

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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

**JANUARY 2013**

**ENGLISH B  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The English B examination consists of two components — Paper 01 and Paper 02. Paper 01 consists of three compulsory questions, one from each mode of writing — Drama, Poetry and Prose Fiction. These modes of writing are the content profiles which form the basis for candidates' assessment. In each question, candidates are required to give approximately five to eight short answers. Twenty marks are allocated for each question for a total of 60 marks.

Paper 02 consists of 12 optional extended essay questions, arranged under three sections, which correspond to the modes of writing and profiles assessed. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Drama consists of four Type A questions. These are questions which are set on specific texts. Two questions are set on each drama text. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Poetry consists of two Type B questions. These are questions of comparison. Candidates are required to study 20 poems which are specified in the syllabus. For one of the questions, Question 5, the poems to be used are specified by the examiner. However, for the second question, Question 6, candidates must choose two appropriate poems from which they have studied to answer the question set. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Prose Fiction consists of six questions. The four questions set on the novels are Type A questions and the two questions set on the short stories are Type B questions. The short story section is similar to the poetry section, in that one question specifies the short stories to be used and the other requires candidates to choose the appropriate short stories from the prescribed list to answer the question. Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Each question in Paper 02 is worth 35 marks for a total of 105.

Overall, performance improved compared with that of January 2012. This was the second sitting of examinations using the new cycle of texts. It was apparent that candidates were prepared for the examination using the appropriate texts and so performance showed considerable improvement.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **Paper 01 – Short Answer**

Paper 01 assesses the following skills:

- Comprehension
- Awareness of the writer's craft (that is, the ability to say how a writer/poet achieves a given effect)

Candidates are required to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis, which here takes the form of reducing a passage to its verbal constituents (for example, imagery, rhythm, tone or mood, sound of words) and the ability to say how these elements function effectively in the passage
- Knowledge of dramatic devices such as stage directions and props
- Awareness of the relationship between action and motive
- Awareness of the interaction among characters

Compared to last year, candidates' performance on Paper 01 showed improvement in all genres. Overall, the mean performance in Profile 1, Drama, was 12.35; in Profile 2, Poetry, 9.29; and Profile 3, Prose Fiction, 7.74. The weakest performance was in Prose.

### Question 1

This question had the highest mean. The overall mean was 12.35 out of 20. Overall, 3 (0.33 per cent) of the 916 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. No candidate scored zero. The extract elicited involvement from the candidates and such resonance was demonstrated in their responses to the items.

Part (a) asked candidates for a description of what was happening in lines 1–8, essentially seeking a response which covered the persons, place and main event (the stick-fighting competition). This was well done. Part (b), however, was not as well done. Although, candidates were aided by the explanatory notes, some could not find two pieces of evidence to support the claim that Inez was a “mature coquette”. Acceptable responses included all the evidence which supported how well versed Inez was in manipulating men to get what she wants. For instance, she speaks charmingly to Joe to “ease up” on Swifty (“Give him a chance, Joe”); she gets Swifty to obey her to “clean up the place.” In fact, her attempt to charm Joe is so effective that instead of getting him annoyed, he praises her for “[taking] over the business already.”

Part (c) did not present a challenge for most candidates, but some failed to mention that Swifty's leaving the bar unattended contributed significantly to Joe's ire. In response to Part (d), regarding Inez's two roles, many candidates mentioned her role as mother/nurturer based on Swifty's response to her. However, other responses included her being peacemaker/mediator and a ‘boss’ of sorts.

By far, Part (e) was the most challenging as candidates could not explain the *dramatic function* of Briscoe's question. Acceptable responses included *to change the subject; to diffuse the tension; and to divert Joe's attention from further conflict with Swifty.*

For Part (f), most candidates identified the simile as the figurative device, but as usual floundered in commenting on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses captured the comparison of the *swiftness of the stick-fighter, who moved so quickly that this opponent was not aware of the coming blow until he felt it.*

Part (g) allowed candidates to demonstrate their creativity in suggesting the title and justifying it. A few however, presented titles without textual evidence, and thus lost marks. Candidates need to remember that reader-response items are always text based.

