



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI
Eswatini Primary Certificate Education

English Language (111)
Examination Report for 2023

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General Comments

The paper is made of three sections. The first is the compulsory situational letter; part two has three compositions from which the candidates select one and the final part is practical writing.

As in the previous year, the overall performance in 2023 was relatively satisfactory. An improvement was observed in some aspects whilst some major setbacks in some could not be ignored. The improvement could be attributed to full comprehension and proper analysis of questions yet the decline could be hugely connected to lack of reading and writing skills. Blatantly irrelevant responses and total disregard of what the questions entailed contributed to candidates getting low grades. Lack of proper language proficiency also produced confusing and hard to understand pieces of writing. Educators' dedication and commitment was observed through good pieces of writing from candidates and is commended.

PART ONE: LETTER WRITING

This was a compulsory question worth sixteen marks: eight marks for content and the other eight for language.

Good grades were obtained by candidates who were able to read and unpack the given scenario and attempted the task fully whilst the not so satisfactory marks were obtained by candidates who attempted part of the question. Candidates who performed below average were those who completely ignored the given task hence providing blatantly irrelevant pieces of work.

Question

You recently entered an essay competition through your grandmother's encouragement. You have just received the good news that you won a laptop and a smartphone from the writing competition.

Write a letter to your grandmother and tell her about the great news. Say what you will do with the prizes and how your school work will benefit from these.

Expectations

This was an informal/friendly letter to be addressed to a grandmother. Candidates had to write a letter to a grandmother and tell her about the good news of winning a laptop and a smartphone from the writing competition which the grandmother had encouraged the candidate to join. They were to further state what they would do with the prizes won and how these gadgets would benefit their school work.

A majority of the candidates did exceptionally well in fulfilling the given task thus scoring high marks. An awesome display of creativity and excellent language proficiency led to beautiful pieces which impressed the examiners and credit was given where it was due. Candidates displayed their familiarity with the gadgets and a clear understanding of their uses was observed. For instance, they mentioned that having these devices would help them join online classes on Zoom, form study groups on WhatsApp, download past exam papers, communicate with their teachers about school work, to name a few. This showed that candidates were used to the technological devices.

On the other hand, some candidates attempted one part of the question thus scoring average marks. For example, some would only appreciate their grandmother's encouragement, state what they won and leave out how these gadgets would benefit their school work. Also, some candidates did not fully show comprehension of the task as they failed to state the benefit of the gadget towards their schoolwork. Instead, they would mention how these gadgets would benefit the school in general e.g.:

'Teachers will now be able to write tests using the laptop.' This indicated a lack of understanding of the question since the expectation was for the candidate to state how the devices would benefit them. This showed the inability to unpack a question well when the benefit became one for the school instead of the winner. Some would write about winning in a competition unrelated to an essay writing competition. For example, some would write about winning in a soccer, netball, dancing, music competition etc. In other instances, candidates would write to the grandmother and ask her to buy them the gadgets. This led to them obtaining very low marks.

PART TWO: COMPOSITION WRITING

This section had three questions from three types of compositions namely: the descriptive, narrative and the expository/informative. Candidates had to attempt only one and each piece of continuous creative writing was worth twenty marks: ten marks for content, relevance and development whilst the other ten was for language, style and accuracy.

Question 1

Describe a time when you met someone famous whom you have always admired.

Candidates were expected to describe a time when they met someone famous whom they had always admired. They were to explicitly describe the moment when they met this famous admired person.

This was a descriptive composition whereby candidates had to paint a vivid picture of what happened during the time they met the famous person. A descriptive piece of writing has more descriptive words which aid the arousal of all the senses, hence they had to use emotions correlating with meeting a person you have always admired.

A majority of the candidates who chose this question wrote creative masterpieces with an exceptional display of imagination, creativity and language style. They were able to identify their celebrities, described how, where, and what transpired, painting a picture of their emotional moment using relevant descriptive words. Language and style was exceptional with descriptive words and figurative language use such as "I just bumped into...", "I couldn't believe my eyes...", "I turned around and there she was right in front of me!", "words failed me..." The candidates showed that they interacted with their idols by way of taking pictures as souvenirs and asking them to sign autographs.

However, some candidates missed the important aspect of the instruction and ended up describing the physical appearance of the admired person instead of describing the moment of meeting the person. Some would describe meeting more than one person whilst others described meeting their famous person on television. This resulted in them producing unsatisfactory pieces of writing thus scoring very low marks. This showed lack of comprehension of the given task.

Question 2

The most exciting thing happened at a surprise party you attended. Write a story about what happened.

