

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

**CARIBBEAN HISTORY
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 01 paper consisted of 60 multiple-choice items. Performance on this paper was fairly good. Paper 02 consisted of 18 essay questions which tested the nine themes of the syllabus. Each question was worth 25 marks, and candidates were required to answer three questions, one each from the three sections, for a total of 75 marks.

Paper 031, the School-Based Assessment consisted of one project. Students, with the guidance of their teachers were required to select a topic and write a project report. Teachers then marked the projects and submitted a sample of students' work to CXC for moderation, if requested to do so.

Paper 032 has been designed specifically for private candidates. It is a written paper and candidates were required to answer five questions based on a specific theme identified in the syllabus.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Paper 01 assessed the Knowledge and Comprehension profile. Performance on this paper was fairly good. The average mark was 35 out of 60 and performance across topics was very similar.

Paper 02 – Structured Questions and Essays

Section A — Theme 1: The Indigenous Peoples and the Europeans

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the political system and leadership roles of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean.

It was the second most popular question in the section, attracting approximately 3,000 responses, the majority of which scored high marks.

In Part (a), candidates were asked to say what the leaders of the Tainos and Kalinagos were called and how the leader of the Kalinago was chosen. Candidates were able to name the leader of the Taino more often than the Kalinago but the method of choosing the Kalinago leader was not well known.

In Part (b), candidates did not have much difficulty describing three functions of the Kalinago leader. These included *preparing his men for military campaigns, leading raiding expeditions against the Tainos* and *determining war strategies*.

In Part (c), candidates were asked to describe three features of the political system of the Taino or Mayan people. This section posed the most difficulty for candidates who sometimes wrote more on the technical or social development of the Mayans than on the political system. A description should have entailed *organization, leadership* and *administration*.

Once again the evidence suggests marked improvement in the preparation of candidates for this theme. Encouraging as well was the fact that quite a number of candidates scored at the Grade I level.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the impact of European colonization on the Indigenous Peoples.

This question was not popular among the candidates, but the better candidates were able to earn very high scores.

In Part (a), where candidates were tested on their knowledge of the two systems of labour which were used in the new world and the names of the persons who introduced either, the better candidates demonstrated the requisite knowledge base. These candidates also knew of Columbus and, to a lesser extent, Ovando.

For Part (b), candidates were able to describe the requirements of these systems of labour. This section did not pose a serious challenge to most candidates and produced a number of very good responses.

Part (c) produced the real challenge where candidates were asked to examine three areas in which these systems of labour affected the Indigenous Peoples. A few candidates nevertheless produced some interesting responses.

Section A — Theme 2: Caribbean Economy And Slavery

Question 3

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the changeover to sugar production in the 1600s and the economic effects of the changeover.

In Part (a), where candidates were asked to identify two Caribbean territories which produced tobacco and two which produced logwood in the 1600s, many candidates seemed unfamiliar with the answer and so while there were some who knew the tobacco islands of Barbados, St Kitts, Antigua, Grenada and Dominica, quite a few of them did not know that logwood was produced in Belize, Guyana and Tobago.

In Part (b), which tested candidates' knowledge of the reasons for the changeover from the production of tobacco to sugar in the 1600s, candidates mentioned that West Indian tobacco could not compete with the Virginia product, the glut in the European market which adversely affected prices and profits and the need for a viable alternative which turned out to be sugar-cane. The better candidates mentioned the *advantages of sugar cane production, the growing demand for a sweetener in Europe and the support of the Dutch who provided the necessary skills and credit, bought the produce and provided a ready market for the young industry.*

Part (c) which addressed the economic effects of the changeover from tobacco to sugar was also well done. Many candidates were able to mention how the *processing of sugar cane required expensive buildings, livestock and machinery and for these to be economically worked meant that large quantities of cane had to be obtained. This required the cultivation of large acreage, which in turn required a large labour force resulting in the importation of captive Africans and their enslavement on the sugar plantations.* A few of the better candidates also mentioned *the emergence of the mono-culture agricultural economy.*

Question 4

This question produced some very good responses. Overall, candidates seemed to be comfortable responding to this question, which tested their knowledge of the reason for the enslavement of the African in the Caribbean, and for the marked increase in the demand for the enslaved African.

Some candidates performed poorly in Part (a) which asked them to identify the countries from which white indentured labour was recruited. Common shortcomings included confusing white contractual labour of the 17th century with Asian indentured labour of the 19th century, mistaking Europe for a country and considering England and Britain as separate territories. The indications were that these candidates did not know the answer and tended to be unfamiliar with the geography of Europe.

Parts (b) and (c) attracted some well-developed responses, but some candidates wrote at length on the topic without addressing the question.

