

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SYLLABUS A & SYLLABUS B

The Certificate of Education English Language Examination offers alternative Syllabuses to cater for two different groups of candidates. Candidates may enter for Syllabus A or Syllabus B, but not both. The skills covered by the two syllabuses are broadly comparable. However, a higher standard is expected of candidates taking the Syllabus B Examination.

INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of the Examination is to assess candidates' achievement of the aims of the Syllabus for English Language (Secondary) prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and recommended for use in schools by the Education Department.

AIMS

To assess the ability of candidates to:

1. understand ideas, facts, opinions and feelings presented through the medium of spoken and written language;
2. respond to, evaluate and make use of ideas, facts, opinions and feelings which may be presented in an integrated manner through the medium of spoken and written language;
3. express their own views, feelings and ideas, imaginative and otherwise, and describe, discuss and reflect upon their own experiences through the medium of spoken and written language;
4. interact with others through the medium of spoken and written language.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the ability of candidates to:

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Paper 1 | – | produce a written text in response to a written communication or instructions. |
| Paper 2 | – | demonstrate an understanding of, and at times make inferences from or make use of, ideas, facts, opinions and feelings presented in various types of written texts. |
| | – | demonstrate an awareness of the correct use of language. |
| Paper 3 | – | complete a variety of tasks by selecting and integrating information from spoken and written sources. |
| Paper 4 | – | use appropriate conversational strategies in interaction with others to work on given tasks. |

THE EXAMINATION

Paper 1 Writing (1 hr 10 mins)

(26%)

A choice of questions will be given, some of which may require more than one writing task. Questions will specify or imply context, reader and purpose for writing.

They will also require candidates to do one or more of the following.

- (i) to express their own views, feelings and ideas, imaginative and otherwise;
- (ii) to describe and discuss their own experiences;
- (iii) to respond to, reflect upon, evaluate and make use of given information.

The text produced by the candidate should be appropriate to the context, purpose and/or audience in terms of content, style and use of language.

Syllabus A candidates will be required to write about 200 words and Syllabus B candidates about 300 words.

For assessment purposes, equal weighting will be given to content and language. Content will be assessed in terms of interest, relevance, organisation, and appropriacy to the context. Language will be assessed in terms of the extent to which the candidate's style and use of sentence structures, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation support or interfere with successful communication.

It should be noted that the incorporation of memorised material, relevant or irrelevant, will be severely penalised.

(See Annex I for further information.)

Paper 2 Reading Comprehension and Usage (1½ hours) (24%)

Candidates will be required to respond to a variety of written texts. They will be required to demonstrate their ability to:

- (i) understand the overall meaning of a text as well as extract specific information from it;
- (ii) recognise, interpret and make inferences from opinions, assumptions, intentions, attitudes and feelings which occur explicitly or implicitly in a text;
- (iii) use linguistic and contextual clues and general knowledge to determine meaning;
- (iv) complete a text by supplying or selecting words or phrases which are semantically and syntactically appropriate to the overall meaning of the text;
- (v) modify a written draft so that the modified text makes sense and reflects a correct use of language;
- (vi) make use of information provided in a variety of texts to produce or complete a different type of text such as a text written for a different audience, with a different purpose or in a different style or format.

Since this paper is objective and wide-ranging, and tests both reading comprehension and usage, criteria for assessment will vary according to the item types.

(See Annex II for further information.)

Paper 3 Integrated Listening, Reading & Writing (1¾ hours) (32%)

Part A Short Tasks (10%)

Candidates will be required to select from and make use of information they hear and/or read in order to carry out a variety of short tasks.

Part B Extended Tasks (22%)

Candidates will be required to process information by selecting and combining data from both spoken and written sources in order to complete various writing tasks. At least one of these tasks will necessitate extended writing. All the information necessary to complete these tasks will be provided.

Assessment will be based on how well candidates complete the tasks, taking into account appropriacy to the purpose and context, relevance and organisation where applicable. Language will be assessed in terms of the extent to which use of sentence structures, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation supports or interferes with successful communication.

(See Annex III for further information.)

Paper 4 Oral English (approximately 10 minutes per candidate) (18%)

Part A Role play (9%)

The candidate and the two examiners will take part in a role play. The candidate will be required to perform a task with each examiner based on the instructions and information provided. The task will require the candidate to initiate a conversation, and elicit and pass on information in a manner appropriate to the role. The candidate will be assessed on conversational strategies and overall fluency.

Part B Group interaction (9%)

Four candidates grouped together will be presented with a situation and task, which they will work on together through discussion. The task will require candidates to express, elicit and respond to ideas, opinions and feelings. They may also need to seek and give clarification, sum up points made and redirect the discussion. Candidates will be assessed on their conversational strategies, overall fluency and the contribution they make to the interaction. The emphasis will be on effective communication rather than on task completion.

