

General

Teachers of English have a huge task when dealing with the potential candidates for English Primary Language SG: daunting as it is it (and they) ought not to be neglected

Comprehension

The majority of candidates do not attempt to answer the questions in their own words . Many scramble a range of incoherent elements together or merely rewrite the question or even the paragraph to which the question directs them.

Reading seems to be what the majority do only when there is no alternative: consequently, common words are not understood because it seems that the candidates see them for the first time on the exam paper. Quote is an example of such a word that is ignored or misunderstood.

A tiny fraction of the candidates ,for instance ,realised that Dr.Baderoon had written NO poetry at school. Happily ,more realised that Baderoon had wanted to be a MEDICAL doctor ,but they were unable to express the distinction-after all, she is a Doctor now!

Few understood what *ambition* is, and fewer still grasped that they were required to answer what the text (a newspaper profile) said about various cultural groups, not what their personal opinion was.

Summary

It would appear that summary skills are not being taught. The summary requires the candidate firstly to show comprehension of the text and the instructions Then the candidate must delve into his or her vocabulary in order to transfer the meaning into "own words"

Language in action

Teachers are to be congratulated on the clear improvement on the active and passive Voice responses: the same is true regarding the Direct and Reported Speech question.

Errors of Concord abound.

Many candidates mistakenly believe that a “statement” is the opposite of a fact. Perhaps they incorrectly see “statement” as a synonym for “opinion”?

Many candidates understand that capitals are often used for emphasis, but they neglect to indicate WHAT is emphasised.

The marking team was alarmed at how often we came across answers other than nine to the to the “two plus seven equals “question: not only Calvin had been flummoxed!

Editing

The candidates were clearly out of their depth in Question 4.2.1—4.2.5. These Questions refer to rudimentary skills (e.g. recognising the difference between the verb advise and the noun advice) which ought to be taught at the Gr.8 level. They are the equivalent of the basic jargon of subjects”e.g. division in mathematics.

Candidates ought to expect to earn full marks in this question.