

KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATION COUNCIL KCSE, 2014

ENGLISH PAPER 1 ANALYSIS

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3.0 PART ONE: ANALYSIS OF DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

3.1 ENGLISH (101)

3.1.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES PERFORMANCE

The table below shows the performance of candidates in the three papers offered in 2014 in the KCSE English Examination. Data for the years, 2011, 2012 and 2013 is also given for comparison.

Table 9: Candidates' Overall Performance in English (101) in the last four years

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Score	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2011	1	410,949	60	25.73 (42.88%)	8.41
	2		80	28.53 (35.66%)	12.46
	3		60	18.60 (31.0%)	7.04
	overall		200	72.84 (36.42%)	25.14
2012	1	434,127	60	28.88 (48.13%)	9.20
	2		80	28.77 (35.96%)	12.91
	3		60	18.11 (30.1%)	7.61
	overall		200	75.76 (37.88%)	27.34
2013	1	445,757	60	21.67 (36.12%)	5.42
	2		80	17.98 (22.48%)	11.20
	3		60	15.30 (25.50%)	6.16
	overall		200	54.94 (27.47%)	20.31
2014	1	482,499	60	29.02 (48.37%)	8.80
	2		80	28.70 (35.88%)	11.26
	3		60	19.97 (33.28%)	6.30
	overall		200	77.68 (38.84%)	24.28

From the table above, it can be observed that:

- Performance in 2014 was better than that of 2013. A glance at the means column indicates that all the papers registered significant improvement. However, overall performance still falls short of the ideal mean of 100 (50%), calling for creativity and innovation in teaching and preparing candidates for examinations.
- Performance of candidates in Paper 1 improved by 7.35 points from 21.67 in 2013 to 29.02 in 2014.
- Performance in Paper 2 improved by 10.72 points from 17.98 in 2013 to 28.70 in 2014.
- In Paper 3 candidates' performance improved by 4.67 points from 15.30 in 2013 to 19.97 in 2014.

The section that follows looks at the performance in individual papers and highlights the difficulties encountered by candidates in the questions that were poorly performed.

3.1.2 English Paper 1 (101/1)

The paper was reported to have been well set and appropriate for the target candidates. Observations on the candidates' performance are as follows:

Question 1

Question 1 tested the candidate's ability to write accurately using the right format and style. Majority of the candidates were at ease with writing an informal letter but some included elements of an official letter. The question afforded the candidates an opportunity to showcase their ability to express themselves in the language but some wrote too briefly to display their mastery of the language. The key to better performance is providing the candidates with plenty of practice in all types of functional writing.

Question 2

The cloze test was rated as accessible to the target candidates but as usual, many were unable to supply appropriate words to convey intended meaning. The test requires the candidate to read through the passage with understanding, predicting the missing words using contextual, syntactic and discourse clues provided. Unfortunately, candidates' answers reveal that a majority of them were unable to make intelligent guesses as they treated each gap as a discrete item. Some candidates failed to score because instead of filling each gap with an appropriate word as required, they provided two responses one of which was incorrect.

Teachers should train candidates to read a passage severally without supplying the words to get the gist of the topic and grammatical flow. Only then should they fill the gaps with the appropriate words. They should also advise students and candidates especially, to read instructions carefully as they form part of the examination.

Question 3e

The question tested turn taking in conversation. The candidates were expected to complete the given conversation by filling in the blank spaces. Some candidates got the correct responses and so scored highly. However, the weaker candidates failed to anticipate the turns and supplied irrelevant responses. In addition, many candidates found it difficult to communicate clearly because they could not avoid gross errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation.