

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2**

### **1. GENERAL COMMENTS**

The standard of the paper was comparable with that of the previous years. The questions were clear, within the scope of the syllabus, and at the level of the candidates. Candidates' performance showed little improvement over that of the past year.

The paper consisted of three parts: Part A comprises three essay questions of which candidates were required to answer only one in not fewer than 250 words. Part B was on comprehension. Here, candidates were given a passage to read and answer questions based on it.

Part C (Literature) was made up of compulsory questions based on extracts selected from the book 'The Cockcrow' compiled by Darmani L. and Sackey J.A. The excerpts were specifically taken from 'Charles Dickens' 'Oliver Twist'; 'Debbie, Sandy and Pepe by Merrill Corney; 'The Dilemma of a Ghost' by Ama Ata Aidoo and 'Scribbler's Dream' by Lawrence Darmani.

### **2. SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' STRENGTHS**

A few of the candidates made judicious use of the English language and displayed a remarkable degree of knowledge of the formal features of the essays they wrote.

Some of the candidates seemed to be adept at answering questions on the comprehension and literature aspects of the paper as their works in these parts were good.

### **3. SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' WEAKNESSES**

A number of the candidates could not tell a debate from an ordinary argumentative writing and consequently wrote the former instead of the latter.

Also, some of the candidates seemed to have lost focus of the requirements of the essay questions. To cite an instance, there were a number of candidates who answered Question 3 and instead of simply requesting the maintenance of the existing buildings, they asked for the putting up of new structures.

Again, there were others who displayed a lack of appropriate vocabulary items and this hindered their ability to express themselves clearly and meaningfully.

Grammatical and syntactical errors obtruded in the answers of almost all the candidates and thereby significantly diminished their marks.

In addition, many of the candidates displayed very little acquaintance with the set texts from 'The Cockcrow' and obtained appallingly low marks. Questions on figures of speech also posed great difficulty to most of the candidates.

Finally, a lot of the candidates had difficulty with answering wh-questions.

#### 4. **SUGGESTED REMEDIES**

- (1) Candidates should pay more attention to the study of the grammar and structure of the English language.
- (2) They should be helped to distinguish between the various types of essays.
- (3) They should read widely and also use the dictionary often so that they can improve upon their stock of vocabulary and power of expression.
- (4) They should be made to do a lot of exercises on essay writing.
- (5) They should be encouraged to read the selected texts in ‘The Cockcrow’ carefully.
- (6) They should study literary devices in order that they would be able to identify them in texts.
- (7) They should read the questions carefully for thorough understanding before proceeding to answer them.
- (8) They should be assisted to learn the techniques of answering questions, especially wh-questions on comprehension passages.

#### 5. **DETAILED COMMENTS**

##### **Part A**

The essay questions are as follows:

##### **Question 1**

*As School Prefect, write a letter to your District or Municipal or Metropolitan Chief Executive requesting the maintenance of the buildings in your school.*

##### **Question 2**

*Write arguments for or against the topic: “Life in the city is more dangerous than that in the village”.*

##### **Question 3**

*Write a report to the Headteacher of your school about how a senior girl beat up a junior boy.*

### **Question 1**

This was a popular question wherein the candidates were expected to write a letter to their District/Municipal/Metropolitan Chief Executives requesting the maintenance of the buildings in their schools.

Most of the candidates who answered this question did very well as they correctly understood it as asking them to present their responses in the form of formal letters. Many of them recognised that they were to make requests of their DCEs/ MCEs. However, some of the candidates wavered in their requests and asked for new structures to be put up instead of simply requesting the maintenance of the existing buildings.

### **Question 2**

In this question, candidates were required to write arguments for or against the topic: “Life in the city is more dangerous than that in the village”. This is an argumentative writing and the candidates were expected to take a stand and advance, at least, two arguments to support it. A lot of the candidates who attempted this question wrote letters or debates instead of the simple or ordinary argumentative essays expected of them. This showed that they could not tell between these forms of essays.

### **Question 3**

Here, candidates were required to write a report to the Head teacher of their school about how a senior girl beat up a junior boy. Essays with the formal features of a report and a blend of description and narration were expected. Regrettably, a number of candidates who attempted this question wrote letters and ended up losing marks.

Some of the candidates seemed to have lost focus of the requirements of the question. To cite an instance, there were a number of them who, instead of simply writing about a senior girl beating up a junior boy, mixed up the characters and their corresponding actions.

## **PART B — COMPREHENSION**

### **Question 4**

This was a mandatory question. Candidates were required to read a passage and answer the questions based on it. It was meant to assess candidates’ ability to read and understand a given passage.

Answers provided by many of the candidates exposed their weaknesses in understanding the passage and providing the expected responses. Many of them simply copied parts of the passage and presented them as answers. It was also evident that a large number of the candidates had difficulty with answering wh-questions. In some instances, the candidates had the required information but wrongly framed the answers. This caused them to lose a lot of marks or score zero in these questions.

## **PART C — LITERATURE**

### **Question 5**

This question consisted of sub-questions based on extracts selected from the set book 'The Cockcrow' compiled by Darmani L. and Sackey J.A. The excerpts were specifically taken from Charles Dickens' 'Oliver Twist'; 'Debbie, Sandy and Pepe' by Merrill Corney; 'The Dilemma of a Ghost' by Ama Ata Aidoo and 'Scribbler's Dream' by Lawrence Darmani.

Some candidates exhibited familiarity with the set texts as they scored very good marks in this part of the paper. Others, however, displayed very little acquaintance with the texts and obtained abysmally low marks. Questions on figures of speech also posed great difficulty to many of the candidates.