

CHRISTMAS TERM
2018
EXAM 1

EXAM REPORT

WBS ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT



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Student Performance by Year Group

First Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The exam was structured to test students' comprehension skills and understanding of paragraph writing and process essay writing. In order to do so they were given a comprehension passage which was followed by 6 questions (three literal level questions, two interpretive level questions and one applied level question). In addition, they were given two questions which required them to produce expository writing.

Student Performance

Student performance in each section of the paper varied noticeably by class. While students from some classes struggled with the comprehension section, others had a challenge with expository writing.

Plans for Remediation

The teachers have recommended that students receive more grammar, spelling and comprehension exercises to address poor responses to comprehension questions. A lesson will also be done on sentence construction. In addition, timely and detailed feedback from teachers will also be encouraged. Feedback will include exploring test taking strategies and interpreting questions.



Student Performance by Year Group

First Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Exam Description

Students were tested on the literary genres, the elements of prose and The Silver Sword, chapters 1-5. The exam comprised fill-in-the-blanks, short answer questions and extended writing. The questions targeted the literal and inferential levels of comprehension and ranged from very easy to slightly challenging.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Most students did well in the areas of recall in sections one and two. They had good content and good recall of important details.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Some students did not respond as well as was expected in the paragraph writing section where they had to write longer responses. Students also demonstrated weakness in terms of spelling and sentence construction.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Students needed to work on their expression, spelling and in many cases, they needed to apply greater thought to their responses. Their description of places, construction of sentences, grasp of directive verbs, such as 'explain', 'list', 'describe' need to be improved. They also had issues with run-on sentences and sentence fragments.



Student Performance by Year Group

First Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Plans for Remediation

1. Students will revisit sentence construction/writing, and dictionary use will be incorporated in these practice exercises.
2. Students will be exposed to vocabulary building with an emphasis on strengthening expression.
3. Students will receive instruction on the use of directive verbs. They will also get handouts with this information. These handouts will become a permanent part of their notebooks for easy/accessible reference when practising extended writing work.
4. Students will be taught how to do close reading of the text.

These improvement measures/activities will be incorporated in future lesson plans to help students to improve their Literature grades both for formative and summative assessments.



Student Performance by Year Group

Second Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The examination was administered on October 8, 2018 to all grade 8 students under strict examination conditions. The paper was divided into two sections. Section A of the paper focused on primary and secondary sources along with conditional sentences. The focus of Section B was expository writing, the cause and effect essay in particular.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Most of the students did exceptionally well on the multiple choice section of the paper. They were able to accurately identify primary and secondary sources as well as complete the conditional sentences with the correct options. In regards to section two of the paper, students were able to create their hooks and also provide adequate supporting details. Very few students attempted the question on school bullying but those who did were able to identify some causes and effects of this issue.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Although students were able to identify the main points for their essay, the structuring and actual delivery of the material proved to be a challenge for many of them. Paragraphing was indeed evident, but many students skipped lines instead of indenting. In addition to this, clear topic and concluding sentences were missing from many paragraphs. Students presented the points without providing a sentence to indicate what the paragraph was about so it detracted from the overall meaning of the paragraph. In some of the essays the causes could be identified but they were all placed in one sentence so many students ended up with three sentences instead of the required 5-8 sentences. Another area of concern was the writing of thesis statements. It was evident that they had an idea of how to write the thesis, as many of them attempted to do so. However, the thesis statement in many cases did not state clearly what would be discussed in the body paragraph of the essay. It was also evident that students had an issue with using personal pronouns in writing their expository pieces. Spelling, sentence structure and grammar also need to be addressed as common spelling errors were identified.



Student Performance by Year Group

Second Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Some students did not adhere to the format that was taught. In addition, some essays were incomplete as students complained that they did not have enough time.

Plans for Remediation

In an effort to address aforementioned issues, the following strategies/activities will be implemented:

1. Grammar topics will be taught in order to address areas of concern such as: clauses, run-on sentences and subject verb agreement.
2. The examination will be reviewed with students and feedback provided on how they could have approached the questions. If possible, teachers can write the essay in class with the assistance of the students so that they have a better understanding of the writing process.
3. Reinforcement of the parts of the essay will be done when the students begin writing their literary essays. Teachers will try to make the link between what was taught in English Language class and what they are learning in their literature classes.