This was a narrative type of continuous writing. Candidates were expected to narrate a story and show all its elements such as setting, plot, characters, dramatic elements to name a few. The use of the right tense was also significant.

The expectation was that candidates had to narrate a story about the most exciting thing that happened at a surprise party they attended. The question was generally well answered. A majority of candidates who chose this question gave impressive pieces of writing with an excellent display of creativity, imagination and language style. All the elements of a story were brought out captivating the examiners'

attention. They displayed a clear understanding of a surprise as they were able to recount how the party was secretly prepared, bringing out the exciting thing that happened. This enabled them to score highly since they displayed a clear comprehension of the task.

On the other hand, some candidates could not attempt all the parts of the given task. They simply wrote a story about a surprise party they attended, leaving out the exciting thing that happened at the party. This compromised their marks because they failed to attempt the task fully. In some instances, some candidates missed the 'surprise' part of the task as they would narrate a story of a party which was known by everyone. This showed lack of understanding of a surprise. For some, the exciting thing that happened at the party would be the common. For instance, to some, the food, the cake would be the most exciting thing with no display of the 'out of the ordinary' about it. Though they were not penalised, it made their work mundane as compared to those who would show the exciting thing exhilarating, such as seeing the party boy or girl being presented with a car or a celebrity gracing the event.

It was also common for some candidates who missed understanding the question well to bring out horrific scenes of the party as exciting things that happened. For example, some would take fights, murders, sexual assaults that happened at the party as the exciting things. This indicated their lack of understanding of the word 'exciting' emanating from lack of exposure to extensive reading which limits their pool of vocabulary. This disadvantaged them since they could not score high marks compared to those who were competent in the language.

Of note, some candidates would just narrate a story about a party they attended ignoring that it was supposed to be a surprise party with exciting episodes. There were also instances where candidates wrote blatantly irrelevant stories. Some would write about a trip they had at school, this resulted in a loss of marks.

Question 3

Many parts of the world are losing natural resources (forests, clean water, animals, soil, etc.) Discuss how one of the resources is important and how it can be saved.

This was an informative/ expository type of writing which was supposed to be factual. Candidates were expected to write about only one natural resource from the given, stating its importance and how it could be saved.

A majority of candidates who chose this question with a clear understanding of its requirements, gave brilliant pieces of informative writing. They picked one natural resource and outlined its importance and how it could be conserved. This made them score high marks. Excellent informative responses were given on the importance of forests and how they could be saved incorporating knowledge gained from other subjects like social studies and science e.g.: 'Forests are one natural resource which provides oxygen needed by all humans. If we cut down trees, the carbon dioxide we exhale will go into the atmosphere and destroy the ozone layer. When that happens, we experience extreme temperatures which have an effect on our skin, resulting in skin cancer.'

However, some candidates performed below average because they could not unpack the question well. These candidates wrote about more than one natural resource yet the question needed them to choose one. This disadvantaged them in that they could not adequately elaborate on one, hence they scored low marks. Some would attempt part of the question, such as giving the importance of the natural resource chosen leaving out how it could be saved. This had a negative effect on their scores.

There were also cases of candidates who would write about human activities that lead to loss of natural resources. For example, they would write about people who cut down trees which causes soil erosion instead of showing the importance of trees which could be the provision of medicine, a wildlife habitat to name a few, hence marks were lost.

PART THREE: PRACTICAL WRITING

You went on a trip to a beautiful, memorable place.

Draw a poster and advertise the place to tourists.

Remember to include the following:

- Name of the place and where it is found
- Services offered there/things to see or do
- Contact numbers/ details for bookings and questions

Expectations

Candidates were expected to draw a poster neatly and advertise a place they have visited to tourists. They were to show an enhanced border, relevant content as per the given clues, a good title and relevant drawings to enhance the message.

This section was exceptionally done by a majority of the candidates. Posters were creatively crafted showing a clear understanding of content and ease of style in their artwork. Candidates proved they had vast exposure to places of interest and entertainment locally that could be explored by tourists. This showed through their responses on the services offered at these memorable places. It showed they knew the places well. Most were able to respond well to all the parts of the task, going an extra mile to give email addresses, Facebook or Twitter accounts for contact details. This showed that candidates were familiar with the different communication modes.

However, there were other candidates who drew post cards instead of posters. This might have been because they had only been exposed to the post card during teaching and learning period in their schools. Educators are encouraged to expose candidates to all the different forms of practical writing.

It is also worth mentioning that some candidates could not respond relevantly to the task. They drew invitation cards or posters advertising an event or a shop which made them lose marks. This calls for educators to teach candidates the skill of analysing questions as the lack of this skill has an adverse effect on their overall performance. Very few cases were noted where candidates could not attempt this part probably due to poor time management.

