

# **GENERAL RESUMÉ OF THE CHIEF EXAMINERS’ REPORTS FOR THE WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION FOR SCHOOL CANDIDATES, 2017**

## **1. STANDARD OF THE PAPERS**

The Chief Examiners affirmed in their reports that the papers were of the required standard within the scope of the syllabuses and compared favourably with that of previous years. They also reported that the questions were fairly spread over the topics in the syllabuses and were unambiguous.

## **2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES**

### **(1) LANGUAGES**

The Chief Examiners ascribed different performance strands to candidates’ output in the Language subjects. While an ‘improved performance’ was observed for Gonja 2 and Fante 1, they reported ‘above average’ for English Language 2 and Ewe 2, ‘below average’ in French, Dangme 1 and Ga 1, and poor in Dangme 2 and Gonja 1.

### **(2) HUMANITIES**

The Chief Examiners made two main observations in respect of the performance of candidates. Government 2, History 2, Christian Religious Studies 2, Economics 2, Music 2, and Music 3B saw an improvement in performance. However, a decline in performance over the previous year was reported for Social Studies 2, Geography 2 and Geography 3, Islamic Studies 2 and Music 3A.

### **(3) SCIENCE**

According to the Chief Examiners, the performance of candidates for Animal Husbandry and Forestry was good. Candidates for Fisheries, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture, Physics and Chemistry were reported to have performed averagely. In Integrated Science and General Agriculture, candidates performed poorly.

### **(4) MATHEMATICS**

The Chief Examiners for Mathematics (Core) 2 and Mathematics (Elective) 2 pointed out that the performance this year was not encouraging. However, that of Mathematics (Core) 2 was slightly better than last year’s.

(5) **BUSINESS SUBJECTS**

The Chief Examiners reported that there was a marginal improvement in performance for Principles of Cost Accounting 2, Typewriting and Business Management. On the other hand, performance of candidates for Financial Accounting 2 and Clerical Office Duties 2 was not encouraging.

(6) **TECHNICAL SUBJECTS**

According to the chief examiners the performance of candidates in the various Technical subjects varied. They reported that performance in Technical Drawing 2 and 3, Auto Mechanics 3, Woodwork 2 and 3, Building Construction 2 and 3 was encouraging. On the other hand, the Chief Examiners for Auto Mechanic 2, Electronics 2 and 3 reported a poor performance of candidates.

However, for Information Communication and Technology 2 and 3 the Chief Examiners reported an average performance.

(7) **VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS**

According to the Chief Examiners, performance of candidates varied, ranging from 'poor' in Clothing and Textiles 2, 'below average' in Picture Making 2, General Knowledge in Art 3, Leatherwork 2, Sculpture 2, Foods and Nutrition 2, Graphic Design 2, Textiles 2, Leatherwork 2, Ceramics 2, and 'average' in General Knowledge in Art 2 and Management in Living 2 and 3.

(3) **SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' STRENGTHS**

(1) **LANGUAGES**

Some commendable features were identified in candidates' scripts. Notable among them include the following:

(a) **Adherence to Rubrics**

In English Language 2, Dangme 2, Ewe 1 and French 2 candidates were highly commended for attempting all questions as required by the rubrics of the papers, writing full length essays and answering composition question without deviation.

(b) **Good Organization of Essays**

Good candidates in French 2, English Language 2, Ewe 2, Nzema 1 and Literature-In-English 2 and 3 presented their ideas in an orderly manner staying clear of winding and inappropriate introduction to their essays.

- (c) Ability to apply themes to aspects of life  
In Literature in English 2 and 3, Asante Twi 2 and Kasem 2 for instance, candidates were lauded for using illustrative details from the text to support their point. Some candidates were also commended for appropriate use of figurative expressions.
- (d) Knowledge of the Formal Features of Essay Writing  
Some candidates for English Language 2, Dagaare 1 and Gonja 1 were commended for exhibiting mastery in the use of formal features of the different forms of essays such as speech writing, articles, debates and letter writing.
- (e) Good approach to answering summary and comprehension questions  
In English Language 2, candidates were commended for using appropriate sentences and phrases in answering the questions on summary and comprehension passages.