Student Performance by Year Group

Second Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The topics tested on include: the elements of prose, The Young Warriors, chapters 1 - 7 and historical context. The paper consisted of four sections. Section A consisted of nine (9) comprehension questions. Section B consisted of six (6) matching questions geared towards identifying the definitions of the character types. Section C consisted of six (6) short answer questions including three fill in the blank questions. Section D consisted of short response questions from which students were expected to select two (2) from the four (4) options to complete. Questions were primarily geared towards the lexical, literal and interpretive levels.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students did well in section A of the paper where basic comprehension was the prime focus. Students were able to recall the information from the text in many instances. Students did better on questions based on characterization.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students did not carefully read and interpret the questions and their responses reflected this. For example Section C question 1 states "Other than Mountain Top, list the THREE Maroon villages that Charlie identifies in chapter 1." Instead of answering the question based on its stipulations, many students simply listed the maroon villages which they knew. Section D also saw some students facing challenges in giving relevant and fully supported responses.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Poor interpretation of the questions led to the poor overall performance for several students. Some students failed to do independent reading.

Plans for Remediation

Review of analysis and understanding of questions will be done to ensure that students look at and assess what the questions require them to do. In addition, students will create their own questions to ensure they know how to find key markers and respond effectively and accurately to questions.



Student Performance by Year Group

Third Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The exam consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A required that the students read and analyse a poem through four (4) open ended questions. Section B prompted students to choose between two (2) options - both of which instructed the students to write a problem and solution essay.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students did well in the organization of their essays. They made a fair attempt at constructing thesis statements, introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusions. Additionally, their points were properly articulated through the use of good expression and properly structured sentences. For the most part, students demonstrated good analytical skills in the comprehension section. Most students were able to complete the exam within the stipulated time-frame

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students demonstrated weakness in the areas of analysis and constructing grammatically correct sentences. Additionally, the examination has shown that students have not yet fully grasped the concept of a thesis statement.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

It was noted that one of the prompts in Section B required more than the students should have been asked to do: the question asked the students to outline the correlation between social media and depression, and then to suggest possible solutions to alleviate the issue. After a post examination review, it was highlighted that the task required a cause and effect essay and a problem and solution essay combined. Therefore, many students who selected that options failed to address the connection between social media and depression. They may have also been unfamiliar with the term, 'correlation'.

Plans for Remediation

In an effort to address these issues, writing labs will be held on a regular basis so that students will have the opportunity to practice/explore their weak areas and work on strengthening them. This will be accomplished through the use of worksheets and practical methods, where students are put in a position to utilize both spoken and written language through impromptu speeches and student tutorials.



Student Performance by Year Group

Third Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The paper comprised five multiple choice questions, ten true or false questions and nine short answer questions. All questions required students to recall specific events from chapters 1 - 7 from the text, Animal Farm.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Most students performed well in sections 1 and 2, which included multiple choice and true and false items.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

The students did poorly on the short answer section. This may have been the case because of a failure to read the text thoroughly. It was also noted that many students had difficulties articulating and in some cases developing their responses. In addition, it also appeared that students may have ignored the marks allotted for each question and so failed to present an adequate response to some questions. As a result, many students were not awarded full marks for those questions.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Some students did not do adequate close reading of the chapters, and some ignored the significance of the marks allocated for each section.



Student Performance by Year Group

Third Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Plans for Remediation

The test provided the teachers with insight into areas of misunderstanding and weakness. Therefore, teachers have an opportunity to improve the strategies and material for future lessons. Remediation will include:

1. Alternative assessments to measure students' performance in forms other than traditional tests. These types of assessments will focus on what students can do without emphasizing their weaknesses, especially in test-taking skills. These assessments provide a holistic understanding of a student's ability and highlights where further improvement is needed. Coupled with this, they provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate the depth and scope of learning without being limited to narrow questions or make-or-break tests.
2. Providing students with a detailed description of the instruments and activities.
3. Continued use of comprehension questions to give students a purpose for reading, focus students' attention on what they are to learn and help them to think actively as they read. The Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) in particular will be used.
4. Graphic organizers to illustrate concepts and the relationships between concepts. In addition, graphic organizers also help students to understand the text, relationships in the text and text structure.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fourth Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The exam had two sections. Section A consisted of a prose expository comprehension passage with ten compulsory multiple-choice questions. These questions comprised four literal, three inferential and three analytical levels of comprehension. Section B consisted of three extended writing prompts that covered three forms of informative discourse (report, article and letter) Students were asked to choose and write on one.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students did extremely well on the questions requiring literal and analytical levels of comprehension. In addition, they organized content well for the extended writing section.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students demonstrated weakness in using the proper format for the extended writing prompt selected. In a number of instances, students did not elaborate on their points by presenting a logical sequence of supporting details. Some students also demonstrated difficulty with expression and sentence construction. In addition, a number of students failed to follow the instructions given for each section and had difficulties answering multiple-choice questions that involved vocabulary use.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Some students lack the critical thinking skills needed to apply what they have learnt to various situations. Thus, parts of Section A, that involved their manipulation of the meanings of words had poor responses. There is also a disconnect between their understanding of what a good expository article looks like, which affected how students who chose the article writing prompt responded to it. Furthermore, it is evident that some students believe they are not good at writing; others believe that English is easy. As a result, they spent little time practising to overcome their overconfidence or lack of confidence.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fourth Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Plans for Remediation

