



# **EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI**

Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education

## **English Language (6873)**

**Examination Report for 2024**

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## EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 6873/01

Reading and Writing

**General Comments**

The total number of registered candidates was 18872, which showed an increase compared to 2023 where there were 17761 candidates. Overall, the paper proved to be easier for most candidates compared to last year's paper. 2024 saw the highest score being 43 out of 50 and the lowest score being 04 out of 50.

**Comments on specific questions****Exercise 1**

Generally, most questions were accessible to most candidates but there were a few questions which proved to be difficult for most candidates.

**(a) What did Teresa Burnes find surprising about the next man in line that Christmas morning?**

**Expected response:** It was her long-lost brother/it was the man she had searched long and hard for, for the past 13 years.

**Comment**

The question was accessible to most candidates and candidates who did not score on this one were misled by the verb, 'astonished' in the text which was the synonym of the key word in the question, 'surprised.' They failed to note, 'at closer inspection' which was what was supposed to lead them to what surprised Teresa-seeing the man she had searched long and hard for-her long lost brother. Such candidates lost marks for picking the next sentence after, 'astonished'- 'standing opposite her, was a rugged scruffy-looking old man', which was not the correct answer.

**(b) What act of kindness did Teresa do?**

**Expected response:** She worked with Lend a Hand Charity/she did voluntary work.

**Comment**

The question was accessible to most candidates, except to a few who failed to present the response as an act of kindness but rather wrote the name of the charity organisation Teresa volunteered at.

**(c) Why does Teresa liken her meeting with her brother to a happy ending on TV? Give two details.**

**Expected response:**

- It was dramatic
- It was unbelievable/it was surreal/it was unexpected

**Comment**

This question proved to be difficult for most candidates as they could not figure out the comparison between what happened to Teresa and her brother, and happy endings on TV. Thus, most candidates gave Teresa and Tony's feelings and reactions when the two met. Common wrong responses were: 'he gave her a hug and she cried so much', 'she was speechless.' Candidates were unable to comprehend the dramatic aspect as well as the twist in the end which makes what happened when the two met unbelievable.

**(d) What two things that Tony did showed his emotions at the reunion?****Expected responses:**

- he gave her a big hug
- he just broke down/sobbing uncontrollably

**Comment**

Most candidates scored one mark on this one since their responses were incomplete. They were only able to give one emotion that was used with the key word in the text, 'just broke down, sobbing uncontrollably' as the two things that Tony did, when actually this was one response, with each being the synonym of the other. They failed to identify, 'gave her a big hug,' as the other emotion. A few candidates lost even that one mark for confusing the pronoun; 'she' with 'he' yet the question was related to Tony.

**(e) Explain the following phrase: 'without a trace' (paragraph 3)**

**Expected response:** Never to be seen/without a trail/without a clue or indication about his whereabouts/without leaving any signs to show where he went/leaving no evidence to help find him/disappeared into thin air.

**Comment**

This was the most challenging question for most candidates as they failed to explain the figurative expression. They gave responses like; 'he did not tell anyone where he was going', 'he disappeared without anyone knowing' when actually, the focus was supposed to be on not leaving a clue which the family could use to find him after he had gone.

**(f) What made it difficult for Teresa to find her brother?**

**Expected response:** The number of homeless people was too high/the high numbers of homeless people seemed stacked against ever finding Tony.

**Comment**

Only a few candidates scored on this one. Most of the candidates failed to associate, 'difficult' with the words, 'stacked against' in the text which were supposed to lead them to the correct response. Thus, they gave wrong responses like; 'Tony had a history of going off from when he was a teenager' or 'the last time they had seen each other was on Christmas of 2005.' Other candidates tried to pick

the response as it is from the text, but they did not score because they omitted important information for the answer to score and gave the following incomplete response; ‘even the high numbers of homeless people seemed to be stacked’, leaving out the important information, ‘against ever finding Tony.’

**(d) What overwhelmed Tony when he got home? Give two details.**

**Expected response:**

- Familiar surroundings (that brought back fond memories)
- Being accepted back into the family

**Comment**

The question was accessible to most candidates except for a few candidates who were careless and substituted, ‘familiar’ with ‘family’ which distorted the whole response. Other wrong responses were: ‘his first home cooked meal in 13 years’, ‘shepherd pie’, ‘baked beans’.

**(e) Give four things that Teresa did to reunite with her brother.**

**Expected responses:**

1. Looked at every homeless person’s face
2. Contacted police
3. Contacted all the missing person’s charities
4. Put up missing persons’ notices on all community notice boards
5. Checked with the police whenever she heard about missing people found/checked out on missing people found (any 4)

**Comment**

This was the most accessible question for candidates even though a few of them confused, ‘reunite’ with reviving the bond between Teresa and Tony. So, they gave responses like; ‘assisted him to find his new home’, ‘she does not want to go through the trauma of losing him again.’ Other candidates lost marks because of negligence as they substituted, ‘contacted’ with ‘contracted’ in points 2 and 3. Another cause for loss of marks was omission as candidates left out key words in the responses such as, ‘community’ and ‘notice’ in point 4 and ‘found’ in point 5.

**Exercise 2**

This question proved to be accessible to most candidates as most of them scored maximum marks with a few candidates getting less than 6 marks.

**Expected responses:**

**Ways to enhance EPOC**

1. weight training/lifting weights
2. high intensity exercise (followed by prolonged rest)
3. full body exercise (that work all major muscle groups)

**Advantages of downloaded programmes**

4. voice-over exercises
5. tutorials
6. handy count down alerts

**Role of protein in the body**

7. reducing hunger
8. boosting metabolism

**Comment**

Candidates who lost marks in this question did so because of writing all the points under a given subheading in one of the spaces provided or giving an option for those points that had options as a separate point. Other candidates did not score because of starting with 'voice-over', in all the points under subheading number 2-'voice-over exercises', 'voice-over tutorials', 'voice-over handy count down alerts.'