(2) **HUMANITIES SUBJECTS**

The Chief Examiners noted the following commendable features in the candidates' scripts.

- (a) Adherence to Rubrics  
Candidates for Social Studies 2, Government 2, Economics 2, History 2, Christian Religious Studies 2 were reported to have followed the dictates of the rubrics.
- (b) Orderly Presentation of Material and Good Expression  
Candidates were commended for orderly presentation of facts in clear comprehensible language and use of good expressions in the following papers: Social Studies, Government 2, History 2, Economics 2 and Christian Religious Studies 2.
- (c) In-Depth Knowledge of Subject Matter  
In Social Studies , Government 2, History 2, Economics 2, Christian Religious Studies 2, Music 3A and 3B, Geography 2 and 3 candidates demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the various topics in the respective syllabuses.

(3) **SCIENCE SUBJECTS**

(a) **Legible Handwriting and adherence to rubrics**

Candidates were commended for legible handwriting, adherence to rubrics and orderly presentation of work in the following subjects: Integrated Science, Physics, Biology, General Agriculture, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry.

(b) **Provision of concise answers:**

Candidates for Integrated Science 3, General Agriculture 2, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture 3, Forestry 2 and 3, Biology 3 were lauded by the Chief Examiners for providing concise answers.

(c) **Usage of scientific terms:**

Candidates were highly commended for the use and correct spelling of scientific terms in Integrated Science, Chemistry and Animal Husbandry.

(4) **MATHEMATICS**

(1) The Chief Examiner for Mathematics (Core) 2 catalogued some of the strengths of candidates as follows:

Candidates' ability to

- (i) use venn diagram to solve a probability problem;
- (ii) simplify and express trigonometric expression in a surd form;
- (iii) complete table of values for a quadratic relation and drawing the graph of the relation using given scale and interval;
- (iv) use a given mean to find the value of a variable of a statistical data;
- (v) evaluate a given binary operation defined on a set of real numbers;
- (vi) find the midpoint of a given vector and express it as a column vector.

(2) The Chief Examiner for Mathematics (Elective) 2 commended candidates for their ability to:

- (i) find inverse and composite functions;
- (ii) find the equation of a circle;
- (iii) find the first term, common difference and the sum of the first ten terms of an Arithmetic Progression (A. P);
- (iv) find the values of an unknown variable in a polynomial expression;
- (v) draw a cumulative frequency curve for a given distribution;
- (vi) express polynomial functions in partial fractions.

(5) **BUSINESS SUBJECTS**

(1) The Chief Examiners for Principles of Cost Accounting 2 and Business Management 2 commended the candidates in the following areas:

- (a) Arranging work in an orderly manner;
- (b) In-depth knowledge of the subject matter;
- (c) Providing precise answers;
- (d) Explaining business terminologies correctly ;
- (e) Using illustrations to support their answers where applicable.

(2) The Chief Examiner for Typewriting commended candidates for the ability to:

- (a) Demonstrate understanding of the rubrics and other marginal instructions;
- (b) Show consistency in style of production work;
- (c) Exhibit correct ruling of tabular work;
- (d) Show correct use of line spacing in letter and tabulation.

(6) **TECHNICAL SUBJECTS**

The Chief Examiners identified the following as strengths of the candidates:

(a) Orderly Presentation of Answers

Candidates for Metalwork 2, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) 2, Building Construction 2 and 3 and Electronics 2 were commended for arranging their work neatly, writing legibly, and providing concise answers.

(b) Application of Knowledge and Skills

Candidates for ICT 3 showed an improvement in query creation. In Technical Drawing 3, most candidates who opted for mechanical drawing showed improvement over that of previous years. Some candidates for Electronics 2 showed in-depth knowledge of classes of amplifiers and combinational logic circuit.

(c) Exhibition of Good Practical Skills

Majority of candidates for Woodwork 3 and were commended for the ability to interpret the working drawings and mark out correctly. Candidates for Electronics 3 were also commended for performing the experiments correctly.