Strategies teachers will employ to facilitate improvement include:

1. Providing more samples of good writing pieces.
2. Engaging students in frequent peer review of writing activities.
3. Providing prompt and individual constructive feedback on written pieces.
4. Ensuring that students use the words of the week in their writing.
5. Creating activities that seek to differentiate the different forms of writing so that, students become increasingly familiar with the structure and features associated with each form.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fourth Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The exam consisted of 9 comprehension questions on “Mom Luby and the Social Worker” and “The Boy Who Loved Ice-Cream” which are short stories from A World of Prose. Most of the questions were at the interpretive and applied level and required in-depth responses, with supporting details.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Most students did well on the first set of questions which focused on “Mom Luby and the Social Worker”. In many instances, students were able to write more than what was asked, which shows that they had a fairly good understanding of the topic.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Some students did not handle the questions on the technical elements of literature well, and this was particularly evident in their response to the question on stream of consciousness in “The Boy Who Loved Ice-Cream”. Overall, some of the responses were superficial and required more development and textual evidence to fully develop the ideas.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Students failed to apply strategies taught in class to adequately develop their arguments with evidence from the text. They are not reading enough on their own and so rely extensively on activities done in class to cover all that they need to do. Therefore, they need to do more independent reading to ensure that they fully grasp the content and concepts before they are given tasks. Additionally, students are not periodically reviewing the handout that was given in September, which provided a glossary of important literary terms. Also, students are not regularly practising their writing which will help them to better articulate and fully develop their ideas.

Plans for Remediation

1. More activities will be given which focus on analyzing/discussing the technical elements of literature.
2. More worksheets/activities that require students to use evidence directly from the text to support their ideas will be prepared.



Fifth Form: English Language Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The examination consisted of 40 multiple choice items based on comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. The questions were reflective of those the students will do in their upcoming CSEC examinations and ranged in difficulty. These questions tested the students' skills in application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation. Each question had 4 possible answers with plausible distractors.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Most students did well in the areas of comprehension and vocabulary (synonyms).

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students performed poorly in the error recognition, sentence completion and antonyms sections.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

The reasons for the performances were similar throughout all the groups. Students did not get adequate practice with comprehension and vocabulary multiple choice items. In addition, little to no extra-textual reading, low critical thinking skills, lack of interest in developing a better vocabulary and general lackadaisical tendencies were also identified as possible causes.

Plans for Remediation

In order to improve the performance of the students, we will target key areas of vocabulary and focus on improving these through the use of metacognitive strategies. They will also be encouraged to use their dictionaries and thesauruses more frequently to ensure that they learn at least one new word each week. They will be asked to maintain a more advanced personal lexicon that they may employ in the different modes of writing. Additional multiple choice practice will also be given throughout the next two terms to ensure that they have adequate practice before their exam.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fifth Form: English Literature Exam Analysis Pools 5, 6 & 7

Exam Description

The exam was a sample representation of Section B (Poetry) on the CSEC exam. The section consisted of two type-B questions. These were questions of comparison which required students to study eight (8) poems specified in the syllabus and the course outline. For one of the questions, the poems to be used were specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, students were expected to choose two appropriate poems from those they had studied to answer the question. Students were required to answer one question in essay format.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

A number of students did very well in terms of providing and organizing content as well as summarizing/stating the main point of the poems. They demonstrated awareness of literary criticism and were also able to identify poetic devices. In addition, their writing demonstrated good use of the English Language.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

A number of students were unable to adequately comment on how poetic devices impact themes. In addition, some failed to create effective thesis statements and provide adequate explanation for the points made using the PEEL format. Furthermore, they had limited introductions as well as flat conclusions. Finally, some students were unaware that phrases such as “how the poet shows...” require some attention to literary devices, and that words such as “examine” and “comment on” demand analysis, not narration.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fifth Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Pools 5, 6 & 7

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

It is the general consensus that students were unwilling to properly prepare for the exam. Additionally, some students were reluctant to follow simple organizational and analytical instructions. As for pool 7, the noise from the class next door was a distraction, which ultimately affected how well the students performed. Some students studied a specific practice essay expecting the same question to be repeated on the exam. Failure to pay attention to the instructional verbs in the questions also impacted students' performance.

