

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION  
MAY/JUNE 2005**

**FRENCH**

**Copyright © 2005 Caribbean Examinations Council ®  
St Michael Barbados  
All rights reserved**

FRENCH

CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2005

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

The paper required candidates to respond to questions based on five short selections and an extended interview. The subject matter for the selections came from each module of the Unit, as set out in the syllabus: education, equality of chances (Module 1), the media (Module 2) and deforestation, global warming and the destruction of mangrove swamps (Module 3). The performance on this paper was satisfactory. Based on this performance, it is recommended that candidates practise listening activities early using a variety of sources – films, taped material conversation; that candidates learn vocabulary related to the topics, for example, “*l’effet de serre*”, “*l’égalité des chances*” and “*les téléspectateurs*”; practise numbers and expressions related to figures, for example, “*un sur deux*”, “*un tiers*”, “*65,000 hectares*”; read the questions carefully the better to anticipate where the relevant information will be given in the selections. For example, in Selection 4 “Phenomenon provoked by vast clouds of dust” but on the tape you hear “... *et les vastes nuages de poussière dégagés provoquent un effet de refroidissement*”.

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

The performance on this selection dealing with educational opportunity was generally good. Part (e) which asked about the expectations for children who did not go to school, presented some difficulty for candidates. However, most of them were able to respond that the ones who did not go to school stayed in the village and helped their parents. Fifty-nine per cent of the candidates scored between six marks and the maximum ten marks.

Selection 2

This selection proved to be challenging to candidates. Sections (c) and (e) were the least well done. The selection dealt with the number of women elected to councils. Some key words included close cognates. “*La proportion de femmes ... a doublé*”, *former ... un tiers des assemblées élues*”, “*un mouvement ... concernant la parité sur les listes électorales*”.

Selection 3

The majority of candidates performed very well on this selection. The topic dealt with deforestation in Cameroon and its effects on people living in the forests. Eighty-four per cent of the candidates scored between four marks and the maximum six marks.

Selection 4

This selection dealt with global warming and measures to deal with it. Part (a) and Part (b) were well done but very few candidates were able to answer Part (c) correctly, (because the word “*écran*” was perhaps unfamiliar) nor were they able to respond to Part (b).

Selection 5

This selection was generally well done. It dealt with mangrove swamps and the results of destroying them. The figure “65 000 hectares” proved to be challenging for some candidates and many did not understand “hectares”.

## **Section B – Extended Interviews**

The extended interview dealt with the attitudes of Canadians towards television and the effect that television has had on their lives. The performance was disappointing. Several candidates gave answers which were not based on the selection. Again, it was clear that the questions were misinterpreted. In response to (h) “How did Canadians spend their leisure time before television?” several candidates wrote “They spent time with their family,” or “They were more polite”, responses which were not part of the interview. Some answers showed that candidates had heard and understood. However, the answers were sometimes put in the wrong place, that is, what was acceptable as correct responses for some questions appeared in the space provided for other questions.

## **Paper 02 – Reading and Writing**

### **Section A - Reading Comprehension.**

Section A consisted of two passages. The first passage required candidates to respond in English to six questions in English as well as to find synonyms for words given. The second passage required answers in French to six questions in French.

#### Passage 1

The performance was good on the whole, and candidates attempted most questions. Seventy per cent of candidates scored at least 11 of the 20 marks. Some candidates were unable to extract the relevant information, and so gave rather lengthy and sometimes vague answers. There were several cases of very literal translations that made no sense within the given context. On the other hand, in some questions candidates lost marks for omitting parts of the answer. The synonyms were generally well handled.

#### Passage 2

The performance was quite good although candidates encountered problems of inaccuracy especially with syntax and spelling. Many candidates opted to use the words of the original passage rather than their own words. Sections a-b were quite straightforward. Candidates were able to identify the arguments on both sides, but in misinterpreting “*abattage*” they mislabeled the arguments for and against slaughtering.

It is recommended that candidates be encouraged to improve their vocabulary. Candidates also need practice in paraphrasing, a skill useful for this paper.

### **Section B - Essay**

Candidates were required to write an essay in French of 250-300 words on one of five topics, listed in the paper as Questions 3 to 7. Question 4 which required a discussion on the influence of United States television on regional identity was the most popular choice. Many candidates discussed the areas in which American programmes had influenced people in the region. The more thoughtful essays also presented arguments to balance the view that the region had lost its identity. Question 5 which required arguments as to whether or not the poor deserved to be poor and question three, which dealt with the issue of racism were also popular. Several candidates attempted Question 5 and some showed a clear indication of their understanding of the question. A few, however, were sidetracked and discussed poverty in itself rather than focusing on the topic. With respect to Question 3, many candidates were able to talk about racism but seemed incapable of linking it to the ideas of fear and ignorance. There seems to be a need for candidates to be given more practice in writing essays which require them to establish or refute the existence of links between main and contributory themes. Candidates who attempted Question 6, which dealt with the pros and cons of the death penalty as punishment for child molesters to some extent failed to give their work balance. They simply chose a position and did not include alternatives. Question 7, which dealt with beauty contests, was the least popular.