Overall, candidates found this question interesting and produced some excellent responses. Some responses in Part (b) created concern. The frequency with which candidates offered physical, pigmentation and other distorted European perceptions of the African as explanation suggests the need for teachers to place more emphasis on enabling students to distinguish between biased opinion and factual information. Too many candidates seemed unaware of the examples of Europeans' successful colonization and survival in tropical conditions. This apart, the indications are that the time spent preparing students for this theme was well rewarded.

Section A — Theme 3: Resistance And Revolt

Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the forms of resistance employed by enslaved Africans in the Caribbean.

Specifically, it asked candidates to (a) list two examples of insurrectionary and two of non-insurrectionary forms of resistance used by enslaved Africans in the Caribbean, (b) three reasons why enslaved Africans ran away from the sugar plantations and (c) three ways in which running away affected the sugar plantations.

Overall, this question was the most popular and it was fairly well done. The majority of candidates were awarded marks ranging from 12 to 25 with quite a few of them scoring in the upper range.

In spite of the frequency of well-structured/organized, factual and well-argued responses, Parts (b) and (c) gave evidence that many candidates were not at ease with extended answers which tested their expressive ability.

In Part (b), candidates who performed well, remembered to mention that the *slave laws were punitive; the difficulty of securing manumission; the harsh treatment meted out to the enslaved on a daily basis; the constant threat of being raped by white men; the difficulties of maintaining family life; the arbitrary reduction in food rations; anger and frustration against injustices; the geographical nature of some territories and the innate desire to be free.*

For Part (c), candidates who underperformed neglected to discuss *the loss of labour; the loss of the money invested in the purchase of the enslaved Africans and the need to find new funds to purchase replacements for those who had fled; the cost of recovering those who had fled; losses as a result of attacks; stolen food and tools; the disruption of plantation operations; encouragement and support to rebellions which increased the planters' feeling of insecurity and the fact that the knowledge of runaways produced a heightened sense of foreboding, insecurity and tension in the society.*

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the 1831 Jamaican revolt.

Part (a) provided some challenges. Many candidates did not recognize British Caribbean in the question and included the Haitian Revolution in their responses.

Part (b) was generally well done even though too many candidates applied knowledge of the general causes of revolts such as desire for freedom or harsh treatment rather than causes specific to the 1831 event, which would have earned higher marks. This could also have been achieved by using *examples of the harsh treatment of the enslaved in Jamaica*.

Part (c) which asked for the consequences of the 1831 revolt for the enslaved Africans and the Jamaican sugar planters elicited some very thoughtful responses. Here, many candidates were able to mention that *estates were destroyed by fire, that Africans were killed during the military operations, and executed following the court martial, loss of production, loss of produce, loss of markets and profitability, and the cost of heightened security arrangements*.

From the responses, it became clear that candidates possessed some knowledge of the question though many failed to produce focused responses. In general, there were some very good responses suggesting some gradual improvement in the preparation of this theme.

Section B — Theme 4: Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation

Question 7

This was an essay question designed to test candidates' knowledge of the metropolitan emancipation movements. Candidates were required to write an article to a local newspaper comparing the British and French anti-slavery movements.

This was not a popular question and it was poorly done. In a number of cases, the attempts at comparisons were incomplete and without the contrasts. Candidates seemed not to be aware of the technique of comparing and contrasting (similarity and difference). Responses for the most part were inadequate with more focus on the British anti-slavery movement and not so much on the French. There was also the tendency to focus on conditions of slavery rather than the movement towards emancipation.

This is never a popular objective but even so, the limited knowledge displayed by candidates on this occasion is a cause for concern.

Question 8

This question targeted the apprenticeship system. Candidates were asked to put themselves in the place of an abolitionist visiting the Caribbean, who was writing a letter to the press explaining why the apprentices continued to protest against the Apprenticeship System.

This was a fairly popular question, which was reasonably well done by some candidates. Some candidates confused the term *amelioration* with *apprenticeship* while others spent too much time outlining the conditions of the apprenticeship system instead of explaining why the apprentices were protesting. Other candidates answered the question from the master's perspective instead of the apprentices.

This theme is usually popular among candidates but on this occasion the responses fell far short of reasonable expectation. Appropriate arguments included *working conditions, withholding of allowances, wages and harsh estate discipline*.

Section B — Theme 5: Adjustments to Emancipation, 1836—1876

Question 9

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of Indian immigration into the Caribbean. Candidates were asked to explain the reasons for the importation of Indian labour and to identify some of the difficulties the immigrant labourer experienced.