### Question 2

Overall, 4 (0.44 per cent) of the 916 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. Two candidates (0.22 per cent) scored zero. The overall mean for this question was 9.29.

Part (a) asked candidates to identify the main event (*concert/contest/talent show*) and its location (*school*). Most candidates were able to score full marks on this question. Although Part (b) was handled reasonably well, some candidates identified the incorrect stanza. Candidates were asked to select a line or phrase from the first stanza which describes Brother Kinsley's outstanding quality and comment on its effectiveness. Phrases included: “*swiftest legs*”; “*like sharpened blades*”; “*cutting through the finishing tape lines*”. All these emphasized his prowess, his superior quality; in essence, how quickly, gracefully and efficiently he could run races.

Part (c) required candidates to describe the speaker's attitude to Brother Kingsley and to support their response with evidence from lines 9 to 12. Many candidates merely mentioned admiration for his dancing and many failed to manipulate textual evidence to earn maximum marks. Acceptable responses included *the way in which his graceful, effortless movements connected earth and air*.

Some candidates hinted at but did not give full treatment to responses in Part (d), which asked for an example of contrast and a comment on its effectiveness. Acceptable responses included: *Brother Kingsley's dancing versus the girl's singing (effective because of the stark difference between Kingsley's talents and popularity against the girl's grating, despised rendition which emphasized the unfairness of the judge); the entire school versus Miss Stirling's judgment OR the symbol of the school versus repression OR the booing by all versus Miss Stirling's single voice*. Any variation of these is effective because the contrast underscores the unfair and undemocratic nature of the judging.

For Part (e), candidates were required to comment on one of the three quotations given. Some candidates disregarded the rubric and responded to all three, instead of commenting on one of the three given. Any of the following responses would have earned full marks:

- "he affected a clutching movement" is used to suggest that Brother Kingsley's action was not willful but merely imitative;
- "dull unburnished memory gem" is used to suggest that the girl's performance lacked spectacle, it was ordinary;
- "a drooping slipper-satin/christian-quattie dress" suggests ill-fitting, ordinary, cheap and boringly correct attire.

For Part (f) (i), candidates were required to identify the line where the persona's tone changed. Most candidates were able to understand the change in tone though some failed to identify the correct line. Part (f) (ii) required candidates to explain how the tone changes. Many candidates who attempted the second part of the question gave why the tone changed, rather than how the tone changed. The latter was required in order to earn full marks. Acceptable responses for the change in tone, Part (a), were line 16, "*till he affected a clutching movement*", and line 18, "*Miss Stirling judged that move*". For Part (b), an acceptable response is: *the tone changed from celebration/admiration to disappointment/a sense of grievance*.

Part (g) required candidates to comment on the appropriateness of the title. Some candidates did not appear to interpret this question well and presented instead, their own title for the poem. Candidates were expected to use textual evidence and respond to the key word *concert* as in celebration of talent but in this instance sarcastically entitled because of the outcome OR a communal condemnation, as in the students acting as one to expose Miss Stirling's judgement. Essentially, candidates were expected to respond to the effectiveness of the word, in light of the poem.

### Question 3

Overall, the prose question generated the lowest mean (7.74). Candidates did not, for the most part, demonstrate a convincing understanding of the passage, especially in areas which required higher order comprehension skills. Candidates must attempt all the parts of the question so as to score the highest marks possible. In this section, in particular, some candidates did not do all the parts. No candidate scored full marks in this section and three (0.33 per cent) of the 916 candidates scored zero.

Part (a) which asked for a description of the setting was done well. Most candidates were able to earn two of the three marks for this question. Acceptable responses included a description of the street/lane, rum bar, sea and twilight.