**Exercise 3**

Most candidates scored the maximum mark on this question, demonstrating its accessibility to most candidates, with a very few candidates who did not perform so well.

**Expected responses:**

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

**Comment**

Candidates who could not score the total mark were unable to identify the most suitable synonym for the key words in (c), 'did not bother to keep their hair in good condition', as 'due to my lack of attention to it', resulting in them picking A which was not the best answer. There were also a very few candidates who gave the responses in the lower case instead of the upper case.

**Exercise 4**

Generally, a few questions (c, d and e) proved to be inaccessible for most candidates and most candidates did well on this question compared to other years since the syllabus changed. However, there are still a few cases of candidates who do not attempt this exercise at all.

**(a) Give two feelings bird watching brings.**

**Expected responses:** Freedom/tranquillity/peace/calmness (any two)

**Comment**

This question proved to be accessible to most candidates, except for a few who gave feelings that are not stated in the text. Wrong responses included, 'rewarding', and 'happiness.'

**(b) What sounds seem welcoming to the writer?**

**Expected response:** Chirps and chatters

**Comment**

The question was accessible to most candidates save for a few who chose to write the actual sounds made by birds, such as, 'skrr-skrr' ignoring the key word, 'welcoming' which was meant to lead them to the answer in paragraph 1. Other candidates did not notice that the key word, 'sounds' was in the plural form which meant that the question required more than one sound and they gave, 'melody' as the answer which was incorrect. A few candidates also could not score because of misspelling the word, 'chirps', writing, 'chips' and other words which had nothing to do with, 'chirps.'

**(c) What picture is created by the expression '...rays of the sun peeping through the canopy'?**

**Expected response:**

- Sun trying to shine through/ sun penetrating through
- thick bush/thick leaves

**Comment**

The question proved to be difficult for most candidates who were not giving the meaning of the expression in the context but trying to give the figurative meaning of the expression. They gave responses such as, 'a beautiful picture of the sun in the forest', 'a bright new day' or 'a beautiful morning.' Most of them could not find the meaning of 'canopy' or 'creeping' in the context. Some even thought it was the canopy of a car rather than that of trees. It was rare to find a candidate scoring the full marks or one mark.

**(d) What made the writer sneak his way through the shrubs and bushes?**

**Expected response:** He did not want to make noise and disturb the birds.

**Comment**

Only very few candidates were able to access this question. The writer's choice of words confused them and they failed to associate the meaning of sneaking with the reason why the writer would sneak instead of just walking normally. The question required candidates to deduce the implication for sneaking or find the answer by reading between the lines instead of picking information from the text. Most candidates gave, 'more determined to see' as the answer which was too obvious for a question requiring implied meaning.

**(e) Explain the following phrases as they are used in the passage:**

- (i) 'The Barbet's cries were deceiving' (paragraph 2)

**Expected response:** The sound the birds made was misleading

**Comment**

Most candidates failed to explain the expression using suitable synonyms or meanings of the key word, 'deceiving' in the context. The common wrong response was the expression found immediately after the word, 'deceiving' in the text, 'making it seem like the bird was all over the place.'

- (ii) 'perched on a twig' (paragraph 2)

**Expected response:** Sat/stood/rested (high up) on a twig/small branch of a tree.

**Comment**

Common wrong responses included, 'placed' for 'perched' and 'log', 'wood' and 'stick' for 'twig' or 'branch' without qualifying it with 'small'

**(f) How do we know that the waterfall edge is home to the Bald Ibis? Give two details**

**Expected responses:**

- (i) They fly lazily about  
(ii) They nest cosily in the cliffs

**Comment**

Most candidates scored total marks on this question, except for those who failed to utilise the spaces provided accordingly. These candidates squeezed both correct responses on one of the spaces provided and wrote incorrect responses for the second answer thus scoring only one mark. Other candidates lost marks because of not attending to the 'how' part of the question by omitting key words in the responses like, 'lazily' or 'about' for the first answer and 'cosily' or 'cliffs' for the second response. In the second response, a few candidates did not score because of writing the wrong spelling of 'nests', substituting the word with 'nets.'



**(g) How are birds good for one's health?**

**Expected response:** Spending time and energy finding and observing birds/watching birds/bird watching is great therapy for physical, mental and emotional health.

**Comment**

This was a higher-order question and most candidates failed to respond correctly to the key word, 'how?' They failed to understand in their question analysis that it's not just birds that are good for one's health but bird watching-which answers the 'how' part of the question. Most of them gave the incomplete response, 'they are a great therapy for physical, mental and emotional health.' Other candidates lost marks for omitting one of the following important aspects; 'physical, mental and emotional', and for writing the wrong spelling of 'mental', substituting it with the word, 'metal' even after finding the correct response.

**Exercise 5**

Read the following passage on safety features in cars and write a summary of the disadvantages of these features.

**Expected responses:****Disadvantages of safety features in cars**

1. They do not work if not used correctly/ without the use of others
2. Airbags cannot function without seatbelts
3. Airbags can collide with the driver at 300km per hour
4. ACC encourages speeding, resulting in fatal crashes
5. Not all AEB systems are equal, some work at only low speeds in some cars and all speeds in others
6. AEB's newness can make it an unreliable safety feature if you do not know how it works
7. Autonomous driving may be impossible with unclear road markings/Autonomous driving is dependent on clear road markings
8. Sensors in Autonomous driving can pick up non-hazardous objects, forcing a car into sudden / emergency braking (resulting in uncomfortable situations)

**Comment**

The question proved to be inaccessible for most candidates as it was rare to find a candidate who was able to identify 5 or 6 points. Most candidates were only able to identify 4 points or less, with a few not getting even one point. The main cause for candidates not doing well in this exercise was generalising on the features. They were expected to specify the features while discussing their disadvantages. There were also those who lost marks for distorting the meaning of the text while trying to use own words. For

instance, they were using incorrect synonyms of the word, 'fatal' in point 4 which was a key word in that particular point. Most candidates also lost marks for confusing homophones. For example, 'braking' was substituted with 'breaking' in point 8 and 'markings' became 'makings' in point 7. There were also a few candidates who ended up discussing the use of safety features instead of their disadvantages as required by the question.

