

Aga Khan University Examination Board

Notes from E-Marking Centre on SSC Part I English Examination May 2014

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of SSC Part I (Class IX) English. It contains comments on candidate responses to the 2014 Secondary School Certificate examination, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

General Comments

This report includes overall comments on students' performance on every question and *some* specific examples of students' responses which support the mentioned comments. Please note that the descriptive comments represent an overall perception of the better and weaker responses as gathered from the e-marking session. Whereas, the candidates' responses shared (where deemed necessary) in this document represent some specific example(s) of the mentioned comments.

Paper II of SSC I English Compulsory comprised of three questions. Question 1 contains five sub-parts i.e. constructed response questions based on a reading passage. The areas assessed in this section are literal and inferential understanding and reasoning skills. Question no.2 and Question no.3 are the extended response questions i.e. letter writing and essay writing respectively. The areas assessed in the writing section are content relevance, language accuracy, coherence within sentences and paragraphs and structure / format of letter and essay.

Teachers and candidates should know that examiners may ask questions that address the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in a manner that requires candidates to respond by integrating knowledge, understanding and application skills they have developed by studying the course.

Candidates need to know that the marks allocated to the question are related to the answer space which is a guide to the length of the required response. A longer response will not in itself lead to higher marks. Writing far beyond the indicated space may reduce the time available for answering other questions.

Candidates need to be familiar with the Command Words in the student learning outcomes which contain terms commonly used in examination questions. However, candidates should also be aware that not all questions will start with or contain one of the key words. Questions such as 'how?', 'why?' or 'to what extent?' may also be used.

Detailed Comments

Question 1

It is a constructed response question. Candidates are required to understand the reading passage and accordingly answer the questions asked on various aspects of the narrative.

The reading passage was an extract from 'Tales from Indian Jungle' where a group of villagers plan to kill a dangerous beast.

Part a:

Most of the candidates answered the question correctly. Better responses displayed clear understanding of the phrase 'taste for wild game'. The answer was precise and adjectives were used to mention the 'impact'. In better responses candidates were able to understand the question and answered both parts correctly.

Example:

The phrase means that the tiger wanted to change its meal to premium beef as it was used to of eating deers and sambars. As the tiger gained confidence enough to attack cattles held in villages, the tiger meant to enjoy a new taste in its mouth. Its impact was that the number of cattles were reduced in villoge.

In weaker responses of 1a, candidates just copied the entire paragraph 2, hence the answer was vague and did not reflect the understanding of the term or the impact. Some weaker responses copied an irrelevant excerpt from the passage. Although, grammatical competence or expression is not assessed in CRQs of reading comprehension, teachers need to focus on the writing expression of the candidates as sometimes, due to vague expression, understanding an answer becomes difficult.

Example:

Its impact is to take beef from human. It is use for human to kill him and take beef which is eat by The Ogrs.

Part b:

In better responses, the description of game trail plan was complete and in the right sequence. Some candidates were not able to write the details in the proper sequence, however. The better responses displayed clarity and brevity.

Example:

The villagers created a trap ~~is~~ deep into the ground and rectangular in shape. However, the opening was covered with thin bamboo local with each other and covered with leaves and twigs. For the ~~distraction~~ approach a bait was set as a calf. The other ways to come in ~~app~~ contact with the bait were blocked by a bulk of thorns to make the loose faced bamboo the only for the tiger to reach the calf. The trap went successful and the tiger was caught in the hole. After the catch, the villagers wanted to torture the tiger to slow painful death. But according to their possessions they only used spears to beat the 'Ogre of Bellunder' to death.

In weaker responses, candidates displayed lack of understanding of the question. Some of the candidates copied paragraph 4 verbatim from the text and hence various irrelevant details were also copied and that left no space for the relevant details on the copy on the candidates. The question clearly mentioned that candidates are supposed to use their own words in the answer. This demand of the question also remained unfulfilled.

Example:

~~It is the game of killing the human.~~
~~The Ogre playing this game, In this game~~
~~the ogre kill the human and for then~~
~~eating his meat. This is food of ogre~~
~~and they can also hunting the animals~~
~~and kill them and eating them. It is the~~
~~game in which the bamboos plant will be use~~
~~with leaves, twigs and bait. It is use for~~
~~caught the animals like tiger. This game~~
~~is play according to plan.~~

Part c:

In better responses, candidates elaborated the author's description regarding the villagers' generally patient nature. They also elaborated that villagers would act when they are driven by extreme circumstances by co-relating it with the example of the decision taken by the villagers to kill the ogre.

Example:

Villagers are patient people and believe in fate. But they act against the wild animals when it's beyond the limits. The wild animals hurt the environment or put the people living in the village in danger. When their life and their cattle's life is put to danger they act against the animal. When an animal starts harming other animals ruthlessly and the animal does not exist anymore.

