

THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

ACCRA, GHANA

WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (WASSCE)

MAY/JUNE 2014

GENERAL RESUME OF THE CHIEF EXAMINERS' REPORTS FOR GHANA

1. STANDARD OF THE PAPERS

All the Chief Examiners unanimously reported that the standard of the papers compared favourably with that of the previous years. Their comments further indicated that the questions were unambiguous and within the scope of the various syllabuses.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

The Chief Examiners gave varying reports on the performance of candidates. These ranged from good to poor. For instance, there was a slight improvement in the performance of candidates for Technical Drawing 3, Building Construction 3, Dangme 1, Integrated Science 3, Biology 2 and Social Studies 2.

For French 2, Ewe 2 and English Language 2, the Chief Examiners reported that candidates' performance was similar to previous years. The performance of candidates was reportedly average in Metalwork 3, Auto Mechanics 3, Akuapem Twi 1, Physics 2, Physics 3, Mathematics (Core) 2, Mathematics (Elective) 2 and General Agriculture 3 to name a few.

However, the Chief Examiner for Literature-in-English reported that candidates' performance fell 'below expectation'. Other Chief Examiners reported a 'poor' performance for candidates in Islamic Studies 2, Christian Religious Studies 2, Geography 2, Geography 3, History 2, Economics 2, Integrated Science 2 and Chemistry 2 for example.

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Elective paper was written for the first time this year. Though the standard of the paper was said to be appropriate for the WASSCE level, the Chief Examiners reported that the performance of candidates was ‘poor’ for ICT 2 and ‘woefully inadequate’ for ICT 3.

3. A SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES’ STRENGTHS

The Chief Examiners noted the following commendable features in candidates’ scripts:

(1) Adherence to Rubrics

The Chief Examiners for Islamic Studies 2, Economics 2, Geography 2, Biology 2, Chemistry 2, Integrated Science 2, General Agriculture 3, Literature-in-English 3, Akuapem Twi 2 and Fante 2 among others, commended many candidates for keeping to the rubrics of the papers they wrote. Such candidates chose the correct number of questions from the relevant sections as required.

(2) Good Organizational Skills/Orderly Presentation of Materials

A good number of candidates for Government 2, Geography 2, Islamic Studies 2, Building Construction 3, Auto Mechanics 2, Integrated Science 2, Biology 2, Ewe 2 were commended for presenting their responses in an orderly manner. Their work was well-numbered, properly spaced out and in well-arranged paragraphs.

(3) Mastery of Subject Matter

Chief Examiners for Dangme 1, French 2, Geography 3, Christian Religious Studies 2, Applied Electricity 3 and Auto Mechanics 2 reported that a few candidates displayed an in-depth knowledge of subject-matter. For instance some candidates for Auto Mechanics 2 explained principles well, supporting their answers with accurate sketches. Also the Chief Examiner for Biology 3 was impressed with the improvement in biological drawing by most candidates.

(4) **Knowledge of Formal Features of Essay Writing**

Some candidates for English Language 2, French 2 and Ewe 1 were also commended for the able manner in which they handled the formal features of essay such as speech writing, letter writing, and debates.

(5) **Appropriate Use of Language**

A few candidates were applauded for making appropriate and effective use of language in areas such as diction, syntax and expression. Examples were cited in Asante Twi 1, Dangme 1 and Fante 2. The Chief Examiners for Government 2, Economics 2, Geography 2, Christian Religious Studies 2 observed that some candidates demonstrated a good command of the English Language.

(6) **Good Computational Skills**

The Chief Examiners for Chemistry 3 and Physics 2 commended candidates for displaying good computational skills.

4. **A SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' WEAKNESSES**

Notwithstanding the commendable features noted, the Chief Examiners identified the following weaknesses in candidates' work:

(1) **Non-Adherence to Rubrics**

The Chief Examiners for Government 2, Christian Religious Studies 2, Social Studies 2, English Language 2, Nzema 1 reported that several candidates failed to observe the rubrics of the papers, thereby losing precious marks.

The Chief Examiners for Information and Communication Technology 2 and Auto Mechanics 2 reported that some candidates could not follow the simple instructions on the use of the answer booklets. Consequently, their answers to sub-questions were scattered in several pages of the booklets.