Part (b) required candidates to use evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3 to describe the relationship between Leila and Millie. While candidates were able to mention the girls were friends, many did not refer to the evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3 in their responses. Evidence from these paragraphs point to, *the girls support/trust each other; Millie is the more aggressive/Leila is the more timid.*

For Part (c), candidates were required to comment on one of the quotations given. Some attempted the two, instead of one. Again, there was the tendency to explain or paraphrase. Acceptable responses for “in the distance the sun slipped...” included those that paid attention to *lonely and cold as these words seemed to define the relationship; the reinforcement of the relationship/situation through pathetic fallacy; the suddenness of night.* For “the smoky noises...”, acceptable responses included *the almost muted sounds from inside, merged with the smoke, seeped outside; the heightened contrast of inside/outside; the animal-like atmosphere of the inside is contrasted with the colder/cleaner environment occupied by the females.*

For Part (d) (i), candidates were required to identify one instance when either Millie or Bradeth was sarcastic. Part (d) (ii) required candidates to explain how the example shows sarcasm. Although candidates were able to identify the sarcasm in Part (d) (i), the explanation for Part (d) (ii) fell short. Some candidates ignored the instructions and supplied responses for both Bradeth and Millie, instead of Bradeth or Millie. An acceptable response for Bradeth included: “check out what a bit of peace and quiet feel like, but it’s not looking like we going to finish the test”. This is a sideswipe/veiled statement that the women were a nuisance, preventing the men from enjoying their rest. Another sarcastic remark was Bradeth’s “a long time now” and by repeating it, he is in fact ‘throwing words’ at Millie, suggesting slyly, that she is the cause of his headache.

Acceptable responses for Millie included: “You both have a nice sleep, then?” in tone which is suggesting, the very opposite. Her use of “nice” is mocking; she hopes they had rotten sleep, and further, she disapproves of their sleeping in the first place. Her other remark, “well now that the testing done” is sarcastic in that her pseudo-polite phrasing (“maybe you don’t mind”) is really a kind of cover for the violence of “*testing your backside up to Sandy Bay*”.

Part (e), which asked candidates to suggest two impressions of the men and use evidence to support these impressions, was fairly well done. However, like many of the questions candidates scored better in one part of the question. Candidates scored in mentioning that the men were friends/drinking buddies but many did not use the evidence which would allow them to score full marks. Acceptable responses included *details which supported the fact that they seem to prefer their own company to that of the ladies (their controlling/nagging girlfriends); they were unreliable, having stood up the ladies.*

Part (f) was not well done. Candidates were required to suggest one reason why Aunt Toosie may want to talk to Bradeth and to justify their response. Candidates missed the inference and could not find supporting evidence. Some thought that Bradeth had done a literal test or felt that Aunt Toosie had not seen him for a very long time. Acceptable responses included: *Aunt Toosie wanted to ask Bradeth about his intentions towards her niece; Bradeth may have a different view about the relationship and may be hesitant to commit to it; or Bradeth may not be as focused on the relationship as Millie.* Marks were also awarded if candidates mentioned that Aunt Toosie wanted to talk to him about the drinking.

Candidates did not appear to be very confident in responding to Part (g). This part of the question required candidates to list the sequential points of tension and explain how each point causes the tension to rise. Some candidates merely mentioned a point or two with no mention of how each contributed to the other. Acceptable responses included: *the girls walking purposefully to an unfamiliar street; seeing their men lying drunken from a distance; tension building as Leila feels uncomfortable for having encouraged Millie to waste time waiting for the men; Millie’s forceful action of pushing Bradeth away from her; her*

*posture, aggression and sarcasm which heighten the tension, plus Bradeth's pointed rejoinders, his stance ("hind legs first"), like an animal at bay climaxes the tension.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 01

- Teachers/instructors should continue to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to literature.
- Discussing the effectiveness of literary devices must be the focus of continued analysis of style. It is not good enough to merely identify or define devices.
- Candidates in general need to base their inferences on a careful reading of the evidence in the passage as a whole. Students need to be taught the strategies that will assist them in arriving at meaning based on a thoughtful processing of the events described.
- Candidates are encouraged to watch live and recorded plays so that they are better able to appreciate the 'performance' element of the genre.
- Teachers could assist students to dramatize sections of plays in class — dramatize scenes and summarize scenes to encourage recall.
- Teachers are encouraged to assist students in understanding the rubric of examinations and ensure that they do only what is asked.