## **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that learners be taught reading in the classroom and be taught how to analyse the writer's use of language, writer's intentions and implied meaning/reading between the lines.
2. Meanings of words should be taught in the context of the given passage to enhance understanding and to help learners to do well in questions that require them to find meaning in context.
3. Learners should be trained on question analysis so that they are able to do proper question analysis on different types of questions and know how to present their answers.
4. Learners should be trained to pick correct spellings of words from the text as this seems to be a persistent problem in all the exercises.
5. Learners should be trained to use only ink when writing tests or examinations, not pencils and teachers should emphasise that the summary has to be written in continuous form not in point form and in one paragraph.

## EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Paper 6873/02

## Continuous Writing

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 (2024) was **45/50** which is a decline from the year 2023 which had the highest score of **47/50**. The lowest was **0/50** yet in 2023 it was **2/50**.

Notably, this year there was one candidate who scored **0** in all the exercises.

The paper was accessible. However, the candidates were challenged by the questions due to weak question analysis and lack of appropriate language.

**Comments on specific questions****Exercise 1****Question**

Your friend recently represented the country in an international sports competition and won a gold medal.

**Write a letter to applaud your friend.**

In your letter you should:

- **congratulate your friend on the victory**
- **ask about your friend's thoughts and feelings about the win**
- **encourage and wish them well for future success**

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

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

**Expectations**

The task was a friendly/informal letter. The purpose was to applaud the friend for winning a gold medal in an international sports competition. The audience was a friend; thus, the register had to be informal/chatty.

The tone was friendly (casual).

**The style/structure****Salutation**

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

**Introduction**

- ✓ Candidates were expected to portray social distance: casual opening, friendly tone, pleasantries e.g. asking about the friend's well-being, showing knowledge that the friend had taken part in a competition (may make mention of the name of this international competition here)
- ✓ The candidates were expected to give the clue of the purpose, that is the reason they are writing the letter, is expected here

**Body**

- ✓ Candidates were expected to develop ideas to show or demonstrate independence of thought. The key word is 'applaud' which creates an expectation of an excited and animated show of approval through choice of words.
- ✓ The candidates ought to develop all given ideas(bullets); congratulate your friend on the victory – (a message of congratulations is expected here. If not already mentioned, the name of the competition won may also feature. Some candidates might compliment qualities that might have made the win possible.); ask about your friend's thoughts and feelings about the win – (questions might include: whether they felt proud, elated, what their thoughts were when announced as winner or sometime after the win); encourage and wish them well for future success – (words of encouragement, wisdom well wishes, and possibly some tips for future success).

**Conclusion**

- ✓ The conclusion should reconnect to the purpose of the letter.  
The letter was expected to have an air or sense of finality before signing off.

**Ending / sign off**

- ✓ The letter can end or be signed off in a variety of informal ways  
e.g. Your loving friend  
Mukelwe
- ✓ Candidates were expected to show creativity, independence of thought in developing their ideas and use appropriate and sophisticated language.

- ✓ Moreover, candidates had to adhere to grammatical conventions and the letter should be 1 page long or about 150-200 words of standard handwriting. However, some candidates wrote and exceeded the expected one-page writing even beyond the margin.

### **Overall performance**

This question was accessible 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 weak responses. The other problem was their command of language which was weak since most of them used lame expressions. Worth noting is that some candidates failed to develop the second bullet which required the thoughts and feelings of the friend who had won, resulting in a flood of questions. Some candidates failed dismally to develop the bullet; these candidates lacked creativity on that bullet.

### **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 contractions appropriately;
- used congratulatory words or vocabulary;
- used the relevant diction for encouragement and well wishing;
- understood the situation at hand which was to applaud a friend for winning a gold medal in an international sports competition after representing the country.

### **Weak responses**

Candidates who wrote weak 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 leaving out the second bullet;
- listed and did not develop the bullets;
- did not analyse the question thus they created their own questions;
- used language which showed lack of awareness of mechanical awareness/accuracy;
- did not paragraph their work and some paragraphs had no punctuation at all resulting in many runs on sentences;
- no understanding of what a sporting activity is yet it was a key word e.g. some wrote about Spelling Bee;

- wrote as if the friend was still to go for the competition instead of them coming from the competition;
- failed to address the bullet on the thoughts and feelings of their friend about the win. Some candidates went on to express their feelings and thoughts, others even totally left out the bullet;
- 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, secondly, moreover, furthermore, hence, and so on;
- used social media language e.g. *a*, *coz*, *u*;
- wrote lengthy introductions which led to mediocre responses as candidates failed to develop all the bullets adequately;
- wrote their own letters which were not relevant to the task as they created their own questions.

## Exercise 2

### Question

There is an outcry over students who spend most of their time watching TV dramas/soapies. Your school suggested that parents limit the time students spend watching these as excessive watching affects their academic performance.

Below are some comments from concerned individuals.

- “TV dramas/soapies raise awareness on real-life issues.”
- “What a distraction!”
- “TV dramas/soapies provide endless entertainment.”
- “Watching TV dramas/soapies promotes living in a fantasy world.”

**As a concerned student, write an article for your school magazine expressing your views concerning this issue.**

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

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

### Expectations

The main issue here was ‘an outcry over students who spend most of their time watching TV ‘dramas/soapies’.

The task was to write an article (persuasive article).

The purpose was to 'express your views concerning students who spend most of their time watching TV dramas/soapies'.

Candidates were expected to bring in fresh or novel ideas, paraphrase the given ideas (just use the given ideas as prompts hence demonstrating independence of thought).