This was a popular question which produced some very good responses. Candidates seemed comfortable identifying the factors which contributed to the importation of Indian labour. Some of them mentioned *the planters' belief that with Emancipation would come a shortage of labour; the fear and/or reluctance to pay wages; the desire to survive and expand; the history of soured relations between the planter and the apprentices and both access and availability of an Indian labour supply.*

A few candidates encountered problems identifying the difficulties faced by Indian immigrants and tended to generalize. They failed to *mention difficulties in adjusting to the rigours of the task system, high mortality rate, harsh and cruel treatment, separation from loved ones and cultural differences.* Many candidates wandered away from the question entirely, preferring to discuss the Chinese or Portuguese immigration system.

This theme is usually popular among candidates and the indications are that candidates were well prepared this time around.

Question 10

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the economic contribution of the free peasantry to the Caribbean society between 1838 and 1876. Specifically, candidates were asked to assume the position of a Baptist preacher stationed in Jamaica in the 1880s tasked with explaining the economic contribution of the free peasants to the Caribbean society between 1838 and 1876.

This proved to be a very unpopular question; there were very few responses. Candidates experienced difficulty discussing the economic contribution of the peasants. Instead, some of them stressed the general lifestyle of peasants or highlighted the obstacles/hindrances to peasant development rather than the contribution of the peasants to the economy. These contributions included *diversifying the economy, stimulation of trade and the starting of new financial organizations, for example, local cooperatives.*

Section B — Theme 6: Caribbean Economy, 1875—1985

Question 11

This question was not done as well as expected. It focused on Jamaica and tested candidates' knowledge of the banana industry in the 1900s. Specifically, candidates were asked to write a letter to an investor explaining the contribution of markets and investment capital to the survival of the Jamaica banana industry in the 1900s.

This was not a very popular question. Responses indicated that candidates did not grasp the concepts of market or investment capital, terms which occur with surprising frequency in this theme. The term *market* was generally understood in a very limited sense to mean the physical market place/setting in the Jamaican society. The knowledge of investment capital was strikingly lacking. This was an economic history question, based on the objective which is specified in the syllabus but the responses indicated that students were not sufficiently prepared to deal with it.

Question 12

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the impact of industrialization on occupations, and the standard of living in the English-speaking Caribbean in the 1900s.

The question was not popular and responses were, in the main, inadequate. Some candidates confused industrialization with mechanization. Candidates lacked the knowledge base to fully and effectively respond to the question. While some candidates generalized about the social conditions associated with, and related to, the industrialization process, most of them found it difficult to deal with the effects on living standards and occupations. These included *job creation, growth of skilled occupations, training opportunities, improved services* along with *pollution and arbitrary conditions of labour*.

In the preparation of students, teachers are encouraged to link the objective of the theme to the content as outlined in the syllabus. Such an approach helps to familiarize students with the key terms associated with the objective and keeps them focused.

Section C — Theme 7: The United States In The Caribbean, 1776—1985

Question 13

This question focused on the nature of the involvement of the United States in the Caribbean in the early 1900s. Candidates were required to discuss the reasons for the United States intervention in Haiti in 1915 and the measures taken to resolve the situation in Haiti.

Most candidates displayed a general understanding of the issues and provided acceptable responses.

A few candidates offered very sound reasons for the US intervention. These candidates discussed *corruption, bankruptcy, assassination and political instability, indebtedness to Europe, particularly Germany, threats from European nations and the protection of US interests/investments in the island*.

Addressing the features of USA involvement, a few candidates produced adequate responses. They were able to identify the *armed intervention and overthrow of the corrupt government, installation of a puppet regime, the take over of customs duties, payment of foreign debts, US investments and infrastructural development*.

Many candidates possessed much general knowledge yet failed to produce organized and chronologically correct responses. Teachers need to recognize this deficiency and organize their teaching strategy to cope with it.

Question 14

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the Cuban Revolution. Candidates were asked to examine the political and economic measures taken by Fidel Castro to ensure the survival of the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Candidates did not find this question to their liking and the responses were, in the main unsatisfactory. With the exception of a few, most candidates produced a paragraph or less. Some candidates demonstrated some understanding of the issues but focused too much on political reforms to the exclusion of the economic reforms. Too many candidates focused on the war of liberation and not on the reforms that followed the war. These reforms included *nationalization of industries, infrastructural works and economic diversification*.

This was a straightforward question closely aligned to the theme and the syllabus yet candidates displayed a surprising degree of unfamiliarity with the objective. Even where candidates probably had the requisite knowledge, they failed to use that knowledge in a focused manner to answer the question.

Section C — Theme 8: Caribbean Political Development up to 1985

Question 15

This question focused on the formation of the British West Indies Federation. Candidates were required to examine the reasons for the formation of the federation and the steps taken to establish it. Reasons that could have been argued were *administered benefits, political advice as to its value, and popular support*. Steps included *conferences, legislation and general elections*.