Language Usage

Below is a list of common noted errors.

- Use of wrong tenses
- Improper punctuation
- Poor sentence (including sentence fragments) and paragraph construction
- Use of nouns and pronouns at the same time e.g.
*grandmother **she*** and *people **they***
- Spelling mistakes even for words found in the question stem e.g.
competion for competition
leptop for laptop,
surpice party for surprise party
- Wrong use of connectives or none use.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the candidates performed fairly well. However, it has been noted with great concern that, of late, some candidates do not attempt the compositions part which hugely affect their overall mark in this paper. Also, great effort should be channelled towards intertwining competency, language proficiency and creativity during the teaching and learning period. Lack of comprehension, purpose, appropriate register and audience is still evident in some responses. Proper planning before an attempt, could assist candidates to write well developed pieces. An observation has been noted on below average pieces showing lack of expression in the second language.

Therefore, the following is recommended.

- Reading and writing skill to be improved
- Planning and brainstorming must be developed as a culture during learning.
- Grammar to be taught within context
- Time management to be practised
- Creativity and imagination should be encouraged.
- All parts of the paper should be given the significance they deserve during teaching and learning time.

Paper 111/02

This paper is made of three sections: Part 1: Listening Comprehension, Part 2: Reading Comprehension and Part 3: Dialogue. Its purpose is to test listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills (dialogue) and writing skills. Candidates are required to respond to literal questions, inferential questions, and evaluative questions. It also has questions that need one-word answers, phrases, and short sentences. A large number of candidates showed a satisfactory performance. A notable number of candidates had challenges with all 3 parts of the paper. Most candidates struggled with having enough vocabulary in the English language, grammar, spelling, and punctuation in almost all the parts of the paper. This resulted in them losing more marks. More candidates failed to adhere to the set of instructions given, thus losing marks. Some had a tendency of writing long winding sentences which later distorted the sense of the answers. At times, candidates failed to respond precisely to questions asked.

The performance on this paper was fair, even though some candidates lacked confidence in expressing themselves. The performance was also affected by:

- Lack of understanding of questions
- Incomplete answers
- Missing key words in questions
- Leaving out key information from answers
- Failure to comply with the rubric
- Failure to comprehend the texts
- Writing long sentences which ended up distorting the meaning.
- Failure to respond well to higher order questions.
- Grammatical errors such as using wrong tenses, wrong subject verb agreement, incorrect use of pronouns, wrong prepositions, wrong punctuation, spelling mistakes etc.

Comments on specific questions

This section of the report gives an analysis of the performance of candidates in each question of the question paper.

Part 1: Listening Comprehension

In this section, candidates performed well. However, a handful of them gave wrong responses resulting in them getting fewer marks.

In questions 4, 6, 7 and 8 candidates gave the desired responses that were expected whereas questions in 1, 2, 3, 5 and 9, candidates struggled to give correct responses.

QUESTION 1

Where are house sparrows usually found?

Most candidates could not give the correct answer for this question as they gave a generalised response about sparrows instead of house sparrows.

Expected response: in or around human settlements.

QUESTION 2

Mention two places where you won't find house sparrows?

Most candidates did not perform well in this question as they omitted /-s/ in their answers to make the nouns plural. The omission of the /-s/ changed the whole meaning of the answer. Candidates gave woodland, forest and grassland without the /-s/ at the end of each noun.

Expected response: Woodlands/forests/grasslands

QUESTION 3

Where in cities do house sparrows like to build their nests? Give one example.

Most candidates forfeited a mark in this question due to incorrect spelling. For example, instead of corners, some wrote 'conar' whilst some wrote 'holls' instead of holes.

Expected responses: in corners of buildings/roofs/holes

QUESTION 4

Give two materials used by house sparrows to build their nests.

A majority of the candidates gave correct answers. However, a notable number of candidates struggled with writing correct spellings e.g. writing 'twiks' instead of twigs.

Expected responses: twigs/grasses/plant fibre

QUESTION 5

What food do house sparrows eat mostly? Give two details.

Most candidates gave the desired answer in this question but omitted the -s to make the nouns plurals which made the answer wrong. Instead of grains, candidates wrote grain and instead of seeds they wrote seed.

Expected responses: grains/ seeds/ discarded food.

QUESTION 6

How long do house sparrows' eggs take to hatch?

Most candidates performed well in this question except for a few who wrote only the number without 'days'.

Expected response: 11-14 days.

QUESTION 7

Fill in the correct missing words as used in the passage.

Sparrow bathing is.....with up to.....birds participating at once and is accompanied by group singing.