(7) **VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS**

The Chief Examiners highlighted the following strengths in candidates' work:

- (a) Improved knowledge in the use of sewing in Clothing and Textiles.
- (b) Appropriate use of terminologies and correct spellings of words for Textiles 2, Picture Making 2, Basketry 2, Food and Nutrition 3 and Management in Living 3.
- (c) Skillful use of tools and materials was exhibited in General Knowledge in Art and Clothing and Textiles.
- (d) Display of in-depth knowledge on healthy studio practices in Ceramics 2 and Sculpture 2.

4. **SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' WEAKNESSES AND SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

(1) **LANGUAGES**

(1) **WEAKNESSES**

(a) **Ghanaian Languages**

The Chief Examiners for the Ghanaian Languages identified poor orthography and inappropriate use of language as the commonest weakness in the candidates' work

(b) **English Language 2**

The Chief Examiners for English Language pointed out that some candidates;

- (i) resorted to the use of pidgin English;
- (ii) had limited stock of vocabulary;
- (iii) could not use appropriate vocabulary to describe situations;

(c) **Literature-in-English 2 and French 2**

For Literature-in- English 2 and French 2, candidates were said to have exhibited the following deficiencies:

- (i) poor knowledge of the text;
- (ii) poor use of expressions;
- (iii) inappropriate use of grammar.

(2) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

A number of recommendations were given to address the weaknesses identified. These include:

- (a) Emphasis on spelling drills .
- (b) Extensive reading of good material to improve language usage.
- (c) Literary devices should be learned not in isolation, but within the contexts of texts studied.
- (d) Exercises on summary and comprehension should be carried out frequently. Teachers must place emphasis on explaining errors made by students and teach them the correct way of answering questions on passages.
- (e) Literature-in-English and Ghanaian Language candidates should do thorough reading of their texts in order to be able to appreciate them well.

(2) **HUMANITIES**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiners noted the following weaknesses of the candidates.

For Christian Religious studies 2, Geography 2, Economics 2 and History 2, the following weaknesses were noted:

- (a) lack of adequate preparation for the examination;
- (b) deviations in answering questions and raising of points in essays without explanations;
- (c) lack of knowledge of the subject matter.

In Geography 3 candidates performed poorly due to

- (a) difficulty in sketching of maps and drawing of diagrams
- (b) inability of candidates to draw cross profile of the area specified
- (c) inability to establish the relationship between relief and transportation network on topographical maps among others.

For Music the weaknesses identified included

- (i) poor knowledge of chord progression and cadences;
- (ii) misinterpreted some of the rhythms in pieces;
- (iii) inability to pitch accurately and thus lost the tonal centre.

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

- (i) Candidates should be encouraged to read the approved textbooks for their subjects;
- (ii) Candidates should read and understand questions before attempting them;
- (iii) Candidates should read extensively to enrich their vocabulary and use of terminologies.
- (iv) Candidates must be taught the rudiments of music by their teachers.

(3) **SCIENCE SUBJECTS**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiner reported the following weaknesses of candidates:

(i) **Lack of mastery of subject matter:**

Candidates showed lack of adequate knowledge of subject matter for example Magnetism and Animal Nutrition in Integrated Science; Optics in Physics; Qualitative Analysis in Chemistry and Genetic Diagram Construction in Biology.

(ii) **Misunderstanding of the questions:**

Though questions were unambiguous, candidates had poor grasp of the demands of the questions set in Biology 3, Animal Husbandry 2 and 3, Fisheries 2 among others.

(iii) **Wrong spelling of scientific terms:**

The Chief Examiners for Integrated Science 3, General Agriculture 2 and 3 Fisheries 3, Physics 3, and Chemistry 2 reported that candidates could not spell scientific terms correctly.

(iv) **Poor computation and drawing Skills:**

The inability of most candidates to manipulate figures and sketching of objects was a source of worry for the Chief Examiners for Integrated Science 3, Physics 2 and 3 and Chemistry 3.

- (v) Other notable weaknesses reported by the Chief Examiners include:  
Inability to carry out simple calculations  
Inability to assign proper units to figures

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

The Chief Examiners for science subjects generally recommended that candidates should be taken through enough practical lessons to improve their performance.

The Chief Examiners also suggested that Candidates should:

- (i) prepare adequately before taking examinations.
- (ii) be encouraged to take lessons in Mathematics seriously to enhance their computation skills.
- (iii) be advised to read through examination questions carefully before attempting them.
- (iv) make the effort to understand and use scientific names and terms appropriately.