Although straightforward, this question was not well done. Too many candidates focused on the failure of federation instead of addressing the specific demands of the question.

Here again, it was obvious that some candidates possessed much general knowledge but failed to produce organized and chronologically correct responses. In this instance, the indications are that the candidates came prepared to answer a question. The question did not appear in the examination paper, but they nevertheless produced the prepared answer.

Question 16

This question tested candidates' knowledge of two West Indian personalities associated with the British West Indies Federation. Candidates were required to examine the role of either Theophilus Albert Marryshow or Sir Grantley Adams in the formation of the union.

This question was the most unpopular, attracting a mere 87 responses with most candidates scoring at the lower end of the scale. Very few candidates appeared familiar with either Caribbean personality and many could not earn marks for their effort.

Section D — Theme 9: Caribbean Society, 1900—1985

Question 17

This question was designed to test candidate's knowledge of the factors which made it difficult to travel in a named Caribbean territory between 1900 and 1950 and reasons why the means of travel became much easier by 1985. Candidates were advised to pay particular attention to the geography of the land, nature of transportation, the changing transportation needs and demands, improvements in technology and in systems of transportation and communication.

This question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of transportation in the twentieth century and the improvements that were in effect by 1985. It was a fairly popular question, but most of those who attempted it did not understand it. The responses were marred by weak content and an unfamiliarity with terms such as *communication* and *technology*.

Question 18

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the Indian labourer's reluctance to join the Christian churches in the 1900s. Candidates were advised to pay attention to the tendency of the Indian immigrant to be socially exclusive, the role of religion in their lives and the reluctance to become creolized. The responses were varied. Some candidates appeared to understand the question and answered accordingly, but the explanations were weak. Other candidates seemed unfamiliar with the term reluctance and did not produce the required response. Reference to cultural factors such as *language, and traditional culture and influences were required*.

General Comments

- In general, too many candidates' performance indicated inadequate, and, in an unfortunate number of cases, faulty preparation. Candidates are encouraged to spend a little more time in preparation for the exam. It is important that adequate time be devoted to the preparation of all the objectives of any chosen theme.
- This is the first testing of a revised syllabus, which introduces at least two novel features. The first is the extended essay question. Here the evidence is one of unfamiliarity if not inability to construct an extended essay. Too many candidates either wrote a paragraph or a number of paragraphs totally off the question. In quite a few cases, the responses were pre-prepared, many dealing with the theme but not the objective and consequently not the question. In some quarters, this is referred to as 'spec-ing' (speculation) and as in all such cases, if the speculation is off target the candidate suffers loss of marks and earns a lower than expected grade. Candidates should be discouraged from this form of inadequate preparation.
- It must be noted as well that the extended essay is now introduced into the two sections of the paper where candidates would normally experience the greatest challenges. Candidates should therefore be given additional opportunity to develop a facility in the construction of this type of response.
- Another concern is the inability of candidates to manipulate key words in the questions. Ready examples are *reluctance, markets, investment capital, around, communication, technology, industrialization, economic*. These all reflect a serious vocabulary deficiency which undermines candidates' ability to grasp the real demands of the questions and to produce a high-scoring response. Many of these words/terms appear in the content section of the respective themes in the syllabus and should not therefore be as unfamiliar to the candidate as now seems the case.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to:

- Make full use of the new syllabus to integrate the specific objectives and content demands of the theme in their teaching strategy. This should produce greater focus in the preparation of the student, facilitate a more relevant knowledge base and enable the student to make better use of his/her knowledge base.
- Aim for the acquisition of knowledge, the use of that knowledge and the skills that help students to better communicate that knowledge
- Provide practice in answering the extended essay question
- Focus on the glossary/vocabulary of history questions

- Encourage students to better allocate time, in the examination room, to cover three questions rather than exhausting too much time on the first question with little left for Questions 2 and 3.

Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

Performance on the SBA was fairly good. The mean mark was 25 out of 35 (71 per cent). There was, however, a decline in the quality of some projects due to the inadequacy of the topic selected for the SBA. The presentation of projects was generally satisfactory. Teachers need to be alert for plagiarism, especially from Internet sources, since strict penalties will be enforced for such instances. Teachers should also be aware of the new mark allocation for the project as outlined in the revised syllabus, examined in 2011 for the first time.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Performance on Paper 032 was weak. The mean mark was 11 out of 35 (33 per cent). Very few candidates scored more than 18 out of 35 available marks. Question 5 was particularly challenging since candidates interpreted the question to refer to the period after 1838, while the question targeted the period 1834—1838. The advice contained in the syllabus (pp. 28–29) should be followed if candidates are to prepare fully for this paper. It should also be recognized that the paper calls for use of background knowledge of the topic in conjunction with the information in the source.