candidates to make presentations. This works negatively for candidates who fail to elaborate on their own. In **some** cases, the candidates who talked at length on their own, seemed to be reading from somewhere. Please note that such is considered a form of malpractice. It is intended that the conversation elements of speaking tests will be lively and spontaneous and the use of predetermined scripts or presentation of rehearsed content is discouraged. Examiners are strictly advised against malpractice of any form.

CONDUCTING THE ORAL EXAM

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

Part A – Welcome and brief explanation

This is where the examiner is expected to begin the recording by giving the candidate's name and number, then welcome each candidate and give a brief explanation about the whole examination. This was done successfully by most examiners. However, some examiners were inconsistent in a few centres. Some examiners gave the wrong examination numbers or the wrong names to particular candidates. Sometimes they allowed candidates to introduce themselves, 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. One examiner would follow the procedure correctly, while the others would not. Examiners are advised to coordinate their understanding of the Examiner's Notes before conducting the examination so that a common standard is applied for all candidates.

Part B – Warm-up

The Warm-up section was conducted relatively well. Most examiners were able to use the warm-up effectively to put candidates at ease and subsequently choose the appropriate card for them. However, some sessions were conspicuously long while others were shorter than the stipulated 2–3 minutes. Some examiners discussed all the cards or rather the contents of each card in this section, which is discouraged. Examiners are advised to discuss general issues (a few questions about herself/himself, the school, etc.) 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.

Part C - Handing card to candidate

Handing the Assessment Card to the candidate was done well on average. 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 to allow candidate a 2-3 minutes preparation period. 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 - Conversation

This is the main part of the test which is assessed. This year, the conversations showed a great improvement. However, 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 the case of short conversations, it was either because the examiners did not clarify the prompts for the candidates as they would stick rigidly to the given prompts or those particular candidates had difficulty in expressing themselves. In some instances, the conversations were shortened by the fact that some examiners 'distanced themselves' and were quiet the whole time, so candidates had difficulty in elaborating on their own without the proper assistance.

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 expressing their views without the examiner's guidance. 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.

Centres are urged to listen to the recordings of these conversations, ensure all are transferred to a CD and create a back-up before submitting to ECESWA.

Paperwork

This year, examiners did a wonderful job as mistakes were very minimal. However, there were some challenges encountered which included the following:

- Using a pencil when filling in the summary form – always use ink.
- Wrong addition 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.
- Some centres did not write the numerical scores on MS1 Form but only did the shading. On the other hand, other centres did not shade the zeros for scores like 10, 20 and 30.
- Absent candidates were not marked appropriately in the Attendance Registers and MS1 Form – always make sure that absent candidates are marked appropriately, do not leave blank spaces. Read instructions and/or follow the prompts given on these documents.
- For candidates that have been repeated, Examiners should enter marks next to the candidate number that has finally been used by the candidate for all the other English Language components. After this, write and shade **'A'** (for Absent) on the repeated, unused candidate number in the MS1 form.
- For candidates not listed on the MS1 Form, Examiners should use the supplementary forms provided by ECESWA to record candidates' marks, following the instructions outlined at the back of the forms.
- Always submit the original Attendance Register to ECESWA. 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
  - properly filled-in MS1 form (in which only an **HB pencil** has been used, and it has been signed by the examiner). The MS1 Form must have numerical scores transferred correctly from the Summary Form and shaded appropriately and neatly. In addition, please submit the **MS1 unlisted page** even if there are no candidates that have been added.

- a CD with all recorded conversations (check if all candidates appear, unless they were absent and are marked a such in all the accompanying paperwork).

Recorded CDs

Generally, recording of conversations 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 and also ensure that every candidate is clearly audible.
- Some centres submitted empty CDs – Examiners are advised to 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 – Centres are urged to 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. Sometimes it was the Examiner's cellphone that interrupted. Please keep cellphones away and find a quieter room for conducting the exam.
- For a few centres, the recording was just one long file for all the candidates. Centres are urged to create separate files for each candidate, this should be well labelled with candidates' examination numbers and names. This helps for easy identification and to show that all candidates are present in the recording.
- Examiners are advised to arrange candidates in the CDs in the order in which they appear in the Attendance Register.

Conversations

There was also a great improvement in this section, except for only a few instances as compared to the previous years. These included some of the following:

- Indicating candidate number and name was not consistent in some centres.
- In some centres, explanation of the exam procedure was not done the same way for 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 for all the candidates.
- Some warm-up sections were rather too long, resulting to the main part of the exam being short yet it, being the graded part, should not be compromised in terms of length.
- Some examiners conducted the oral exam as if it was a question-and-answer session, or a presentation yet it is supposed to be a conversation. In some instances, a candidate would start

talking from the first bullet to the last, without the examiner's prompting or intervention which then sounded like a rehearsed presentation.

- Examiners are encouraged to ask 'open' questions which allow candidates to respond at length and 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 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.

- Most importantly, Examiners are encouraged to read and follow the guide stipulated in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes. Furthermore, to conduct oral tests effectively, good examiners should familiarise themselves with the oral test before the test is conducted.

Conclusion

Examiners are applauded for the splendid work done in the 2023 English Language Oral Examination. Nevertheless, examiners are encouraged to uphold the spirit of working as a team whilst preparing the candidates and conducting the exam together. Centres must ensure that their recording equipment is in good condition and also check audibility levels before recording begins. Moreover, centres that have two or more examiners are advised to conduct internal workshops beforehand so that a common standard is applied for all candidates when awarding marks. They should first coordinate their understanding of the marking criteria beforehand, to reach common ground.

Last but not least, examiners are encouraged to seek advice from ECESWA every time they face internal problems when conducting the exam.

In instances where there are candidates who need special consideration, centres are advised to communicate with ECESWA, BEFORE the exams begin.

Recommendations

- Teachers should continue teaching grammar to help learners with the **Structure** category.
- Teach and expose learners to extensive reading. This could be good foundation for improving the **Vocabulary** category.

- Give learners more practice on speaking in the classroom setting. This will give them more exposure, boost their confidence and help them get familiar with expressing themselves freely.
- Discourage learners from giving one-word answers in conversations, but rather, encourage elaborations with convincing reasons and examples where appropriate.

- Give learners more practice on speaking in the classroom setting.