### Paper 02 – Essay Questions

The following are the skills and aptitudes tested in Paper 02 (as outlined on Page 23 of the syllabus):

- The ability to respond to West Indian and other literatures in English: novels, poems and plays; to make rational and sensitive appraisal of value judgements, states of consciousness and other concepts explained in literature, and to relate these to everyday living
- Description, analysis (the ability to break down and select relevant details) and synthesis (the ability to bring together and condense, in a new form, information drawn from various sections of a text for the purpose of answering a particular question)
- The ability to communicate informed opinions and judgements in well-structured, analytical responses in oral and written form using the vocabulary of literary criticism
- The ability to produce balanced critical analyses
- The awareness of the writer's craft (the writer as a person who employs various techniques in the shaping of language and the presentation of character and behaviour). This skill is tested throughout the examination and most particularly in Paper 02
- The ability to recognize and distinguish between moral assumptions contained in a particular text
- A grasp of concepts and values and an understanding of how these are manifested in literature.

Of the 12 questions in Paper 02, 6 (50 per cent) had candidates earning full marks. Less than 20 per cent of the candidates attempted Questions 4, 8, 10 and 12. Question 4, one of the questions on drama achieved the highest mean (19.17); the second highest mean was also from the drama questions: Question 2 with a mean of 18.18. The lowest mean came from Prose Fiction, Question 7, with a mean of 12.03. Question 9 on *The Wine of Astonishment* was the most popular question, with more than 50 per cent of candidates attempting it.

## Drama – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### Question 1

For Question 1, candidates were required to use evidence from Act 2 Scene1 to support the description that (a) Puck was a “shrewd and knavish sprite”; (b) describe how his actions cause confusion in the magic wood and (c) discuss Puck’s dramatic function in the play. For Part (a), some candidates had difficulty recalling the scene. Acceptable responses included details which captured *Puck’s delight in doing mischief to humans and animals (frightening village maidens; skimming off the cream from the milk; tricking stallions/colts into thinking there is a filly nearby to name a few)*. Although some candidates listed/mentioned some of Puck’s actions in the magic wood, responses to Part (b) lacked development. Acceptable responses included: *he mistakenly enchants Lysander instead of Demetrius and Lysander awakes madly in love with Helena and scornful of Hermia; Oberon orders him to make matters right and he enchants Demetrius and this causes both men to declare their love for Helena, much to Hermia’s consternation and anger. That same night Puck puts the ass’ head on Bottom, causing the mechanicals to panic and scamper away.*

Part (c) which required a discussion of Puck’s dramatic function was not handled well. Acceptable responses included: *the comic humour by his words and actions; his intentional creation of comedy (under Oberon’s orders) of Titania falling in love with an ass; he links the three worlds of the play; he closes the play by reminding the audience that they did but slumber and so reinforces the idea that the play is an illusion; thus returns the audience to reality.*

The mean for this question is 17.86 out of a total of 35 marks.

### Question 2

Four couples were listed for candidates to choose one and for Part (a), to describe the personality differences between the male and female; Part (b) to describe one situation in which these differences were demonstrated and finally, Part (c) to discuss the way in which Shakespeare dramatizes these differences. Candidates managed Part (a) reasonably well, in that they were able to grasp that the men appeared to be domineering, authoritative, selfish and abusive; whereas the women tended to be passionate, accepting, headstrong, gentle and capable of love. Part (b), however, proved somewhat challenging in that candidates sometimes were not able to relate the characteristics of the characters with the situations.