(See Annex IV for further information.)

ANNEX I

WRITING

While the candidate's writing is globally assessed, taking content and language equally into account, the achievement of a successful written communication will involve the candidate in the following considerations:

- appropriacy to context;
- awareness of reader(s);
- impact on the reader(s):
 - interest, style, and so on;
- expression of rhetorical functions:
 - generalisation, elaboration, explanation, definition, classification, illustration, hypothesis, deduction, implication, restatement, concession, reason, cause, consequence, comparison, contrast, summary, conclusion, and so on;
- sense of purpose of writing:
 - informing someone about something, making a proposal, appealing for something, considering an issue, changing somebody's mind, advising somebody, telling a story, defending/explaining a decision or action, persuading somebody to do something, and so on;
- management of types of writing:
 - analytical, expressive, descriptive, persuasive, argumentative, narrative and so on;
- use of conventions of common formats:
 - letters, articles, reports, speeches, stories and so on;
- development of an organised and cohesive text.

Pictures and other forms of graphic representation may be used in setting tasks.

ANNEX II

READING COMPREHENSION AND USAGE

This paper tests reading skills and an understanding of vocabulary which can be enhanced through reading extensively for both pleasure and information.

Texts may be drawn from a variety of sources including, for example, newspapers, magazines, government publications and promotional materials, and will be of the type commonly encountered in occupational, educational, social and recreational contexts.

Usage questions will be contextualised and may be based on the same text or on different texts. The question types and formats will vary from year to year.

Reading Comprehension

The candidates may be required to:

- follow and evaluate development of a point or an argument;
- recognise the theme of a passage;
- decide what the mood of the writer or the tone of the passage is;
- locate or extract specific information from a passage, and relate it to a particular point or the whole passage;
- recognise what rhetorical functions (e.g. example, contrast, elaboration, generalisation) sentences perform in the development of a text;
- distinguish different points of view and arguments;
- find the implications and draw inferences from the passage;
- appreciate the writer's relation with the reader and attitude to the subject matter;
- understand how sentences and parts of a sentence relate to each other;
- decide the probable meaning of words and phrases through a study of the context by making use of previous experience of word meanings;
- understand the different types of meanings of words (e.g. denotation, connotation, collocation), and the semantic associations that exist among words (e.g. semantic fields, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy)
- know what a word or phrase refers to in the previous or subsequent context;
- make use of knowledge of the world to make sense of the text;
- recognise how writing conventions such as punctuation marks affect meaning.

Usage

The candidate may be required to:

- complete or amend a text by supplying any missing words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs;
- rewrite or amend a text to create a new text which is appropriate in content, style and format for a different audience or a different purpose;
- proofread a text to locate and correct errors, which may include omissions and intrusions;
- demonstrate control of discourse features by pairing, matching or ordering sentences or paragraphs to produce a coherent text.

ANNEX III

INTEGRATED LISTENING, READING AND WRITING

Part A Short Tasks

Task types may include taking messages, writing short notes, filling in forms, and so on.

Part B Extended Tasks

To carry out the extended tasks candidates will need to select and integrate information relevant to each task from written and/or spoken material.

The written material may be in a variety of styles and formats, ranging in content from factual information to the expression of attitudes, opinions and beliefs. This material may be in prose form or be presented graphically, in tables, graphs, flow charts, pictures, and so on.

The spoken material will be on tape, and may be in the form of conversations, interviews, lectures, speeches, and so on.

The integrated tasks may involve writing, editing, amending or rewriting texts in the production or completion of one or more of the following:

- letters or replies to letters,
- memos,
- reports,
- summaries,
- articles,
- texts for talks or speeches,
- diary entries,
- instructions,
- tables, charts, and so on.

All writing tasks will be contextualised, i.e. all the information needed for completing the tasks will be provided in the written and spoken material, and the communicative purpose will be stated.

ANNEX IV

ORAL ENGLISH

Part A Role play

Before carrying out the role play, each candidate will be given preparation time to read the instructions and information provided.

During the role play, the candidate will play the same role throughout, but will have a different task to complete with each of the two examiners in turn. The candidate will elicit information from one examiner and then pass on this information in response to questions from the other examiner. Candidates may be required to introduce themselves, explain what information they require and why, and rephrase their questions in order to obtain further details, clarification or repetition. They will be required to pass on the information accurately and appropriately.

After completing the role play, candidates will be examined in groups of four.

Part B Group interaction

The group will be given copies of a written statement which presents a situation and a task. After silent preparation in the presence of the examiners, candidates will work together on the assigned task. This may involve them in expressing opinions, personal feelings and judgements, making suggestions, asking for clarification, supporting and developing each others' views, disagreeing and offering alternatives. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate appropriate conversational strategies and make a balanced contribution without either dominating the discussion or being too reticent.