(4) **MATHEMATICS**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiner for Mathematics (Core) 2 listed the following weaknesses of candidates as difficulty in:

- (a) finding the value of a logarithmic expression;
- (b) translating word story problems into mathematical statement and solving them;
- (c) solving problems involving geometry, such as cyclic quadrilaterals, tangent and chord theorem;
- (d) finding the product of two matrices;
- (e) solving problems involving financial mathematics.

The Chief Examiner for Mathematics (Elective) 2 listed the following weaknesses of candidates as difficulty in:

- (a) solving probability related problems;
- (b) applying the laws of logarithms;
- (c) finding the integration of a function using trapezium rule;
- (d) finding the angle between two vectors;

- (e) resolving forces to find the value of an unknown forces;
- (f) drawing histogram with unequal class intervals.

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

The Chief Examiners for Mathematics (Core) 2 and Mathematics (Elective) 2 suggested that teachers should encourage students to learn and understand the concepts of the Mathematics topics in the syllabuses.

They also suggested that teachers should make the teaching of Mathematics lively and interesting for candidates to appreciate the topics in the syllabuses.

(5) **BUSINESS SUBJECTS**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiners identified the following weaknesses:

(i) **Poor Expression in English Language**

The Chief Examiners for Business Management, Typewriting and Principles of Cost Accounting reported that some of the candidates could not express themselves in good English even when they stated the right point.

(ii) **Misunderstanding of Questions Set**

The Chief Examiners for Principles of Cost Accounting and Business - Management reported that some of the candidates deviated in answering some questions.

(iii) The Chief Examiner for Typewriting reported of candidates' inability to demonstrate mastery of the keyboard.

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

The Chief Examiners suggested the following remedies for the weaknesses enumerated:

- (i) Candidates should be advised to take their time to read questions well and to understand their requirements before answering them.

- (ii) Candidates should also be advised to adequately prepare for examinations. A lot of practice with past examination questions would go a long way to improve performance. A lot of exercises must also be given as part of the preparation for the examination.
- (iii) Every section of the syllabus must also be given adequate attention to give candidates more options.
- (iv) For subjects that require skills such as Typewriting, a lot of keyboard work need to be done. Mastering of the keyboard will give the candidate the needed Speed and Accuracy.

(6) **TECHNICAL SUBJECTS**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiners identified the following weaknesses in candidates' work:

(i) **Inadequate Preparation for the Examination**

Majority of the candidates did not prepare adequately for the examination as they demonstrated limited knowledge in the basics of the subjects as shown in Technical Drawing 2, Building Construction 2, Electronics 2, Information and Communication Technology 2 and Metalwork 2.

(ii) **Poor Practical Skills**

Performance of some candidates for Woodwork 3, Auto Mechanics 3, Technical Drawing 3 and ICT 3 revealed lack of practical exercises.

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

Some of the remedies recommended were as follows:

- (i) ensuring that more practical lessons and exercises are taught to deepen candidates' understanding of their subjects.
- (ii) Candidates should lay much emphasis on mastering the application of principles and desist from rote learning.

(7) **VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS**

(a) **WEAKNESSES**

The Chief Examiners found the following weaknesses in the work of the candidates:

- (i) Poor drawing skills were reported in General Knowledge in Art 3A, Jewellery 2 and Visual Art 3.
- (ii) Inability of candidates to apply certain principles to practical situations was evident in General Knowledge in Art 2, Clothing and Textiles 3, Management in Living 3 and Textiles 2.
- (iii) Poor spelling of basic terminologies and words in Clothing and Textiles 2, Jewellery, Management in-living 3, Ceramics 2, Foods and Nutrition 2B, Picture Making 2, Basketry 2, Leatherwork 2 and Sculpture 2.

(b) **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

The Chief Examiners suggested that the following remedies could address the challenges.

- (i) Candidates should be given more assignments which involve all types of drawing and shading.
- (ii) Candidates should be encouraged to read prescribed textbooks in addition to notes given by their tutors.
- (iii) Teachers should teach candidates how to handle tools and materials well and should use as many text books as possible to teach.
- (iv) Candidates should be encouraged to learn and use the terminologies associated with their subjects.