

The Computer Applications Technology written paper for 2009 was centred on current social networking applications, such as FaceBook, MySpace, MXit and YouTube – a scenario aimed at intriguing and challenging CAT candidates because of its topicality and relevance to them. The scenario asked candidates to apply their knowledge to solve situations that would occur in their daily lives. However, it was also a scenario that drew on the candidate's own frame of reference in response to the aforementioned applications. This could, however, have favoured candidates who are more exposed to these technologies than those who do not have ready access to them. Nevertheless, it was a scenario based on both the subject content and the interests of the candidates.

As the question paper's scenario had many contexts, our candidates' reading and writing abilities were rigorously tested. This is clearly an area that raises grave concern and candidates are urged to improve their reading and comprehension abilities. Candidates must also develop the ability to express their understanding of solutions clearly in writing. At times it was clear that candidates knew the solutions to questions, but could not explain the solutions in words.

Teachers are urged to insist that candidates use the correct subject terminology from Grade 10, and not to accept alternatives, e. g. "install anti-virus software", not "get anti-virus software".

It is also clear that a number of candidates are taught in a language other than their mother tongue. As 'computer language' is mainly in English, this holds true for most Afrikaans- and Xhosa-speaking candidates.

Questions were answered with varying degrees of competence. There were schools that had prepared their candidates well and others – particularly in their first year of offering the subject at Grade 12 level – that showed they are in a developmental phase and have much to learn.

In the November 2009 paper, the following sections were poorly answered.

Q 7.1 – 7.7	Applying the practical competences, particularly in databases, and explaining processes and content knowledge while referring to practical competences
Q 4.2.2	Making hard-copy text editable by scanning in the document and using OCR software. Here teachers should demonstrate in class how it is done so that candidates have a better idea and will be able to express themselves.
Q 5.5.4 Q 5.4.2 Q 5.8	Candidates had difficulty expressing themselves.
Q 6	Questions on hardware, asked in the context of the scenario.

It is recommended that candidates

- describe what they are doing when involved in practical work in class so that, in future, they can answer the application questions,
- know their definitions and terminology,
- learn the spelling of computer terms (and improve their spelling generally),
- read the scenario properly and answer the question within that scenario,
- answer every multiple-choice question, using capital letters, one below the other, and
- read the instructions at the beginning of the paper, i.e. begin each question on a new page and do not write in the margin.