This question was fairly done by candidates. However, some didn't get the desired marks because of wrong spellings. For example, they wrote words like 'socail', 'socially', and 'socaily'.

Expected response: sparrow bathing is **social** with up to **100** birds participating at once and is accompanied by group singing.

QUESTION 8

Name two hunters of house sparrows.

This question was well done by most learners. However, a handful of candidates did not get the correct answer as they used general knowledge instead of using information from the passage.

Expected responses: domestic cats/hawks/humans.

QUESTION 9

Would you like house sparrows to live and build their nests in your home? Why?

Most candidates got this question correct. However, some candidates would take a stand but fail to give a valid or relevant support thus getting one mark instead of two.

Expected responses: Candidates' own responses. They were expected to take a stand (yes/no) then explain why e.g.: Yes, because I love birds and their singing is not noise but melody to me or:
No, because their noise can be irritating.

PART 2: READING COMPREHENSION

This section was done well by most candidates who had good comprehension of the passage. Some candidates displayed lack of understanding which is fundamental in this section. Lack of awareness on the types of questions also affected the candidates' performance adversely.

Questions 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 were well answered by most candidates. Most challenging questions were 2, 3, 6, and 11.

QUESTION 1

Where is the largest desert in the world?

Most learners were able to spot the answer from the passage. However, a handful of them gave Northern America as the answer. Some wrote wrong spellings of the desired answer.

Expected response: Northern Africa

QUESTION 2

How big is the Sahara Desert?

Most candidates gave a correct response for this question, but some omitted the word 'about' which was key in the answer. Some were giving units which were not mentioned in the passage such as kilograms.

Expected response: about 9 million square kilometres.

QUESTION 3

Why is it surprising that the Sahara is home to many strange animals?

This question was not done well by the candidates as they were unable to pick the correct answer from the text instead candidates wrote it is because they (animals) were able to adapt to the desert environment.

Expected response: it is a **dry** and **hot** place

QUESTION 4

Which two desert conditions does wildlife in the Sahara need to adapt to?

Most candidates attempted this question very well. They were able to identify the conditions that wildlife needs to adapt to.

Expected response: severe winds/extreme heat/wide temperature changes

QUESTION 5

What happens to animals that are unable to adapt to the Sahara conditions?

This question was generally well answered by most candidates except for a few who wrote 'died' or 'death'.

Expected response: they die out

QUESTION 6

How is a sandfish skink's behaviour different from that of a fish?

Candidates could not answer this question correctly as they were unable to compare a sandfish skink and a fish. Instead, they gave one side of the answer where they described the sandfish skink's behaviour without comparing it to that of a fish.

Expected response: sandfish skink swims in the sand while a fish swims in water/the sandfish skink behaves just like a fish except that instead of in water, it swims through the sand.

QUESTION 7

What is the main source of survival for the desert shrimp?

A majority of candidates struggled with this question and were giving wrong responses. They could not identify the main source of survival for the desert shrimp, or they would give an incomplete answer, hence losing the mark.

Expected response: pools of water from desert rainstorms

QUESTION 8

Why is the camel the ‘horse of the desert’?

Most candidates gave a correct response to this question.

Expected response: helps travellers across the desert carrying heavy loads.

QUESTION 9

What two features make the camel the perfect ‘horse of the desert’?

This question was generally well answered by the candidates.

Expected responses: big, strong

QUESTION 10

Explain in your own words why the camel is able to survive for days without drinking water?

Most candidates could identify the answer from the text, and they performed well in this question.

Expected response: it can drink up 118 litres of water a day/it can move for up to five or seven days without water.

QUESTION 11

How does the size of the camel’s hump change?

A majority of candidates were unable to give a correct answer as they gave part of it, hence losing the mark. Some wrote ‘it becomes small’ whilst others wrote ‘it becomes smaller’ leaving out the other required part of the answer (as the camel consumes the fats stored in it).

Expected response: becomes smaller as the camel consumes the fats stored in it.

QUESTION 12

Mention two plants that grow and survive in the Sahara Desert.

A majority of candidates were able to pick the answers from the text hence this question was generally well done.

Expected response: date palms and acacia

QUESTION 13

Would you like to live in the desert? Why?

A majority of learners were able to take a stand and support it fully using information what they had learnt from the passage. A few didn’t take a stand but just gave a supporting statement thus losing marks.

Expected response: Candidates' own responses. They were expected to take a stand (yes/no) then explain why e.g.:

Yes, because I want to explore desert life and have an experience of living there.

No, because it is hot and dry, and I don't think I can stand the harsh desert conditions.