Acceptable responses for Part (c) included Shakespeare’s use of *conflict situations* as a means of dramatizing the differences or contrasts. The use of enchantment (physical and psychological transformations as male partners struggle to retain or obtain power over females) and props (for example, Bottom’s ass’ head as part of Oberon’s attempt to dominate Titania).

The mean for this question was 18.18 out of a total of 35 marks.

The following are some recommendations that will enable candidates to better appreciate Shakespearean texts and drama as a whole:

- Teachers/instructors should find creative ways to get students to summarize scenes (even minor ones).
- Candidates should dramatize scenes to aid recall.
- Teachers/instructors should identify dramatic techniques in live dramatizations and discussion of scenes/excerpts.

- Candidates should practise Part (c) of drama questions, which target the language and application of drama.
- Teachers/instructors should use technology (such as DVDs) to demonstrate how dramatic techniques work.
- Teachers/instructors should prepare worksheets with questions/tasks that focus on dramatic techniques.

### ***Old Story Time***

#### Question 3

For Part (a), candidates were asked to describe what was happening in Act 1 Scene 1; for Part (b) to discuss Miss Aggy's understanding of *ambition* and *advancement* and finally, for Part (c) to show how Rhone explores the ideas of ambition and advancement in the play. Although candidates were asked to give the details of the first scene in the play, many had challenges recalling the major incident (Len's beating because he was caught playing with Pearl by the river, and not at home studying) and a few candidates did not correctly identify Miss Aggy's relationship to Len. Acceptable responses for Part (b) covered Miss Aggy's self-hate and her dream of the light-skinned Margaret as the ultimate prize for her son (the epitome of advancement and ambition).

Part (c), which focused on the writer's craft proved challenging for many candidates. Acceptable responses for Part (c) included the ways in which *Rhone allows his audience to see a more balanced view of ambition and advancement than what Miss Aggy offers by using Pa Ben as storyteller and character to comment on and draw attention to Miss Aggy's actions; Pa Ben's role as mentor and confidante in fostering the relationship between Len and Lois ("the pretty black girl"); using Len and Lois as another alternative to Miss Aggy's bias, showing that ambition and advancement can come through the black middle class; using dramatic irony, contrast and flashback to interrogate Miss Aggy's anti-black stance.* Costuming, props and visual imagery are also used to explore the idea of ambition and advancement.

The mean for this question was 17.97 out of a total of 35.

#### Question 4

This question registered the highest mean for Paper 02 (19.17). Using the stem, *Rhone's presentation of his characters is what makes this story worth telling*, this question asked candidates for Part (a), to describe two characters they find appealing; for Part (b), to show how one of these characters has his/her story to tell and Part (c), to discuss how the character named in Part (b) contributes to suspense in the play. Candidates managed Parts (a) and (b) reasonably well, perhaps because these parts were 'open' enough for personal interaction. The suspense aspect of the question posed a challenge. Acceptable responses included a discussion on how the character selected impacted the drama/story through tension, resolution of the conflict, enhancement of the theme(s), and advancement of the plot.

### **Poetry**

#### Question 5

Part (a) required candidates to describe what was taking place in *A Stone's Throw* and *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her son* in terms of how women are treated. Candidates had reasonable knowledge of the poems (although a few mentioned, wrongly, that the woman was raped by the mob in the first poem). Part (b) required candidates to discuss the speaker's attitude to the woman in each poem. In articulating the speaker's attitude acceptable responses for *A Stone's Throw* included the *self-righteous*,



*smug, haughty and narrow-mindedness of the speakers (men) in their behaviour to exact judgment.* The speaker in *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her Son* is voiced through the concerns of a mother in the third-person narrative, who appears to be at the mercy of the don. She, however, has other and inner powers to draw on for strength and support as she faces the daunting task of her son's imminent violent end.