There were many pleasing scripts with accurate language, idiomatic expressions and clear presentation of ideas. On the other hand, there were also too many examples of careless, ungrammatical French. Many candidates translated ideas word for word from English. For example, “*encourage on a vivre*”, “*le gouvernement de France doit apprendre les gens aimer*”. There was some influence from Spanish, for example, “*muerte, aunque, ineficaz*”. The expressions “*parce que / à cause de*” were misused. The use of the passive proved to be difficult. “*Ils doivent condamner à mort*” but also “*les personnes sont donné des emploi médiocre*”. Prepositions were

often omitted and pronouns misused. There were also problems with gender and incorrect use of the auxiliary verbs “être” and “avoir”. These are areas in which candidates need to be more careful if they are to produce essays of exceptional quality.

### **Paper 03 – Literary Extracts and Themes**

#### **Section A – Literary Extracts**

This paper was divided into two sections. Section A consisted of the literary extracts. Candidates were required to choose one of two extracts and to answer questions based on it, in French. Candidates were expected to show understanding of the content and structure of the passage they had chosen. Performance in Section A was satisfactory.

##### Passage 1 - Une montée difficile

This passage was not well handled by candidates. Thirty-three per cent of candidates obtained at least 12 marks out of a maximum of 24. Candidates did not provide enough information in their responses. It is suggested that candidates pay attention to the number of marks allocated to questions. This would help to give them some idea as to the amount of information that is required. It was evident from their responses that candidates needed to acquire greater skill in close readings of texts.

##### Passage 2 - Un document important

Candidates' response to this passage was much better than to Passage 1. Approximately 68 per cent of them obtained at least 12 marks out of a maximum of 24 marks. Some of the candidates had difficulty understanding the passage. Because war imagery was used, some candidates concluded that the narrator was leaving a war-torn country to go to America or felt that she was still in a country which was in the midst of war. Again it must be stated that exercises in close readings of texts might help candidates to avoid such serious misunderstandings. Candidates need to acquire the ability to respond to open-ended questions in a way which is logical, cohesive and closely linked to information provided in the passage. Their opinions ought not to be baseless but must focus on those elements which highlight mood, themes, characterization and other literary aspects.

#### **Section B - Themes**

This section required candidates to explore one of three themes - (i) La Condition Féminine (ii) L'Individu et La Société or (iii) - La Jeunesse, making detailed reference to one literature text while providing support from other sources. The performance of candidates in this section of the paper was on the whole quite satisfactory. Fifty-nine per cent of the candidates obtained at least 27 marks out of a maximum of 48 marks. The most popular option in terms of questions was #6 (<< “Le caractère du personnage principal est anormal” >>. Discutez). No candidate attempted question #8, (“Aux yeux de l'enfant, l'adulte est presque divin. >> Discutez ce point de vue.”)

In general, candidates were prepared in that they were, in most cases, able to discuss the main text and to attempt points of comparison with other material. However, there was clearly a need in some cases to make tighter links with regard to secondary material being used to reinforce thematic points.

Other important points need to be underscored so that candidates' performance in this section of the paper may become more acceptable. Candidates need to pay more attention to the wording of questions so as to ensure that they answer questions fully. This was evident especially in an analysis of responses to question four. (<<Le mal et le bien sont symbolisés par l'homme et la femme. >> Discutez). Most of the responses to this question focused on the women. As a result several marks were lost because of the incompleteness of answers.

Failure to produce introductions and conclusions to essays also resulted in the loss of marks since it was sometimes unclear as to the candidates' understanding or interpretation of questions. Also, while the use of quotations was appreciated when they helped to strengthen arguments, the excessive use of these served to detract from the quality of the essay and seemed to suggest that the use was an attempt to hide the candidates' limited analytical skills.

In some cases, also, candidates lost marks because they simply paraphrased texts rather than attempting to analyse. However, there were a few essays which were well written and well structured and which, therefore, earned high marks.

## UNIT 2

### Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

This paper required candidates to respond to questions based on five short selections and an extended commentary. The subject matter for the selections came from each module of the Unit as set out in the syllabus. Selections 1 and 2 were based on Food and External Relations (Module 1), while the Effects of AIDS on Education, Internet and Space (Module 3) were tested in Selections 3-5. The commentary was based on agriculture (Module 2).

#### Section A – Short Selections

##### Selection 1

The performance on this selection on festivals celebrated in Guadeloupe was satisfactory. Forty-five per cent of candidates scored between six and the maximum ten marks.

##### Selection 2

The performance on this selection was also satisfactory. This selection, on French military involvement in different countries, saw 40 per cent of candidates scoring between six marks and the maximum 10 marks.

##### Selection 3

Forty per cent of candidates scored between four and maximum six marks on this selection on illiteracy. Candidates had difficulty identifying the number of children and adults who were illiterate, as well as where the majority of illiterate children would be found.

##### Selection 4

This was the second best answered selection in this section. Sixty-six per cent of candidates scored between five marks and the maximum eight on this selection dealing with the Internet. Candidates' weakest area related to the cost of internet services. Some quoted a figure for the cost of the internet services whereas others simply quoted the word used in the passage '*gratuites*'.

