

ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE HG: PAPER 1

GENERAL REMARKS

1. These comments must be read with a copy of the November 2003 English Second Language HG Paper 1 and its memorandum of marking. The memorandum is available on the WCED website.
2. Teachers of English Second Language HG are urged to compare the requirements of the HG papers with the requirements of the SG papers and to advise their candidates wisely regarding their choice of grade.
3. Please make use of the November 2001, 2002, 2003 and March 2004 papers, among others, in preparing your candidates for the November 2004 (and March 2005) examinations.
4. In preparing candidates for the examinations in this subject, educators must insist that the candidates meticulously follow the instructions. It serves no purpose allowing in internal examinations what will not be accepted from the Senior Certificate candidate or will be to his or her disadvantage.
5. Marking this particular question paper highlighted what might seem to be a rather obvious fact, and that is that candidates who were naturally comfortable with English as a means of communication did well in answering the paper, while those who were not comfortable with English, fared rather badly.
6. Teachers would still do well to pay attention to the following findings. These are presented in the form of suggestions and teachers are encouraged to allow these suggestions to inform their lessons for 2004:

THE COMPREHENSION

Quoting

1. Candidates must be taught to quote only when instructed to do so. Comprehension questions should, as a rule, be answered in the candidates' own words.
2. Quoted text must appear between inverted commas.
3. A quote is an exact transcription of a section of the text. As such, there should be no changes made to either the spelling of the words or their order. Neither should other words be inserted into sentences.
4. When the quote is requested as part of, say, a 'TRUE or FALSE' answer, a paraphrasing of a section of the text (starting the answer with "because") cannot be regarded as a quote.
5. The ability to use ellipses correctly seems to be unknown in many of the candidates' answers. This is a useful skill to have as it obviates the need to rewrite long sections of text. Note that a quote that has been shortened without using ellipses can no longer be regarded as a quote.
6. Many candidates, especially those who scored low marks, seemed unfamiliar with the instruction to quote either a certain number of words or "**consecutive words**". These instructions should be explained and used in internal question papers. Note that a mark is awarded if the quote contains only that particular number of words, correctly spelt, in the proper, consecutive order and placed between inverted commas.
7. The word "brief", as in "Quote briefly in support of your answer", should be interpreted to mean that the quote provided could be less than, but never more than a full sentence in length.

THE SUMMARY

1. For the last few years, the numbered point-form summary has been tested in this paper. This is a most useful form of summary skill and should be practised at length. Candidates should be aware that they do forfeit marks if they present their summary in paragraph form. An extreme

form of penalty would be to regard the entire paragraph as one point, and then to mark the first sentence only!

2. Even though direct quotes from the text were accepted as points, candidates who answered in this manner forfeited their language mark component (2 marks) of the total mark allocation for the summary question. As a rule, a summary must consist of points phrased in the candidate's own words. All that this means, is that the candidate should paraphrase the point as stated in the text.
3. Impress upon candidates that the summary question is not an exercise in creative writing. The instruction to summarise does not and will never imply that candidates should give their own opinions / views / suggestions.
4. The mark allocation for the summary always consists of 3 components. This should be brought to candidates' attention. For the 2002 paper it was as follows: 7 points – 7 marks; faultless language usage – 2 marks; word limit acceptable and correctly indicated – 1 mark.

LANGUAGE IN ACTION QUESTIONS

1. Teachers are encouraged to expose their learners to the entire language syllabus and not to focus narrowly and exclusively on the “old faithfuls” like tense and concord, however important these might be.
2. When addressing language issues, teachers are encouraged to test these in a variety of formats. For example, candidates should not associate reported speech with cartoons only.
3. Frequent use of the adapted passage format (as was used in this paper) is encouraged. It is easy to set up, relatively quick to mark, and will expose learners to all the language structures as set out in the syllabus.

In conclusion, candidates who had mastered the essential skills of language and followed instructions, scored well in all sections.