Part (c) continues to be challenging to candidates. Candidates were asked to identify and comment on one poetic device used to explore the treatment of women. Acceptable responses included *the use of biblical allusions, metaphor, irony, sarcasm, contrast*, among others. Many candidates did not lose sight of the significance of the biblical allusions in the poems. In *A Stone's Throw* references to "guru", "God-merchant", and the title ("he that is without sin, cast the first stone") invoke ideas of supernatural intervention on the woman's behalf, as the rescuer stands alone against a blood-thirsty mob; hypocrisy exposed as no one could stone the woman and generally, the fate of women and their unequal status in terms of sexual indiscretion. In *The Woman Speaks to the Man Who Has Employed Her Son* references to Judas Iscariot's mother, the father giving gifts (Jesus' parable), and the thief on the cross all allude to relationships in families, betrayal and death, sin and consequences.

The treatment of women is seen also through the use of contrast: the mob versus the guru; the scared woman versus the blood-thirsty men; the woman versus the man who employed her son. These all demonstrate the imbalance of power.

The mean for this question was 15.28 out of a total of 35 marks.

#### Question 6

This question required candidates to identify two poems by name that focus on a significant experience or event. Part (a) asked candidates to describe the experience or event; Part (b), to discuss the speaker's attitude to this experience or event and Part (c), to discuss one device that is used to present this experience or event.

All poems on the syllabus could have been used. Part (c) was as usual, the most challenging as most candidates were not able to discuss the effectiveness of the poetic device to present this experience or event (even when correctly identified). The tendency was to explain and not analyse. Further, in some instances only one device was identified. If this is to be acceptable, candidates must show its effectiveness (textually) in both poems. In order to gain full marks, candidates must correctly identify each device, show how it is used to portray the event or experience and make a statement of comparison between the two poems.

Here is an example from a candidate who did a fairly good job of showing the effectiveness of a device by tying it to the experience/event (in this instance discrimination/racism in the poem "Dreaming Black Boy"):

*The constant repetition of 'I wish' illustrates the longing and desire the persona has for oppression and blatant discrimination to stop. It is a symbol of grief as he feels helpless to the fact that he is oppressed by the white society. The phrase 'I wish' is far-fetched and may not happen. Therefore, it is evident he thinks discrimination against African-Americans would not stop. By extension the phrase 'I wish' reminds us of the famous speech made by civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr which entailed the phrase 'I have a dream.'*

The mean for this question was 17.69 out of a total of 35 marks.

## Prose Fiction

### *Songs of Silence*

#### Question 7

This was not a popular choice among candidates as less than 4 per cent of the 916 candidates attempted this question. The stem read: *Songs of Silence is held together by the sure and simple voice of a child but interspersed with the voices of adult reflection*. Candidates were asked for Part (a), to describe two incidents that Marlene the child observes OR experiences in the chapter *Effita*; for Part (b), to discuss how that chapter highlights that the story is being told from a child's point of view and finally, for Part (c), to discuss how Forbes mixes childhood and adult voices in the novel. Many candidates could not recall the details of the chapter and many confused Auntie Sare and Effita. Acceptable responses for Part (a) included how *Auntie Sare was sustained by the community; Marlene's Sunday ritual of taking food to her and enduring her long and personal prayers; Effie, the community wailer and the incident in which she made the wrong pronouncement*.

Acceptable responses to Part (b) included the fact that *the narrator declared that she was nine years old; her childish fascination with Auntie Sare's prayers; declaring that Auntie Sare was "older than forever"; the childish wonder in which Effie's actions are captured; repeating phrases from her mother and her constant questioning of the inadequacy of her mother's responses and generally, her living in 'fear' of her mother*.

Implicit in this part of the question is the writer's technique. A few candidates hinted at but did not discuss with conviction the elements of Part (c). Acceptable responses to this part included: *using Marlene as the child narrator or as the adult reflecting through the consciousness of a child; using various tones in Marlene's voice, for example, language registers (from the Standard to the non-Standard); using voices of other adult villagers to comment on social issues; using folklore and juxtaposing the young naïve Marlene with the adult who looks back*.