## **The style/structure**

### **Introduction**

- ✓ The candidates were expected to give the background of the issue at hand or background information and then take a stand.

### **Body**

- ✓ The candidates were expected to be clear about which stand he or she was advocating for. The candidates were free to use any style of persuasive writing that was at their disposal. They had the liberty to do so as long as their writing was persuasive.

For example, candidates were allowed to:

- The candidates were expected to state their opinion and not acknowledge the other side of the argument, but the use of emotional appeals and persuasive techniques was imperative in bringing out a clear stance and clear voice. The self-centred approach. (Worth Noting is that Only candidates with a very good command of English language proved to have the ability to use this style effectively)
- bring the opposing view, rebut the claim and then bring their view in a convincing manner.
- put forward their ideas and support them and move on opposing ideas and refute them but should ensure their voice remains is prominent.
- can start with their views, develop them adequately to strengthen them and then just mention other people's views.

Most importantly, the candidate was expected to use any persuasive style but with strong and persuasive language and the appropriate/relevant terminology should have had to be used. Also, the candidate's voice had to be heard from the introduction to the conclusion. Put differently in whatever style that the candidate decides to use they must be personal and convincing through the use of good ideas and appropriate language (When we talk of good quality, we are referring to the language).

### **Conclusion**

- ✓ The candidate was expected to restate or reaffirm his/her stand.

The article had to be paragraphed appropriately. The candidates were expected to show creativity, independence of thought in developing the ideas and use appropriate and sophisticated language.

## Overall performance

This question was not accessible to most candidates. In short, this question was not well done as most candidates did not take a clear stand from the introduction. The voice of most candidates was not clear. 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. Analysis of speech bubbles was a huge challenge; opposing bullets were used as supporting one and vice versa. Most candidates supported their claims with irrelevant details or information and changed the situation at hand from TV dramas/soapies to television or social media.

## Good responses

Candidates who gave good responses are those who:

- displayed an understanding of the task.
- understood the bone of contention: **the issue of parents limiting the time students spend watching TV dramas/soapies or not.**
- 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.
- used **relevant** novel or fresh ideas

Worth noting is that most students did not perform well in this exercise.

## Weak responses

Candidates who gave weak responses:

- did not understand that the task was a persuasive piece of writing;
- misinterpreted the burning issue or bone of contention. They talked about television instead of TV dramas/soapies and parents limiting students;
- Got carried by soapies and dramas and completely forgot about limiting or not limiting the time students spend watching these shows;
- 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 articles that lacked persuasive register and voice;
- took the speech bubbles or prompts as they appeared (cut and paste) without developing them;
- Failed to paraphrase the speech bubbles and used them as topic sentences yet they could not construct proper sentences using them but used them as they are (fragments);



- wrote articles that showed lack of awareness of the audience and no independence of thought;
- used language that depicted lack of mechanical accuracy: wrong punctuation, rambling or sentence fragments;
- wrote sweeping statements without evidence or support;
- Discussed throughout the article.

### Exercise 3

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

1. Write a story about a decision you made that makes you feel proud.
2. Describe an important social event you attended and the impact it had on your community.
3. Write an essay on how the youth can be empowered to become a better generation.

### Question 1

**Write a story about a decision you made that makes you feel proud.**

#### Overall performance

This question was popular yet the candidates' responses had many short comings. There is a number of perfect responses and some extremely weak ones. The weak responses showed lack of understanding of what a story entails.

#### Expectations:

**The candidates were expected to write a decision they made that makes them feel proud.**

- ✓ The story had to emanate from the given scenario.
- ✓ The candidates were expected to narrate the events or situations they found themselves in that led to them having to make a grave decision.
- ✓ As the story unfolds, realistic details about what the decision was and how it yielded positive outcomes that they are proud of (why they are proud they made the decision) had to be narrated.
- ✓ a clear plot, suspense and great use of language in action were a must.

#### The style/structure

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

Candidates were expected to show creativity, independence of thought in developing the ideas and use appropriate and sophisticated language.

### **Good responses**

Candidates who gave good response are those who:

- wrote a narrative essay (good responses took the descriptive narrative approach);
- captured the theme of the story and wrote realistic stories on a decision they made that they were proud of;
- included all the elements of a story: characters, setting and a clear plot;
- used appropriate language (including strong words, figurative language, adjectives and adverbs);
- material was excellently developed;
- observed mechanical accuracy.

### **Weak responses**

Candidates who gave weak responses:

- did not write a story but discussed what a decision is;
- wrote informative pieces on what a decision is;
- wrote about numerous decisions they took;
- did not capture the theme of the story;
- decisions taken but the element of being proud was not explicitly stated;
- wrote a story that was a twist of what they were expected to write, for example, someone else made the decision for them;
- lacked creativity, stories were flat and lacked suspense;
- paragraphs were absent and those present were made of run on sentences;
- changed point of view from first person singular narration to third person singular narration;
- translated siSwati sayings to English.

### **Question 2**

**Describe an important social event you attended and the impact it had on your community.**

### **Overall performance**

This question was not popular. The few who attempted it performed dismally, as most candidates did not describe the important social event they attended and failed to capture both aspects of the question

**Expectations:**

- ✓ The candidates were expected to show awareness that the question is in two folds.
- ✓ The candidates were expected to **describe** an important social event they attended and how it influenced their community.
- ✓ The candidates were expected to give full details and paint a clear or vivid motion picture of this event for the reader. They should show how it was significant and the impact it had on their community e.g. a change in the community after this event (this may be positive or negative).
- ✓ The candidates were expected to use sensory details that appeal to the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
- ✓ The candidates were expected to use descriptive language: strong verbs and powerful adjectives.

**The style/structure**

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

**Good responses**

Candidates who gave good responses are those who:

- wrote a descriptive essay which captured the expectations of the task, that, is, described an important social event that had an impact on the community;
- 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;
- addressed both aspects of the question adequately.