14. LANGUAGE USAGE

Rewrite the following sentences and fill in the blanks with the past continuous form of the verb in brackets.

- i. The dogs (bark) all night.
- ii. The children (play) hide and seek in the park.
- iii. The gardener (water) the lawn.
- iv. Thando (listen) to rock music.
- v. The birds (fly) in the sky.

This question was not done well by the candidates. Only a few were able to write the sentences using the past continuous tense. Common answers by the candidates had the past tense instead of the past continuous tense. A handful of candidates did not understand the instruction to rewrite the sentences and to fill in the blanks with the past continuous tense (form). Some candidates would just underline certain parts of the original sentences without rewriting the sentences.

The expected responses were as follows:

- i) The dogs **were barking** all night.
- ii) The children **were playing** hide and seek in the park.
- iii) The gardener **was watering** the lawn.
- iv) Thando **was listening** to rock music.
- v) The birds **were flying** in the sky.

Part 3: Dialogue

This dialogue was free style. Candidates were expected to portray their understanding of the information about the Sahara Desert as outlined in the reading passage. They were expected to show their creativity but still be relevant to the subject. Candidates were expected to write a dialogue which showed that they indeed understood the context and the content of what they were writing about. Coherence and cohesion were very important when crafting this dialogue. Candidates were expected to display that they knew who their audience was, which would then help them choose the right language for this dialogue. Most candidates were able to write good dialogues with reasonable content but were let down by their language which continually made the meaning to be doubtful. A handful picked sentences direct from the passage and were unable to converse which let them down in terms of getting marks.

Expected response: example of a dialogue

Two pupils, Lungelo and Bayanda, are sitting together at lunchtime, and they are talking about what they learnt during an English lesson in the morning.

Lungelo: Learning about the Sahara desert today was fascinating. It really helped me understand that there is life in the desert although it seems tough for animals living there.

Bayanda: It really was fascinating friend. I had never thought life existed in the desert. In fact, I only imagined deserts as lifeless places.

Lungelo: Me too friend. I had always thought the same as you. But here we are today being told that different plants and animals survive there.

Bayanda: Yeah, pal. But I felt pity for the desert shrimp which has a very short life span of about 2 weeks. Can you imagine being roasted in the sun until you die? It should be painful, don't you think?

Lungelo: Don't even mention that friend. I can imagine its happiness when a desert rainstorm is imminent. I'm sure its happiness becomes evident.

Bayanda: Indeed, it does my friend. But I loved the camel being the 'horse of the desert'. Who would have thought that there could be an animal that drinks about 118 litres of water at once? Amazing!

Lungelo: It is indeed amazing friend. We also learnt that the camel can go for days without drinking water, carrying its own portable tank. It sounds so unreal, but it is what it is. Well, bye friend.

Recommendations

- Reading should form a great part of English language teaching so that pupils are familiar with all types of texts.
- Pupils should be exposed to all parts (sections) of the paper and the expectations of each should be communicated.
- Teachers need to teach pupils listening skills so that they can be able to listen with reason (purpose) in the listening comprehension part. The responses given showed that learners were not taught how to listen. Teachers are asked to teach listening comprehension and not to assume that it is easy.
- Teachers need to teach reading comprehension using reading strategies and skills. This can help pupils to understand what and why they are reading. Lack of reading skills on the part of the candidates made it very difficult for them to comprehend the reading passage.
- Question analysis should be taught to help pupils understand tasks given in exams. Moreover, learners should be taught the different types of questions and how to answer them. The different

types of questions include literal questions, inferential questions and evaluative questions. At least learners should be able to identify these different types of questions. This will help them be able to identify from the passage an answer relevant to the question asked.

- Teachers must teach grammar as this plays a major role in the development of the pupils' English language.
- Teachers should teach dialogue properly so that the candidates can be able to differentiate between the free-style and the guided dialogue and emphasise on the rules of writing a proper and a good dialogue. Emphasise that a dialogue should have cohesion and coherence and it must have a conversational tone.
- Train the learners so that that they are able to recognize key words in a question which will guide them in presenting relevant responses. Teachers should also teach English lessons in the English language and also encourage the learners to communicate in English. It would help to hold debates frequently, encourage pupils to dramatise stories they have read and encourage them to read story books and any reading material written in English.
- It is also important to teach phonics so that the learners can appropriately capture spoken words especially during listening comprehension activities. Moreover, avoid using slang language when teaching because it does influence the candidates' vocabulary.
- Teachers should not be lenient on issues of spelling, grammar during teaching and learning.
- Finally, teach pupils to read and listen to instructions. Always emphasise on the importance of adhering to all instructions given.