(2) **Inadequate Preparation**

A significant number of candidates were not adequately prepared for the examination. This lack of in-depth knowledge of their subject-matter was reportedly seen in the responses of many candidates for Chemistry 2, Physics 2, General Agriculture 2, English Language 2, French 2, Literature-in-English 3 and Woodwork 3 for example. In ICT 3 for instance, many candidates did not know what a database software is, and used Microsoft Excel when they should have used Microsoft Access. In addition a significant number of ICT 3 candidates did not know how to save their work on the CDs provided and thereby lost marks. In Financial Accounting, candidates had difficulty in preparing Bank Reconciliation Statements.

(3) **Misunderstanding of Questions and Deviation**

The Chief Examiners for Business Management, Biology 3, Chemistry 2, French 2, Ewe 2, Auto Mechanics 2 and Integrated Science 2, among others, reported that the responses of several candidates portrayed that they did not understand the questions that were set. This failure of candidates to appreciate the demands of the questions led to deviations in their answers. In Government 2, Geography 2, Literature-in-English 2 and Islamic Studies 2 for instance, several candidates introduced a lot of irrelevant points in their answers.

(4) **Lack of Understanding of Scientific Terms and Mathematical Concepts**

The Chief Examiners for Crop Husbandry and Horticulture 3, Fisheries 2, Forestry 2 expressed concern over the lack of understanding of scientific terms by some candidates. Some candidates for Animal Husbandry 3, Biology 3, General Agriculture 3 reportedly did not adhere to the convention of writing scientific names.

The Chief Examiners for Mathematics (Core) 2 and Mathematics (Elective) 2 were also concerned that several candidates showed a lack of understanding of the basic concepts of logarithms, plane geometry, circle theorem. They also bemoaned the inability of these candidates to translate word problems into mathematical statements or to solve and evaluate given functions or probability related problems.

(5) **Poor Orthography**

The Chief Examiners for English Language 2, Literature-in-English 2, Literature-in-English 3, Government 2, Economic 2, Islamic Studies 2, Geography 2, Christian Religious Studies 2 and several of the Ghanaian Languages reported that a significant number of candidates could not spell words correctly; scientific terms were also wrongly spelt by several candidates for Biology 2, Biology 3, Animal Husbandry 2, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture 2 among others.

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

Several Chief Examiners expressed concern over the poor construction of sentences by many candidates in English Language 2, Literature-in-English 3, Government 2, Christian Religious Studies 2, Economics 2, Geography 2, Islamic Studies 2, Animal Husbandry 2, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture 2, General Agriculture 2, Integrated Science 2, Building Construction 3 and ICT 2. Consequently, examiners found it difficult to understand what the candidates wanted to put across.

(7) **Poor Handwriting**

The Chief Examiners for English Language 2, French 2, Literature-in-English 2, Literature-in-English 3, Integrated Science 2, General Agriculture 2, Crop Husbandry and Horticulture 2 reported that the handwriting of a substantial number of candidates was appalling. This made their work difficult to read.

5. SUGGESTED REMEDIES

The Chief Examiners gave a number of recommendations to address the weaknesses identified. These measures include the following:

- (1) Through mock examinations, tutors should help candidates to understand and follow the rubrics in their papers
- (2) Tutors should endeavour to cover all the topics in the various syllabuses thoroughly with their students. They should also place emphasis on more class exercises, spelling drills and speed work in subjects such as Mathematics, English Language and Typewriting. Practical exposure for subjects such as ICT, Auto Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, General Agriculture and the like should also receive more attention.
- (3) Candidates should be urged to read the questions carefully and understand them before attempting to write their responses. Once they know the requirements of questions, they they are not likely to deviate in their answers.
- (4) Tutors should teach students the convention of writing scientific names and properly explain basic mathematical concepts to them.
- (5) Extensive and intensive reading of good material by students to enrich their stock of vocabulary and improve their use of language should be encouraged.
- (6) More emphasis should be placed on the teaching of grammar e.g. sequence of tenses, syntax, by tutors of English Language. Candidates for Literature-in-English will benefit from a thorough study and appreciation of set texts instead of relying on pamphlets.
- (7) Students should be advised to cultivate the habit of writing clearly.