**Weak responses**

Candidates who gave weak responses are those who:

- failed to understand that question was in two folds;
- failed to understand that this was a **social event** and not just anything;
- wrote discursive essays and some even wrote argumentative essays;
- did not capture both aspects of the question since some focused solely on the impacts totally forgetting about describing the event;
- failed to decipher the appropriate tense;
- failed to use a descriptive tone;

- failed to use the show, not tell technique;
- used inappropriate language;
- presented material that was not adequately developed.

### Question 3

**Write an essay on how the youth can be empowered to become a better generation.**

#### Overall performance

This question was popular and fairly done as candidates were able to address the topic. The topic was something they could easily relate to. Probably that is what made it accessible to most candidates. It was an expository piece of writing.

#### Expectation

The key word here was **‘how?’**

Candidates were expected to write an informative essay, suggesting ways or strategies on how the youth can be empowered (encouraged and equipped) to become a better generation.

- ✓ The candidates were expected to highlight different issues (financial, social, wellness issues, etc.) the youth is facing e.g. education and unemployment, social media, drug use, peer pressure, etc.
- ✓ They were also expected to then suggest ways on how the youth can be enabled to overcome these to become a better generation. Such may include strengthening and financing education, imparting leadership skills, mentoring, development of new technologies, encouraging apprenticeships, etc.
- ✓ Candidates might also support their suggestions and ideas with evidence.

#### The style/structure

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Body
- ✓ Conclusion

#### Good responses

Candidates who gave good responses are those who:

- were able to identify or understood that the question was in two folds;
- wrote explicit essays explaining the issues the youth faces and suggested ways to overcome them;
- showed independence of thought;
- developed their material excellently.

**Weak responses**

Candidates who presented weak responses are those who:

- did not touch on the issues that the youth is going through;
- only addressed the strategies or solutions to the issues the youth is facing;
- failed to express themselves adequately;
- wrote lengthy sentences without any punctuation in whole paragraphs;
- repeated the same ideas throughout;
- repeated the statement on issues and strategies more than two times in a paragraph which made the essays to be monotonous;
- wrote as if they are talking to the youth directly through the use of the second person plural “you”;
- wrote essays which displayed a lot of mother tongue interference (could not express themselves in English).

**Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

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

## EGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## Paper 6873/03

## Listening Comprehension

**General Comments**

The 2024 paper proved to be challenging for the majority of candidates compared to that of the previous year. Exercises that were accessible to the candidates were Exercise 1, question 1 to 3; Exercise 2 and 3. Exercise 4 proved to be the most challenging with Exercise 5 being relatively accessible. As a result, no candidate attained total marks in the component. The highest was 27 with marks ranging from 0-27 yet the previous range was 0-28.

Wrong spelling, unclear handwriting, lack of top-down processing and bottom-up processing were contributing factors to the 'not-so-good' performance of the candidates. It is of great concern that candidates are becoming weak in 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 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 challenges 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 spaces provided. This exercise was fairly accessible in the sense that most candidates were able to get answers for questions 1-3. However, there were notable challenges with questions 4 and 5.

**Question 1**

**Name two things the students must bring on the class trip.**

**Expected response:** camera and water

**Comment**

This was a highly accessible question to most students since they scored both items. A handful could not spell 'camera' instead they gave 'camara'. Some gave the plural form 'cameras'.

**Question 2****Why is the Head of Department going to Singapore?****Expected response:** attending a conference/there is a conference**Comment**

This was a fairly accessible question. However, some could not score due to wrong spellings, that is, 'entertaning' instead of 'attending'. Instead of writing 'conference' wrote *confrarrance/conference*.

**Question 3****What is Mr. Shabalala's occupation?****Expected response:** Accountant/accountant**Comment**

This was a highly accessible question. Very few misspelt the word 'accountant'. There were few candidates who were distracted who could not understand the meaning of the word 'occupation' hence they gave a response such as 'KwaZulu Natal'.

**Question 4****What change has been made for the Cape Town flight?****Expected response:** The departure time has been (slightly) delayed**Comment**

This question was not accessible to most candidates because they came up with 'slight delay' as their answer instead of 'departure time'. Those who got it correctly were challenged by the concept of transportation which seemed foreign to them. They lacked exposure to relevant jargon associated with flying.

**Question 5****What is Mr Seyama's preference of his double room?****Expected response:** A non-smoking room with a view over the lake.**Comment**

This was an easily accessible question but some failed to spell certain words correctly such as; '*non*' and '*none*' as '*nice*', '*smoking*' as '*smoky*,' *lake* as '*land/lack*'. They used inappropriate preposition, that is, instead of with, they would use '*to*', '*on*', '*of*'. Other candidates incorrectly spelled '*view*' and wrote '*vew*' instead.

**Exercise 2**

In this exercise, candidates were expected to listen to a talk by an environmental activist on recycling plastic and then fill in details in the spaces provided. This part proved to be a relatively inaccessible exercise. The learners were not familiar with the concept of recycling hence they could not contextualise the subject matter.

**Objectives of the Exchange****Expected responses:**

- encourage
- hunger

**Comment**

These items were quite accessible to a majority of the candidates. However, some could not score due to spelling errors such as: 'courage' as 'encourage'; 'hunger' as 'hungry/hangar'.

**Education sector****Expected responses:**

- underprivileged
- shredding

This item was inaccessible since quite a number of candidates could not get the spelling of underprivileged but came up with words such as: *underpriviledged*, *privileged unprivileged* and *previllage*. The two-space question was challenging because they utilised one space instead of writing each answer on its own space.

The second item where they had to write 'shredding' they came up with words like 'school fees.'

**Advocacy for issues like****Expected response:** afforestation**Comment**

This item was quite inaccessible due to lack of contextualising. Some candidates came up with words like 'deforestation' (a familiar word).