In weaker responses of question 1c, students missed the connection between the generally patient attitude of the villagers and how it was related to their final decision of killing the ogre. Some of the weaker responses failed to understand the question and ended up writing about how the villagers killed the ogre. Some candidates just mentioned irrelevant details as shown below.

Example:

According to the author, the villagers do act against wild animals because ~~they~~ the wild animals think they have to die or mad that's why they act.

Part d:

In better responses, the candidates mentioned every detail regarding the quality and quantity of weapons the villagers had. They also mentioned a plausible opinion (based on details of weapons) about whether these weapons were enough to kill the dangerous ogre. Some candidates' mentioned an opinion which was not appropriate or rationally based on the details they explained.

Example:

Villagers were not too rich, they did not have any particular weapon to kill the beast. No one had a gun to shoot ~~it~~. Only two of them had spears, which were blunt from the attacking side, it could hardly hurt the tiger. The other spear was short enough to reach the tiger ^{but the} spear was sharp and could hurt the tiger. I think so the weapons were not enough to kill the tiger, ~~it~~ was such a strong tiger, a single shot cannot kill him, it may hurt it but cannot completely kill it. They had only one proper weapon and if they miss the shot, they will run out of weapons and it could not be killed.

In weaker responses, the candidates missed out one or two points from the description of weapons. Some of the weaker responses failed to convey an opinion regarding the sufficiency of weapons for killing the ogre. Some of the candidates failed to mention the main weapons like two spears etc.

Example

The weapons which villagers use to have were very old and was not comparable to kill the dangerous ogre as they used bamboos and old style of digging a pit and the bait. These weapons were only applicable to trap the ogre but as he was so dangerous he could harm the villagers and firebrands ~~was~~ were not to effective to kill the ogre but then to it was a slow process of spearing and ogre would have died.

Part e:

The question invited candidates to use their imagination and make a logical connection to the passage by giving a reason. Some of the candidates were able to do both. In better responses, the candidates presented at least one plausible condition of tiger after it fell into the pit and substantiated it with reason.

Example

After it had fallen inside the pit the tiger may have become lazy and tired as it would have to starve from then on. The villagers may have decided to let the tiger ^{go} on by himself. And one day it would be dead by lack of food. By prohibiting anyone from the village to feed the tiger. This would have worked because the villagers were short of ~~ppropriate~~ weapons and money to buy a gun. And by this simple technique they would have gotten rid of the tiger.

In weaker responses, the candidates were unaware of the strategy of making a connection between what they had read and co-relating it with an assumed scenario. Such candidates failed to answer the question on both levels and scribbled some details regarding the villager's plan to trap the tiger.

yes I think might have happened after the tiger fell into the pit. Because villagers have sense that how the tiger to caught or tiger ~~is~~ could be killed. out of Bellundar have no gun. But all villagers have guns. the people have confidence and they ~~plan~~ have feel that day by day wild life can disturb their life.

Question 2 (a,b)

In this question, candidates were encouraged to use their thinking and language skills and assuming a situation, they were supposed to write letters showing their insight and understanding of the stimuli.

In better responses for Question 2a the candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the stimuli.
- elaborated on the dangers of fast driving and cited relevant examples of road accidents.
- mentioned the effect of any future accidents on parents.
- used the correct format of informal letters.
- wrote relevant content without much repetition.

- used appropriate vocabulary and connective devices.
- displayed logical progression of ideas within context.
- displayed correct use of subject-verb agreement.
- used accurate spelling and punctuation.

Example:

To: and.xyz@xyz.com
 Cc: zwf_mtp@xyz.com
 Bcc: Pec.h-g@xyz.com
 Subject: disadvantages of high speed driving

Dear xyz,

How are you? hope you are fine. what's up nowadays? How is the weather in Karachi? rainy! Be careful while driving. Well, you should be careful every minute, your Speedy genes may lead you to several problems. You don't want to Kick a bucket! You try to be as fast as a bullet but take it easy friend. You may drag yourself to danger. last Sunday, I went out for something and saw a terrible, heart-shaking accident, the driver was very young his Speed was more than 50 km/hr, a bike rider became his prey and he himself was damaged badly. I want to ensure you that Karachi has such busy roads, driving beyond the average limit is a great peril. One single ~~more~~ act of yours can destroy your whole life. Be careful, be patient. It's not only about you but you may harm somebody's else's life, show humanity. Get a control on your speed ~~and~~ gradually you will ace it and become a patient driver.

if you are so much fond of driving, play driving games. But show your interest till the games only. And God-forbid if you do an accident there are several problems, the police

makes a case against you, people around you won't care and will start beating you up, it's better to drive at average speed rather than involving in all these cases.