The mean for this question was 12.03 out of a total of 35.

#### Question 8

This question was the least popular. Less than 1 per cent of the 916 candidates attempted it. The stimulus read: *In spite of her insightfulness, Marlene, even as an adult, was still confused by some relationships*. Candidates were required for Part (a), to describe two instances of Marlene's insightfulness in the chapter "So Few and Such Morning Songs"; for Part (b) to describe two instances of Marlene's confusion in the chapter "A Story with No Name"; and for Part (c), to discuss one device that Forbes uses to portray insight and confusion in the novel.

Candidates did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the text in order to describe two instances of Marlene's insightfulness in the chapter "So Few and Such Morning Songs" or her confusion in "A Story With No Name". Candidates also did not demonstrate sufficient facility with narrative techniques to respond to the final part of the question which asked for one device used to portray insight and confusion in the novel. Acceptable responses included: *the narrative structure itself which tends to reflect Marlene's random wanderings; the narrator's 'head' becomes the site of wandering as well ('my head don't work straight...sometimes my head weave stories');* *stories do not support chronological development; symbolism, as in silence and the ways in which silence confuses or clarifies issues*.

The mean for this question was 12.33 out of a total of 35.

## ***The Wine of Astonishment***

### Question 9

This question was the most popular, garnering more than 50 per cent of candidates' responses. The stimulus read: "*I want you people to be against me*", *Bolo says and his voice, Bee tell me, was a terrible cry. "I want you to be my enemy. I want you to come and take these girls from me"*. For Part (a), candidates were required to describe the situation in which Bolo poses this challenge; for Part (b), to discuss why Bolo would challenge the villagers in this way and for Part (c), to show how Lovelace presents the tension between the community and Bolo in the novel.

Clearly the Bolo/Bee dynamics resonated with candidates and many were familiar with the text. For Part (a), candidates were fairly conversant with the issue of Bolo's *abduction* of Primus' daughters, Bee's role in trying to resolve the issue and Bolo's defiance of the entire village. Part (b), which asked for the reason for Bolo's challenging of the villagers was not lost on candidates who discussed Bolo's passion in waging his one-man war against the men in the village to regain their manhood. Part (c) which dealt with the writer's presentation of the tension between the community and Bolo was also managed well. Acceptable responses included: *Bolo's challenging of Bee's decision to obey the law and stop shouting; Bolo's return from prison and turning into a bully and the reasons for this; the abduction of Primus' daughters; through elements such as contrast, figurative devices and symbols.*

The mean for this question was 15.33 out of a total of 35.

### Question 10

The stimulus for this question read: *Eulalie is a marginal, forgotten character in **The Wine of Astonishment***. For Part (a) candidates were required to describe Eulalie; for Part(b), to explain her role in the novel and for Part (c), to discuss Lovelace's treatment of women in the novel.

Superior responses demonstrated knowledge of Eulalie's symbolic role in relation to the Bonasse community, whereas weak responses demonstrated limited knowledge of this 'marginal' character. A brief description of her yields her being the village belle and future wife of Bolo, only to be taken and used by the returning Ivan Morton. Although some candidates had challenges with the word *role* in Part (b), some rightly saw her as the personification of beauty and innocence in the village; she was Ivan's first 'victim' from the village; her 'violation' must have affected Bolo, whose pride would not allow him now to have her.

Part (c) which asked for the writer's treatment of women in the novel, had responses which primarily featured Eva, the narrator and matriarch. Other responses included the fact that women are generally marginalized; they are victims of the male world.

The mean for this question was 15.52 out of a total of 35 marks.

