



ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

ORDINARY LEVEL EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1 (4005/1)

NOVEMBER 2022 SESSION

EXAMINERS' REPORT

1.0 Preamble

This report presents an overview of the candidates' performance in the November 2022 English Language (4005/1) examinations.

The purpose of the report is to give feedback to stakeholders on candidates' strengths and weaknesses as noted during marking in a bid to improve future candidates' performance. It is hoped that this feedback will inform teaching, learning and assessment.

1.1.1. GENERAL COMMENTS

The question paper was fair and standard as the questions catered for candidates from different settings. All types of compositions were represented in the question paper. The questions were also suitable for the level of the candidates. Question 8, a memorandum, which featured in this examination for the first time, caused no difficulty to candidates. Most candidates presented it in its correct format and the subject Covid-19, was familiar to all.

In section A, candidates attempted varied questions and most of them fully answered the questions. Some very good candidates presented highly accurate and interesting work which was couched in apt vocabulary, expression and register. However, a few of the candidates' responses were irrelevant.

In some instances, some candidates, whole centres in some cases, deliberately chose not to indicate the question number they had attempted, leaving the examiner to decide for them. Such candidates naturally shot themselves in the foot.

Language accuracy is the most critical aspect in this paper, so candidates are advised to handle language aspects such as tenses, spellings, punctuation etc. accurately. Weak candidates had challenges with handling verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, basic punctuation marks such as the comma and the apostrophe. Mother tongue interference is one other challenge which resulted in poor presentation of answers due to limited

vocabulary. Candidates are advised to always proof-read their work before submitting the work for marking

Script Length

It appears most teachers of English heeded the call to train their charges to present quality work and shun the tendency to write long empty essays fraught with errors.

2.0. QUESTION BY QUESTION ANALYSIS

Question 1: Describe a family you admire in your community.

This was a descriptive topic. Focus was supposed to be on admirable characteristics of the named family.

This was the most popular question, attracting a huge candidature who produced relevant responses. However, some weak candidates missed the concept of admiration.

Common errors peculiar to question 1

- Repetition of Subject
 - This family it is a good family.
 - Mr Moyo he is a good man.
- Use of informal words e.g. mom, dad, kids
- Spellings
 - Comunity for community
 - Farmily for family
 - Regularly for regularly
 - Bussinessman for businessman
 - Favourate for favourite
 - Ophans for orphans

Question 2; Write a story based on one of the following statements:

- (a) This time, she felt that she was going to succeed.
- (b) Every time I thought about it, I could not ignore the fact that we had been dishonest.

Good candidates were rewarded for successfully incorporating the elements of a short story such as characterisation, pace, atmosphere and a controlled plot structure.

Mediocre candidates presented memorised passages which were very difficult to fit in the given statement. Sometimes, they would give more than one memorised introduction.

Weak candidates presented flat narratives with no coherence and these were presented with multiple gross errors.

It is very important to note that teachers should desist from the idea of teaching narratives only to candidates as it disadvantages candidates who cannot write such kind of essays. Candidates should be exposed to a variety of essays during the four year course.

Question 2a was the third most popular question. Brilliant essays were produced on this topic. Excelling candidates managed to create a tense atmosphere which resulted from the desire to succeed. However, unwary candidates confused the gender pronouns 'she' and 'he'.

Some common errors peculiar to Question 2(a)

- Tenses

- This for that
- Now for then
- Sit for sat
- Use of contractions
- Didn't for did not
- That's for that is/was
- Don't for do not
- Won't for will not
- Word division
- Care taker for caretaker
- Your self for yourself
- Further more for furthermore
- Class room for classroom

Question 2 (b) was a fairly popular question. The fact that it had to be written from the first-person plural point of view created a rigid position for the candidates. As a result, quite a number were penalised for breaching the rubric. Focus was supposed to be on the sense of guilt that haunts the character as a result of concealed dishonesty.

Some common errors peculiar to question 2(b)

- Wrong word division
- Inorder for in order
- School work for schoolwork
- Hard working for hardworking
- Wrong word order
- I and my friends for my friends and I.
- Me and Tapiwa for Tapiwa and I

Question 3: In what way does the Internet contribute to education?

The question was averagely popular. It was largely attempted by candidates from urban settings. Focus was supposed to be on the different ways that the Internet can help in education. Good candidates displayed a wide knowledge of the appropriate use of the Internet. However, their presentations did not link the internet to education. Rather they discussed the use of the internet in general.

Weaker candidates presented their ideas in poor language, mixing many aspects of the internet. Some did not even link it to education. The poor communication skills plus failure to understand the demands of the topic in itself was a disaster. Teachers are encouraged to expose learners to various issues that are trending as well as give learners research topics on some of the cross-cutting themes enshrined in the syllabus.

Common errors peculiar to question 3

- Most candidates omitted the definite article 'the' before internet.
- Punctuation
- Candidates constantly used the lower case for words like Whatsapp, Twitter, Facebook.
- Some students used unrecognised acronyms such CALA .

Question 4: Write about an occasion when you felt very important.

This was the second most popular question. Presentations in this question were highly descriptive.

Focus was supposed to be on the achievement that made one the centre of attraction. The question afforded the candidates an opportunity to describe any gathering such as weddings, birthdays or other celebrations. Some of the best essays came from this question. Good candidates wrote very powerful essays.

However, mediocre candidates had the challenges of bringing out the aspect of the centre of attraction. Weak candidates could not identify key words of the question and wrote, in poor English, about an important occasion.