As a friend it was my responsibility to inform you, I didn't mean to scare you but to make sure you stay safe and blessed. Please think over it and implement it. Best of luck for exams. I'll be get ant in pants when I'll get a news from Aunt that you've boycotted speedy driving. now, I gotta go, bye.

Regards,
xyz

In weaker responses for Questions 2a, the candidates:

- showed limited understanding of the stimuli.
- used an incorrect or incomplete format of informal letters.
- wrote irrelevant personal experiences which were not reflective of 'dangers to careless drivers'
- used clichés, slangs or internet language.
- used language inaccurately that does not prove the articulation of the stimuli.
- wrote incorrect sentence structure with serious grammatical errors.
- used incorrect spelling and punctuation.

Example:

Landhi # 6

Karachi

May 15, 2014

Examination hall

Dear Friends,

My lovely friends please my one request please full attention to my request my friend car is a electronic things my friend please car and any bicks its very danger to the children car and bicks and all its included excedent and very danger times please I request you please not drive the car because car play the road dont memorize the what excedent and what and what dear friend please play the car is very slow and please inform your father and any family members please slow the car i thing my request please excepted to the car any things please my friend today come to my email please open the computer and sms the mobile

please check to the mobile yours
my sms is please slow the car
and my carefully email is
my friend Hi please drive slowly
the gas and safety the held please
attached the body because safety
the car and my advising is
my various information in the
given please apply and except
the given advising the safety
and dangerous of the drive .
please slow the drive, not full
speed and god knows better
any times accident please my
prey is God is glorify to you
any times my letter please main
point memorized the brain and
all children forward the this email
I shall be very thankful to you
to if you take immediate action
and do the needfull and I hope
full attention read out to my
letter and Good by .
"Thank you" . Your faithfully
X.X.Z

In better responses for Question 2b, the candidates:

- elaborated on bad habits with reference to real-life. They mentioned the consequences of such problems in detail and gave at least two suggestions to their friends about how to get rid of such habits.
- used appropriate connectors and cohesive devices; the effect of which was coherence in their writing.
- Used appropriate language, adjectives were used to describe the difficulties and problems.
- displayed correct use of subject-verb agreement.
- used accurate spelling and punctuation.

Example:

The Examination Hall,

ABC Road,

Karachi.

May 15, 2014

Dear Atiqa,

How are you? Hope you are doing well with your studies, How ~~is~~ uncle and Aunty? ~~what~~ what about your sister and brother? Hope they ~~are~~ all are fine - well, I am writing this ^{letter} to inform you about a very serious issue that can cause a great loss for you -

I have heard that recently you've got a new laptop. I am very happy to hear that. But, I have a little concern about you and your laptop. Your parents ~~were~~ told me that you're busy with it ~~all~~ all the day. I know that it's not a big deal, every one gets ~~it~~ excited when they get something new, but using the laptop all day and playing games on it doesn't make any sense my friend, I feel that gradually it's turning in your ~~a~~ daily habit, you must be aware that this thing has many ~~side~~ side effects, thousand of them ~~indeed~~, please you must realize that this is affecting your studies and your learning - I am writing a few tips for you that can help you to avoid the use of such electronic device:

1. you must ~~stating~~ start reading good books (books like

Divergent, Alice in wonder land, little women and many others)
to keep yourself busy. ~~with~~
2. you must organize yourself (or ~~as~~ you can make a
daily timetable).
3. ~~when you receive that~~ you can engage yourself with
your younger siblings (you can help them in their homework
or project work)
4. you can request your parent to put a password in the
laptop and only give it to you when you've completed all
your homework and studies.
5. Take care of yourself, hope you've got a solution for
your problem, give my love ~~you~~ to your siblings, take care
love you,
your friend,
xyz.

In weaker responses for Question 2b, the candidates:

- were unmindful of the structure of the letter: there were too many details in the introduction which was mentioned on the entire page.
- lacked grammatical accuracy in their writing. The writing reflected serious and persistent grammatical errors.

Example:

Examiner's Mail
X, Y, Z
17 May, 2014

Dear friend,

My habit is Reading. I want to read much. My parents wish is I can read and write. But friend some problems are facing me. I can not read. My heart not want to read. some time I study better. But some I can read. This is my Big problem. My father is a servant. He is a great personality I am his only one son. He was a lot of money wasted on me. I read in High expensive college. I live along distance to home. I am stay in hostel. But I don't want to read. My heart are not to lessen my brain. So plz me some suggestions about how my disengage from the habit

Your friend
X, Y, Z.