Plans for Remediation

The team will execute the following:

1. Introduce team teaching. Students might be a little more accepting of knowledge when it is presented by another teacher; varied teaching styles might also prove effective.
2. Writing workshops that are geared towards writing effective thesis statements, introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions.
3. The use of the CSEC English B annual reports to encourage/motivate students to address that which is lacking.
4. Worksheets that seek to compel students to provide analysis/explanations for points made.
5. The art of debating so that students will get a better understanding of literary essays as arguments.
6. Organize a Literature seminar towards the end of the academic year. (Potential presenters: H.O.D of English, WBS; H.O.D of English, UWI, Mona; retired teacher, Ms. Leyow).
7. Encourage active parental involvement. Parents will be encouraged to track their sons' progress in the subject and provide additional support where necessary.



Student Performance by Year Group

Fifth Form: English Literature Exam Analysis

Pool 1

Exam Description

The exam consisted of 14 comprehension questions on The Tempest. Most of the questions required higher order thinking and textual evidence.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students were able to answer some questions fairly well. Although they were not able to use direct quotations from the text, they were able to provide supporting details through paraphrasing. They also wrote more than the question required and the general impression is that they are aware of the techniques/ strategies employed by the playwright to convey the themes.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students performed poorly on the first question which asked them to explain the significance of the play beginning with a storm at sea. Many of the responses to this question were vague and did not adequately deal with or address the symbolism of the tempest. Students also performed poorly on number 5 which asked them to explain if Prospero accepted responsibility for his usurpation. The class as a whole needs to work on their expression. Some responses were clumsily or awkwardly worded and there were far too many spelling errors.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

Many students were not sure how to answer the question, and they needed to pay close attention to the details in the text. Students are also not reviewing the information that they are taught as the significance of the tempest was discussed repeatedly in the first lessons on the text.

Furthermore, many students are not reading on their own and so the very first time they do any form of reading or engagement with the text is usually in class when they are assigned character roles or given activities focusing on specific areas of the play.

Plans for Remediation

1. More activities will be given to students to assist them with their expression as their responses are sometimes clumsily expressed.
2. More tasks will be assigned that target vocabulary development and spelling.



Student Performance by Year Group

6B: Communication Studies Exam Analysis

Exam Description

The Communication Studies examination tested 4 particular areas: Communication - The Process and Elements, Modes of Writing, Language - Elements, Characteristics and Purposes, and Research. The paper comprised 28 items, which came to a total of 35 marks. The questions were multiple choice as well as short answer type questions.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students for the most part were able to properly define terms relating to Communication Studies. They were also able to accurately respond to the multiple choice questions, particularly on Communication. The students also showed mastery of the Modes of Writing component and they were able to distinguish the main point from the purpose of the extract.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Students were able to respond to the literal level based questions; however, they lacked analysis and critical thinking skills. Hence, they were unable to identify the same terms and concepts that they were familiar with when the concepts are presented in a scenario. Students also did poorly on the research component.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

The teaching and learning of the research component was somewhat rushed, and students did not get to explore this concept fully. However, the students did well on communication as they got a chance to do real life role play scenarios as well as projects to concretize the concepts and elements. Indubitably, students knew all the concepts related to language, as they have to show mastery of same in their SBAs.



Student Performance by Year Group

6B: Communication Studies Exam Analysis

Plans for Remediation

To address areas of weakness:

1. Each week or lesson, students will have to do two forms of tutorial activities.
2. Students will make presentations in class to reinforce various topics and/or will have to complete past paper questions/scenarios linked to the particular component being taught.
3. Teachers in the team will also explore the possibility of doing revision webinars with students prior to each exam sitting.



Student Performance by Year Group

6A & 6B: Literatures in English Exam Analysis

Exam Description

Students were tested on drama and prose, particularly the plays Cymbeline or Antony and Cleopatra and the novel, Hard Times. For Cymbeline, 6B students were asked to respond to ten comprehension questions, with many at the inferential and applied level. 6A students were required to identify characters, answer comprehension questions and write paragraph long responses to questions on Antony and Cleopatra. Both groups completed an essay question set on Hard Times.

Student Performance: Areas of Strength

Students were familiar with the plot of the texts and so were able to present satisfactory summaries. They were also able to respond well to questions that focused on theme and characterization. In addition, they interpreted the questions well even if they were not able to fully substantiate their arguments.

Student Performance: Areas of Weakness

Many students did poorly on the questions which required analysis, synthesis and the application of extratextual knowledge.

Possible Reasons for Poor Performance

6B students are only now becoming accustomed to the rigour of study at the advanced level. Some students needed to read the text more carefully and manage their time better.

Plans for Remediation

1. Writing Workshops
2. More activities which focus on effectively using textual and extratextual evidence to support arguments
3. Occasional in-class close reading sessions

NOTES



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