## **Short stories**

Candidates are asked to prepare ten short stories for this section. Of the 916 candidates attempting the Prose Fiction profile 37 per cent attempted the question on short stories. No candidate attained full marks for these questions. As with the Poetry, this section contains Type B (comparative) questions. Generally, candidates were not conversant with some of the stories. In some instances, only one of the stories was studied sufficiently with the other, a mere passing acquaintance. Consequently, candidates lost marks as they launched into story telling or repeating of information to 'pad' their responses.

## *A World of Prose*

### Question 11

“Septimus” and “Emma” were used to demonstrate how children and adults see the world with the suggested bias that readers preferred the children’s perspective of the world. Part (a) required candidates to provide an outline of the views held by the children; Part (b) required an explanation of the adults’ views on the matter and Part (c) required candidates to say which view is preferred with (textual) justification.

The children in “Septimus” collectively endorse the view of their parents that everything in the family must be shared: the children play together; ‘own’ the street together and as Septimus would later learn, share the goodies together. In “Emma” the children want to be spontaneous, unpretentious and not full of adult restrictions when they grow up. The adults, however, (as in the adult Septimus’ delight in having an entire apple for himself and in “Emma” with the adult play of deceit, betrayal and hypocrisy) tend to have opposite views to that of the children.

Candidates for Part (c) exercised their reader-response skills although some did not base their responses too much on textual evidence. There was the tendency here to support the issues with their own narratives and this tended to divert their attention from the onus to keep to the ‘facts’ of the stories. Justification requires textual responsibility.

The mean for this question was 15.06 out of a total of 35 marks.

### Question 12

Referring to the stories “Shabine” and “Blackout” in the context of ambiguity in male–female relationships, candidates were asked in Part (a), to describe one male–female relationship presented in each story and for Part (b), to show how the ambiguity is presented in each of these relationships and finally for Part (c), to discuss one theme that each writer portrays through these relationships.

Able candidates described the narrator’s secret fascination with Justine in spite of his grandmother’s warnings (since he is her social superior). The brief bus-stop encounter of the black man and the white woman and the stereotypical assumptions form the basis of the relationship in “Blackout.”

Part (b) proved challenging to some candidates as they had problems understanding the word *ambiguity*. Acceptable responses for “Shabine” included: *the privileged male admirer sees Justine as a seductress and appears to be blind to the communal rejection of her; they both desire each other but lack the will to take the leap from admiration to action. The norms of North American culture (segregation and racist responses) evident in the subtle actions of the woman and the nationalistic pride juxtaposed with strong sense of equality affirmed by the West Indian black man in “Blackout” reflect the tension and ambiguities the story explores.*

Candidates were able to choose from a range of themes (racial intolerance, gender issues, class, inhibited love, black/white relationships) and some were able to apply them to the stories under discussion. The mean for this question was 14.14 out of a total of 35 marks.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAPER 02

- Candidates need to be conscious of the demands of the comparative essay, as in Paper 02, Questions 5 and 6 (Poetry) and Questions 11–12 (Prose Fiction, Short Stories).
- A genre-specific approach is suggested so that candidates can better appreciate the discrete nature of the genres and not use them inappropriately in their responses.
- Teachers must continue to teach drama from a technical perspective and not as prose. The teaching and reinforcing of dramatic techniques must remain important.
- Modelling responses and more sustained practice are needed for students to sharpen their essay-writing skills.
- The use of technology is suggested to enhance and reinforce learning and appreciation of texts, for example, websites to enrich the learning experience.
- Attention must be paid to **all** parts of the question.
- Special attention should be paid to the section of the questions addressing the devices and effectiveness as candidates continue to underperform in this area.

Candidates need to be reminded that June 2012 was the beginning of the new cycle of texts to be studied and examined (with this 2013 being the first January sitting). Knowledge of the revised syllabus is necessary.

For the Prose section in Paper 02, the only comparative questions are those set on the Short Stories (Questions 11 and 12). All other prose questions are on single texts. Candidates need to select the appropriate texts from the revised syllabus in order to be adequately prepared for the examinations.