Question 3(a,b,c)

The candidates were directed to write an essay on any of the three choices given. Most of the candidates attempted 3c.

Question 3a required the candidates to narrate an incident which was exciting but dangerous.

In better responses for **Question 3a**, the candidates:

- showed a clear understanding of the stimuli.
- mentioned an event which reflected the feelings of excitement and fright experienced at the same time
- used appropriate examples from general or personal context.

- used relevant vocabulary, connectors and cohesive devices.
- displayed correct use of subject-verb agreement and tenses, except for occasional slips.
- used correct spelling and punctuation.

Example:

It is truly said that "Some adventures are exciting a lot but at the same time they're too dangerous and scary for us." It was two years ago summer vacations were going on me and my classmates along with our teachers decided that this summer something special should be done. One of my classmates gave the idea of picnic, one gave the idea of watching movies but I was the one whose plan was accepted which was going for a mountain climbing. Everyone was so happy and excited by my plan that they readily accepted it even the teachers. The preparations were kept under the management of the teacher who were responsible to select the best area maintains for the climbing. The next day we were told that in the evening we would leave for Islamabad a beautiful place with huge mountains. After our long journey we reached Islamabad we were too tired that we slept. The next morning the head of the management told us to pack our bags for the tour of Daman-e-Koh a place on the top of the Margalla Hills. Where we were going for mountain climbing. The head of the management made us introduced to two people who were our guides for the entire tour. They were very nice people they gave us safety advices for the mountain climbing. Soon, we reached to the main entrance of the Margalla Hills. We saw huge mountains there some of which were

covered with greenery and others had huge stones covering. The guides told us that how we should wear our safety gadgets and the costume which was required for the mountain climbing. Soon we all were ready in our costumes. Hanging belts, thick costumes, striped pants, the dress was amazing. The guides taught us how to hang our belts. There were some people standing on the top of the mountains from where the ropes were hanging for the individuals, which was then tied to our belts which we had worn. And after few minutes our tour for mountain climbing. I was very excited and I was enjoying a lot. Suddenly I tripped and fell from the stone and lost my balance but luckily the rope which was tied to me kept me in control and I was safely dropped down on the ground. I was so afraid of this thing that for a few moments I was in a shock but when I came out of the shock I realized that I was safe. The rope had saved me. Later all my friends gathered around me just because of me they weren't able to reach the top of the mountains and came back all the way to me. I apologized to them but they weren't sad about it. My all enjoyable moments had vanished till then. And I was much in a shock after this bad incident that happened with me. Yet it was an exciting tour for me but it proved to be a dangerous one too.

In weak responses for Question 3a, the candidates:

- showed a limited understanding of the stimuli. The experienced written was vague and / or irrelevant.
- did not have effective structure; beginning, middle and end.
- rephrased the stimuli repetitively.
- wrote irrelevant content.
- used clichés, slangs or internet language.

- ideas presented lacked originality or focus.
- most of the ideas were randomly presented, which lacked any organization.
- wrote incorrect sentence structure with serious grammatical errors.

Question 3b required the candidates to describe the experiences that are bothersome in one way or the other. They were also asked to elaborate whether peer pressure and competition are making them progress or regress.

In better responses for Question 3b the candidates:

- mentioned one incident OR a few details about their usual school days and within it the bothersome specifics of their school life. Some of them were able to make a connection between stress that results from continuous peer pressure and competition. Some other better responses narrated an event which described a typical day of school resulting in some heartbreak or tears.
- used appropriate adjectives and adverbs to describe their actions and feeling.
- displayed moderate language accuracy.

In weaker responses for Question 3b the candidates:

- showed a limited understanding of the stimuli. They elaborated about the negative aspects of school life in general terms. Some candidates just mentioned random and /or irrelevant details.
- displayed lack of knowledge of the mechanics of essay writing.
- left the responses incomplete or copied the question verbatim repeatedly.

Question 3c was a descriptive essay regarding candidates' experiences of social networking sites. Many candidates opted to attempt this question as social networking may be fairly common amongst candidates.

In better responses for Question 3c the candidates:

- Began the essay by outlining a context which was appropriate and relevant to the prompt. They mentioned at least two clear benefits of using social networking sites and mentioned the impact of such sites on their lives.
- Clearly mentioned the steps or stages of planning a reunion.
- Displayed coherence and appropriate organization of the essay
- Used appropriate tenses and accurate subject-verb agreement.

In weaker responses for Question 3c the candidates:

- failed to address the requirement of the prompt: they mentioned about social networking as internet and mentioned a few negative effects of using internet. From the looks of it, such composition may have been rote learned by the candidates.
- displayed serious errors of grammar i.e. tenses were incorrectly used, many words were misspelled etc.