**Future Plans****Expected response:** used footwear

**Comment:** This item appeared to be inaccessible. Instead of 'footwear' they came up with 'footware'.



**Exercise 3**

For Exercise 3, candidates were expected to listen to an interview with a rugby player, Siyabonga Shezi, and then fill in the details in the spaces provided. This exercise was accessible to a majority of the candidates as most of them scored above average with only a few candidates scoring below average because of grammatical errors.

**How his career started:****Expected responses:**

- childhood
- twelve/12

**Comment**

'*Childhood*' – this item proved to be accessible to most of the candidates except for a few who wrote: '*childwood*' and '*chillhood*'. '*Twelve*' – this item was accessible to most of the candidates. However, some wrote wrong spelling for the word like '*twelf*'.

**Motivation****Expected responses:**

- coaches
- inspired

**Comment**

'*Coaches*' – this item was accessible with some giving wrong spellings like '*couches*', '*coatches*', '*coachies*', and '*cotches*', while others wrote it in singular form "coach" which did not score. '*Inspired*' – this item was also accessible as most candidates were able to score a mark with a few candidates writing the answer in the wrong tense, '*inspire*'. There were however some who were writing wrong responses such as '*aspire*', '*inspired*' and '*enspired*'.

**Match preparation****Expected responses:**

- fibre
- optimum
- mentally

**Comment**

'Fibre' – this item was accessible to a majority of the candidates as they were able to score. However, some could not score as they wrote wrong spelling like: '*fibra*', '*faber*' and, '*faiber*'. 'Optimum' – this item was also accessible to a majority of candidates. However, some of them gave spellings like; '*optimam*' and '*obtimum*' which could not score. There were others who wrote words like, 'good' and 'maximum' which also could not score. 'Mentally' – this item was also accessible to most candidates as they were able to score a mark. However, some could not score as they gave responses like; '*metally*', '*mentaly*', '*metal*' and '*mental*'.

**Lesson learnt from rugby****Expected responses:**

- communication
- informed

**Comment**

'Communication' – the item was accessible to a majority of the candidates. There were, however, those who could not score due to incorrect spellings like '*comunication*', '*communicating*', '*commucating*' and '*commucation*'.

'Informed' – this item proved to be accessible to most candidates. There were however those who could not score due to wrong tense. Some candidates wrote the wrong tense 'inform' which could not score. There were also those who wrote incorrect responses like "in-formed" or "formed".

**Exercise 4**

In this exercise, candidates were expected to listen to a business expert giving a lecture on 'robot technology' and then answer questions. This part of the examination proved to be the most challenging, and a few candidates managed to score all the marks.

**Question 1****What are robots?**

**Expected response:** automatic devices that (are designed to) assist in performing activities that are risky, tiresome and boring (without requiring human effort).

**Comment**

Quite a number of candidates could not score because of spelling. They wrote '*alternatice*'/ '*autamatical*'. Others could not spell '*devices*'. They misspelt the word – giving words such as '*divise*', '*divices*'. Others could not spell '*design*' – they wrote '*desire*' and for '*assist*', they were writing '*insist*'. Other candidates omitted the key words '*assist*' and '*performing*'.

**Question 2**

**Why are manufacturers keen on using industrial robots? Give two reasons.**

**Expected responses:**

- speed up the production/manufacturing/industrial (processes)
- maintain competition in the markets

**Comment**

This question was not quite accessible because only a few candidates managed to score. They could only get one correct response. The wrong responses were: '*speed up processes*', '*speed up procses*', '*speed up work*'. For the second reason, the candidates misspelt '*maintain*'- they wrote '*mentain*', '*mantaine*' instead. Some candidates could not spell '*competition*' – they wrote '*competion*', '*compesion*' instead. Other candidates gave incomplete responses leaving out '*in the market*'.

**Question 3**

**Give one advantage and one disadvantage for the human employees of robots being used in their workplace.**

**Expected responses:**

**Advantage:** no longer have to work in dangerous environments/no longer have to risk injury/robots can do the dangerous jobs.

**Disadvantage:** they lose their jobs/their work may be replaced completely by a robot/people will be unemployed/creates unemployment.

**Comment**

The candidates failed to score because they misunderstood the question. They thought the question referred to the robots yet it referred to employees. Most candidates gave '*more efficient*' as a response. Other candidates wrote '*can work fast*', '*can work faster*', '*can do dangerous jobs*'. The disadvantage part of the question was accessible. Most candidates were able to write that '*many people become jobless*'. Other candidates, however, could not spell '*jobless*'. They omitted the /-s/. Most candidates separated the word and wrote '*job less*' as if it were two words.

**Question 4**

**Give two places you are likely to find robots and the tasks performed by the robots there.**

**Expected response:**

- restaurant(s)
- serving people their food/orders)
- hospital(s)
- transporting linen(s)

**Comment**

This question was the most challenging and it was not well done by almost all the candidates. Some candidates could not spell '*restaurant*'. For the task, instead of writing '*serve*' they wrote '*save*'. For the second item '*hospital*' was easily accessible, it is the task that was a challenge since the candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with the word '*linen*'. They just wrote any word associated with hospitals such as '*transporting livers/patients/climes/injections/surgeries*' etc.

**Exercise 5**

Candidates were expected to listen to a presentation about zoos from the *National Geography Society* and then answered the questions that followed. This was generally a fairly accessible exercise. A majority of the candidates were able to score half of the total marks.

**Question 1**

**Define a zoo.**

**Expected response:** a place where animals are kept in closed areas and displayed for people to view (two details, one mark each).

**Comment**

Most candidates were unable to score all the marks; only partial success was remarkably common in their responses. Candidates gave responses like: '*a place where animals are placed in enclosed areas/ close areas/ in close areas*'. In their second part of the response, some candidates only wrote '*kept in place for people*'. Most notable, candidates seemed not to have realised that this question required two responses which resulted to them answering only one part of the question. Thus, candidates could not get all the marks.