##### Selection 5

This was the best answered selection. Ninety-one per cent of the candidates scored at least four of the maximum six marks available for this selection on space exploration.

#### Section B - Commentary

This selection required responses to questions based on a commentary on industrial development in Guadeloupe. Although the commentary seemed to have posed some problems for some of the candidates, performance was still quite satisfactory with 50 per cent of candidates scoring between 11 marks and the maximum 20 marks for this section.

It is obvious that there is a need to develop listening skills by having more listening comprehension activities both within and outside the classroom. There is need too for more vocabulary exercises which will certainly contribute to greater facility in understanding when listening to the tapes.

### Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

#### Section A - Reading Comprehension

Section A consisted of two passages. Passage 1 required candidates to respond in English to six questions in English and to find in the text synonyms for words given. Passage 2 required candidates to answer, in their own words, in French, five questions set in French.

### Passage 1

The candidates performed quite well on the questions on this passage. Eighty-three per cent of the candidates obtained a minimum of 11 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks. The overall performance was, therefore, commendable.

### Passage 2

The overall performance of candidates on this question was also very good. Seventy-nine per cent of the candidates again obtained a minimum of 11 marks out of a maximum 20 marks. However, it must be noted that some candidates found it difficult to respond to the questions in their own words. Sometimes the quality of French was not as idiomatic as it could have been. Clearly within this context, there is need for exercises in paraphrasing. Vocabulary exercises designed to help candidates to become more aware of synonyms would also be useful.

## Section B - Essays

Candidates were required to write an essay of 250-300 words in French on one of the five given topics. The most popular choice done by 23 out of 58 candidates was essay number 5, “*L’agriculture n’a plus d’importance économique. Êtes-vous d’accord?*”. No candidate attempted essay number 7, “*Patronat et ouvriers doivent coopérer dans l’intérêt de l’un et l’autre*”. The remaining candidates wrote on essays number 3, 4 and 6.

Candidates, it was felt, did not give full answers to questions which were attempted. Although it was obvious that they had a great deal of information they did not always know how to put it together to produce a quality essay. More practice in composition appears to be necessary. Candidates also had problems with grammar. Subject and verb agreement, subject and adjective agreement, the use of anglicisms, correct formation of some tenses, for example, the conditional tense are all areas that need attention.

It would seem that essay number 5 was perhaps the most popular because many of the candidates could clearly identify reasons why agriculture was so important to the economy of the region. Some of the reasons given to support the economic importance of agriculture included the following: it provided jobs, foreign exchange and supported the tourist industry.

## Paper 03 – Texts and Themes

### Section A - Literary Extracts

This paper was divided into two sections. Section A required the candidates to choose one of three excerpts and comment, in French on various questions. Excerpts were taken from *L’enfant noir*, *L’étranger*, and *Gouverneurs de la rosée*. The most popular option was the passage taken from *L’étranger*. However, all excerpts were attempted. In some cases candidates did not read questions carefully and, therefore, lost marks for incomplete answers. Candidates also needed to be more concise with their responses. Some of these were quite lengthy and in instances most of what was said was not relevant to the question.

### Section B - Themes

This section required candidates to explore one of three themes listed in the syllabus, while making reference to one literature text and providing support from other material. The three themes were “*L’Émergence de l’Identité Caraïbe*”, “*La Vie Rurale*” and “*Les Conflits Politiques et Sociaux*”. The most popular theme was “*Les Conflits Politiques et Sociaux*”, and the question which most candidates opted to do was number 9: “*Commentez l’impact de l’idéologie politique sur la conduite humaine*”. From their responses, it appeared that some of the candidates who attempted this question were unclear in their own minds as to what was meant by “political ideology”. As a result, they struggled to produce a piece of work that would be considered acceptable.

Candidates need to provide more balance when writing essays. They need to pay closer attention to the wording of questions so as to ensure that their responses are complete. There must also be balance between analyses of the chosen text and comparisons with additional material. In some cases, candidates placed more emphasis on additional material and spent very little time discussing the main text. As always, there is a need for candidates to pay greater attention to grammar, for example, subject and verb agreement, adjective and noun agreement.

#### **Paper 04 – Internal Assessment for Units 1 and 2**

##### Oral Assessment

This paper required candidates to make an oral presentation on a topic of their choice and engage with the examiner on this topic, as well as on abstract and/or current topics. A good range of topics was dealt with and the better candidates seemed genuinely to enjoy their chosen topic. On the whole, candidates were well prepared for their presentations and were able to respond to stimuli presented by the examiner. In many cases the performance fell off in the topic conversation and general conversation but a satisfactory standard was still generally reached. Greater attention still needs to be paid to pronunciation and intonation. Opportunities must be provided for students to increase their vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

##### Written Assessment

There was good variation in the topics selected. Much emphasis was placed on adhering to the format and length stipulated that many presentations were truncated and lifeless. For a school based assignment there were, on the whole, far too many errors of grammar and spelling, idiom and style, and too many instances where English thoughts were literally translated into French. However, there were some very sound projects and there were a pleasure to read.