

## ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE H.G. PAPER 2

- The general point should be made at the outset, that candidates should read questions thoroughly. It is only through understanding the question that a coherent answer can be formulated, instead of a learnt answer reproduced. Candidates should be taught the meanings of examiner's terminology. For example:

**list** (Write down only the relevant items, preferably one below the other. Full sentences are not required.)

**mention** (The relevant items must be given.)

**describe** (Identify the salient features of a phenomenon. Avoid personal interpretation.)

**contrast** (Describe the differences between two or more items.)

**compare** (Describe the similarities between two or more items.)

- The length of some answers were out of all proportion to the mark allocation. Such answers contained the correct answer at their beginning, but then rambled on interminably. This type of answer normally counts against candidates, as they contradict themselves at the end of the answer. In such cases, the mark is not awarded. The following is a useful guide: Look at the mark(s) allocated to each question:

1 mark	= 1 idea
2 marks	= 2 ideas/examples
3 marks	= more elaboration and explanation

- Candidates should be drilled to read questions closely and to identify the particular format in which the answer is required. For example, where the question stipulates that the answer should be given in no more than 2 words, any additional words nullify the first two, even though the correct answer might be among the words given.
- Candidates should be taught not to repeat the question as part of their answer.
- The candidates for this examination were able to identify figures of speech. However, very few were able to *comment on the effectiveness of a particular figure of speech*. Candidates were required to explain how a figure of speech either illuminates the reader's understanding or the writer's claim (effective) or how it obfuscates understanding or the writer's claim (ineffective). This skill will always be tested in the Higher Grade paper.
- The teaching of **the pun**, **irony** and **symbolism** appeared to have been neglected. These are important literary devices, and should be taught so as to enhance candidates' appreciation of the prescribed books and to enable them to answer the questions. **Irony**, in particular, must be understood as the contrast (either humorous or tragic) between an intended meaning and the actual meaning of an utterance or action. Questions that address irony therefore require answers that illuminate this contrast. Answers should not merely state one or the other meaning.
- Candidates should be reminded not to use colloquialisms in their answers, e.g. "mad" instead of "angry".
- When teachers set internal papers, they should ensure that their questions draw extensively on the candidates' knowledge of events occurring throughout the prescribed work. Candidates must be able to identify the extract in terms of its significance in the narrative.
- Teachers should keep in mind that plays are meant to be performed and should therefore be taught with their visual and oral elements in mind. Learners should be taught to see the sense of a character's movements and how this augments (complements or detracts from) what he or she says. Stage directions, as well as advice to actors, are important components in the play, and reveal vital information about a character's motivation and/or inner struggle.
- **Quoting**

It should be impressed upon candidates that, unless specifically requested, quotations alone do not constitute answers.

When candidates are required to show evidence of their understanding, they must express their opinions in their own words. To master this skill, synonym and paraphrasing exercises should be set. Ploys such as shuffling the word order of a quote, or merely using a different member of a word's family to express the core idea of a quote, are unacceptable.

In this regard, it would be instructive to learners if, after having written a paper, educators could show them exactly where in that paper they were required to quote. A quotation is an unaltered repetition of a selection of text from the extract or poem. Therefore, a spelling error or word omitted, for instance, invalidates the quotation, and no marks can be awarded. Where words have deliberately been omitted from a quotation, ellipsis ( ... ) must be used. All quotations must be placed between inverted commas. Failure to do this could result in the loss of a mark.

- **Linked questions**

The weaker candidates fared poorly in these questions. This is a questioning format where a series of subsequent questions all flow from an initial question. This means that it is impossible to answer the subsequent questions correctly if the initial question had been answered incorrectly. An example from the paper:

1.5.1 *What figure of speech is presented in the words “swatting of shame”?*

1.5.2 *How is this figure of speech effective in showing how this incident with the beggar bothered the poet?’*

Candidates must be taught that the subsequent questions (which can be identified by the numbering) all address a common theme or concern, and that the questions have to be interpreted in that way. In a linked question, the candidate must answer the initial question correctly in order for the subsequent answers to be considered. The implication of this is that, should a candidate answer the initial question incorrectly, but have the correct answer for the subsequent question, that candidate will not be credited with the mark for the subsequent question.