**Question 2**

**How can a visit to the zoo benefit children?**

**Expected response:** they can better understand the importance of taking care of the environment or they get to learn a story about each animal (**any one**).

**Comment**

This question was a bit challenging as most candidates could not score. Candidates gave responses like, "better understand on taking care of environment" omitting the key word importance thus failing to score.

**Question 3**

**Give two negative beliefs about animals in zoos.**

**Expected responses:**

- (animals) are happy there/get depressed
- (animals) get psychologically disturbed
- (animals) harm each other
- (animals) go hungry
- (animals) get ill
- (animals) endure extreme and unnatural temperatures
- (animals) get frustrated

**(two details required for one mark)**

**Comment**

This was a generally accessible question. Those who could not score failed to qualify their responses and only provided 'unhappy, depressed, hungry etc.'. Also, notable in this item were spelling errors.

**Question 4**

**How is the welfare of animals in zoos maintained?**

**Expected response:**

- they are provided with healthy/nutritious food.
- authorities/zookeepers ensure they are not harmed in any way

**(any one between the two)**

**Comment**

This question was fairly accessible to the candidates because a number of them were able to core. Those who could not score gave responses such as '*health, nutrition, nutritional. etc.*'

**Question 5**

**Identify one instruction that people should follow at the zoo.**

**Expected response:** not to bring edibles/not feed them to animals/do not give them food

**Comment**

This question was a bit challenging as most candidates failed to score. This was mainly because of spelling errors such as '*addibles*', '*edebles*'.

**Question 6****Why do researchers find zoos to be better than the jungle?****Expected response:**

- zoos offer the opportunity to meet the animals face to face and connect with them
- to observe and learn about their behavioural patterns/behaviour

**Comment**

This question was fairly accessible to most candidates. However, some failed to score because they were omitting part of the response. For example, the candidates provided responses such as “they meet the animals face to face” omitting “connect with them”. Also notable with the second response was that candidates would omit part of the response like “observe or learn” resulting to them failing to score.

**Recommendations**

- Extensive reading is key as most candidates could hear the answer but failed to write the responses correctly due to lack of language skills.
- Learners should be taught inferential skills.
- Teachers should teach the listening skill to the learners instead of testing them.
- The principles of grammar should be taught.
- 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 familiarise the learners with the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ processing strategies when it comes to the listening. Top-down processing uses background knowledge and contextualises words to aid comprehension while bottom-up processing has to do with sounds, words and other small units to create meaning.
- Teachers should give constant practise so that learners get used to the listening paper rather than waiting for the exam.
- Teachers should teach their learners spelling conventions.

## 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. The performance of candidates in the 2024 examination on this component was quite good though, there was a noticeable slight decline from that of 2023. The familiarity of the subject matter and exposure to life experiences enabled some candidates to score above average, in some instances.

Three out of the five cards (**Card A – Good Decisions**, **Card B – Rules**, **Card E – Household Chores**) were popular and were done fairly well. **Card C – Retail Therapy** and **Card D – Conversations** were least popular among the cards.

**Question Analysis****CARD A – GOOD DECISIONS**

This was also a particularly friendly card to most candidates. The subject matter of the card seemed familiar, one way or the other to all candidates. A majority knew exactly how to respond to all prompts where good decisions are concerned. However, a number of candidates were sabotaged by examiners who led the conversation, forcing candidates to disclose their personal affairs which turned out to be awkward. Some examiners even got emotional on responses given by candidates. This affected the performance to a great extent as it made the candidates a bit tense and not at ease, resulting to the candidates clamming up.

**CARD B – RULES**

This card was also accessible as it proved so friendly to most candidates. This could be because most candidates are exposed to rules both at school and at home. A number of candidates managed to tackle this card properly. The card proved to be favourable to candidates as they talked freely about unfair rules that should be done away with and the consequences of breaking rules. The card was tackled well by most candidates who had firsthand experience with the topic. The observation was that the COVID-19 pandemic might have exposed learners to the severity of rules during the lockdown as there were rules such as sanitising and observing social distancing, and the fact that there were consequences on breaking those rules. Many talked about this experience.

**CARD C – RETAIL THERAPY**

Card E was the least popular amongst them all. Most candidates who received this card did not perform very well. The conversations were generally short. The examiners themselves could not quite assist the candidates in as far as unpacking and clarifying the bullets was concerned. Most notably, most

examiners seemed to avoid this card - it was the least used in most centres. This card seemed to favour girls than boys, probably because girls are used to shopping. Boys hardly go for shopping. Moreover, candidates from low economic background were also favoured as 'comfort buying' is foreign to them and it is seen as an unnecessary expense. Candidates who are exposed to shopping and who do commercial subjects managed the conversations well enough as they used relevant register for the topic throughout their conversations.

#### **CARD D – POSITIVE THINKING**

From face value the card seemed friendly but as the bullets developed, candidates had difficulties with expressing themselves. They particularly faced challenges in tackling the last two bullets. A majority of candidates dwelt much only on the disadvantages of negative thoughts. This card was a little challenging and examiners would need to constantly probe and unpack the bullets for the smooth running of the conversations. Where examiners simplified the prompts, it became easier, but where they did not, the candidate got stuck trying to figure out what to say about positive thinking.

#### **CARD E – HOUSE HOLD CHORES**

Card E was the most popular and easily accessible because candidates know and do a lot of household chores at home. This card proved to be very friendly to learners and those examined on it did very well. However, in card E, a number of candidates confused '**chores**' with '**choices**' and '**chooses**'. The given explanation of chores in the card was misinterpreted for choices. It was interesting though to note that some candidates were able to differentiate between the two. The card seemed to be gender biased though in that, girls could relate better to ideas on household chores whereas boys did not have much to say as most boys hardly involve themselves in these chores. However, it is worth mentioning that students from the countryside seemed to be the most favoured and advantaged by the card as there are many chores they are exposed to than those in urban areas.