Common errors peculiar to question 4

- Spelling
 - Occassion for occasion
 - Intresting for interesting
- Confusion over the use of Master of Ceremonies.
 - Master of Ceremony instead of Master of Ceremonies or master of ceremonies.
- Tense errors
 - Use of the double past tense e.g. 'I did not told my mother'

Question 5: 'Sending orphans to children's homes is an unfair practice.' Do you agree?

This was an argumentative/discursive essay. As such, candidates had the latitude to either present an argument or a discussion of the issues surrounding this topic. The question failed to attract many candidates. It was the third least popular question. The few candidates who attempted it presented unconvincing arguments. Candidates were expected to either choose a side to support or look at both the affirmative and the opposing sides of the assertion. Hardly any candidate did approach the topic from a discursive point of view.

Teachers are encouraged to teach argumentative and discursive essays so that those candidates who are capable can write them.

Common errors peculiar to question 5

- Use of informal words
 - Street kids for street urchins
 - Mom for mother
 - Dad/daddy for father

Question 6: 'Most problems among learners in schools are caused by incompetent school administrators.' Discuss.

This was the least popular question. The concept of school administration may have deterred most candidates from attempting the question. Again, as the case in Question 5, discussions were unbalanced and lacked depth. Candidates were expected to present a balanced discussion and come up with an informed decision. On this note, again, teachers are encouraged to help candidates to read widely so that they are not vexed by such terms as 'the administration'.

Common errors peculiar to question 6

- Spelling
 - Administrators for administrators.
 - Promblem for problems

- Buling for bullying
- Ridiculous idioms e.g. ‘Administrators eat money’
- Confusing parts of speech e.g. there; they; their
- Subject verb agreement
- The pupils drinks beer
- The administrators was not do work
- The teachers proposes love to pupils

Question 7: Fire.

This question was quite often abused. Most irrelevant responses came from this question. In spite of the explicit instruction in the rubric not to treat the question as a character’s name, a number of candidates ignored this and their work attracted a severe penalty.

There are two approaches to take in this kind of question. One can choose the thematic direction in which case one can write a narrative whose dominating idea is the topic: in this case ‘Fire.’ The other option is to follow the explanatory/expository or discussion path in which case one can attempt to explain or discuss the subject or concept.

The most ridiculous scenario was when some candidates wrote essays that had nothing to do with ‘fire’ but threw the word in at the end. That was unconvincing and it was regarded as an attempt to evade the purpose of the examination. Good candidates wrote very impressive essays expressing fire as a good servant but a bad master.

Average candidates attempted stories about a fire breakout but in most cases these were written in simple language. Weak candidates attempted to write about fire but had limited vocabulary and poor links which made the essays to be of low calibre.

An open ended question is one of the easiest because a candidate is not limited to a particular scope of discussion. They can explore and write anything that is related to the topic. By and large, this should be one of the topics which has more advantages to the candidates.

Teachers are thereby encouraged to teach learners to explore various fields of study so that they are familiar to words that can be used in different areas of study.

• Common errors peculiar to question 7

- Word division
 - Fire guard for fireguard
 - Fire wood for firewood
 - Veldfire for veld fire
 - Wild life for wildlife
- Spelling
 - Cigarattes for cigarettes
 - Destoray for destroy

Section B

Question 8

The question was: ‘All schools had been closed during a lockdown that was put in place due to a serious pandemic. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has now published the dates to reopen schools for examination classes after the lockdown. As the Head of your school, write a memorandum to the members of staff and students at your

school, advising them of the reopening of schools and the health safety measures to be put in place as suggested by the Ministry. Using the following points and other relevant points of your own, write your memorandum.

- fumigation of classrooms
- social distancing
- sanitising
- wearing of masks
- role of staff and prefects

This question was compulsory. Although the format for a memorandum varies from one organisation to another, the four tenets, namely: To, From, Date and Subject, must be included. Most candidates met this requirement and earned a bonus mark. A few pegs e.g. fumigation of classrooms and role of staff and Prefects, were poorly handled by very weak candidates.

The thrust in this question is on amplification. Candidates must develop the given pegs. A mere mention of them is far inadequate. Quite a number of candidates simply stringed together the assigned pegs and again that was unacceptable. The skill of including own material in this question must be inculcated in the learners. Candidates should also use appropriate register.

Teachers are encouraged to teach learners the various situational essays. Weak candidates end up mixing different formats of situational essays which end up being costly to them in terms of marks.

Common errors noted:

The nature of common errors noted in this examination are similar to those observed in previous examinations:

- Tense errors
- Errors of agreement
- Word division
- Punctuation; the commas and full stops, lower case and upper case.
- Confusion of words
- Run-on sentences
- Repetition of words/expressions and ideas
- Misuse of demonstrative pronouns e.g. ‘this’ and ‘that’
- Confusing parts of speech

It is important for learners to use appropriate discourse markers to link their ideas.

3.0. CONCLUSION

Although the marking period is hectic, examiners do their best to scrutinise every answer independently. It is very important that candidates present their answers neatly and clearly such that it is easy to understand what they want to write and avoid being deduced wrongly.

It cannot be overemphasized that teachers should teach all aspects of grammar and all types of compositions in the syllabus so that candidates have a wide spectrum to choose from. Teachers should avoid drilling candidates to answer certain types of compositions in the examination.

It is important to note that good subject matter presented in highly inaccurate English in the English Language paper 1 examination cannot be awarded high marks. The candidate must demonstrate linguistic competence in this paper.