#### **POINTS OF CONCERN REGARDING EXAMINERS**

- In some instances, examiners failed to lead or prompt candidates towards the right direction.
- Some Examiners had challenges in following the marking criteria. They were either too lenient or too severe when awarding marks. Examiners should always refer closely to the marking criteria for each and every candidate for proper allocation of marks.
- If there are two or more examiners in the Centre, they should first coordinate their understanding of the marking criteria beforehand to reach a common ground.
- Also worth noting was that the examiners had a tendency of offsetting candidates by asking them tricky questions, channeling 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 those of the teacher-examiner. A number of Examiners became angry if their viewpoints were not followed.



- Some conversations between candidates and examiners were a little disturbing. Examiners are encouraged to maintain professionalism in the type of conversations they have with candidates.

## **CONDUCTING THE ORAL EXAM**

A few challenges were noted from the way the exam was conducted

### **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. Some examiners were inconsistent in that some did not explain procedure to candidates. Some examiners gave a wrong examination number or a wrong name to a particular candidate. Sometimes they allowed candidates to introduce themselves, but then forget to give their examination numbers. Examiners are urged to always use the Attendance Register to verify candidates' names and numbers, mark present and absent candidates.

A number of examiners also failed to use this part to briefly explain what was going to happen in the course of the exam. In some centres where there were two or more examiners, the examination was not well coordinated. You would find that one examiner would follow the procedure correctly while the others did not. Examiners are advised to coordinate their understanding of the Examiner's Notes before conducting the examination so that a common standard is applied to all candidates.

### **Part B – Warm up**

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

### **Part C – Handing the card to candidate**

Handing the Assessment Card to the candidate was not done satisfactorily by some examiners. At this point, the examiner should mention which card has been selected for the candidate. This process should always be on record, and the examiner must pause the recording. This should be indicated by saying 'the recording will now be paused'. This allows the external moderator to know that the candidate was given time to study the card. Some examiners do not pause the recording, they were heard telling their own stories, some of which were quite disturbing.

## Part D- Conversation

This is the main part of the test which is assessed. It showed a great improvement. However, some examiners 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. Short conversations were partly because the examiners did not clarify the prompts for the candidates, simplify or unpack where needed. Those particular candidates had difficulty in expressing themselves.

In some instances, examiners simply read the prompts as they were on the card then asked the candidates what they thought about them. When the candidates were confronted with such, they had difficulty in expressing their views without the examiner's guidance. Others were made to make long presentations without the examiner's assistance. This is strongly discouraged as the test is supposed to be a conversation between the candidate and the examiner, not a presentation.

In some few instances, examiners gave candidates very little time to express themselves, but the examiner took most of the time giving his/her own views. Such candidates seemed to have been trained to ask the examiner to give his own ideas on topic. Examiners are strongly advised to avoid this as it deprives candidates from elaborating freely. Examiners should always remember that they are there to guide each candidate through the conversation and should always appear interested in what the candidate is saying. The expectation is that the examiner should then allocate marks accordingly.

Some examiners did not arrange the recordings on the Compact Disks (CDs) numerically as they appeared on the attendance register. The summary form should also follow that order. A few centres submitted CDs with incomplete recordings, with missing candidates or recordings with no sound. In some instances, CDs were empty, with no recordings at all. Having said that, examiners are urged to listen to the recordings and create a back-up before submitting them to ECESWA.

## Paperwork

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

- Using a pencil when filling in the summary form – always use ink;
- Wrong calculation of marks on the Summary Forms – it is advisable to cross-check if the calculations have been done correctly;
- Transferring wrong marks from summary sheet to MS1;
- Converting marks to percentage;
- Presenting scores which are more than the 10 marks allocated for each category;

- 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. In case of internal moderation, examiners are advised to provide the distribution too;
- 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;
- Always submit the Attendance Register and the duplicate should remain at the Centre as a form of back-up copy.

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

### **Recorded Compact Disks (CDs)**

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

### **Conversations**

There was 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's number and name was not consistent in some centres;
- In some centres, explanation of the exam procedure was not applied in the same way to all the candidates - Examiners are reminded to consult the Examiner's/Teacher's Notes to ensure they conform to the expectations of conducting the exam. **It is expected that a common standard procedure is applied to all the candidates;**
- Some examiners did not use the warm up sessions to select the appropriate card for the candidates. Examiners are encouraged to use this part of the exam to select the appropriate card for the candidates;
- Some warm up sessions were rather too long, resulting to the main part of the exam being short;
- Some examiners conducted the oral exam as if it was a 'question and answer' session, or a presentation – this is supposed to be a conversation;
- Some examiners dominated the conversations, and even enforced their views on candidates. **Examiners are reminded that the purpose of the oral session is to examine candidates, as such, they should be given more time to talk than the examiners themselves;**
- Examiners are encouraged to ask 'open' questions which allow candidates to respond at length and that they should not interrupt with their own views;
- Some examiners/teachers did not simplify the prompts for the candidates, sometimes resulting to weak candidates being stuck and not knowing how to proceed with the examination. It is important to simplify the prompts to the candidates so that even the weak candidates can be able to say something on the issue being discussed. It is also equally important to unpack and simplify the stem of the question to ensure that each candidate understands what it means;
- If it becomes apparent that the candidate finds the topic difficult or inappropriate, it is permissible to move into more productive areas, rather than to stick rigidly to the examiner's prompts;
- Examiners are encouraged to read and follow the guide stipulated in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes. 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 2024 English Language Oral Examination. Nevertheless, examiners are encouraged to continue with the spirit of working as a team whilst preparing the candidates and conducting the exam together.

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 working criterion is applied by all examiners when

awarding marks. Last but not least, examiners are encouraged to seek advice every time they face internal problems when conducting the exam before submitting relevant material to ECESWA.

**Centres are also encouraged to consult ECESWA if they need clarity on anything concerning the Oral Exam.**

**A cover letter should be written if centres have engaged ECESWA on anything that involves candidates.**