KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATION COUNCIL
KCSE, 2014

ENGLISH PAPER 2 ANALYSIS

3.1.3   English Paper 2 (101/2)

The paper was reported to have been the right level for the candidates and to have tested all skills in a balanced manner. Although the performance was better than that of 2013, it is still disappointing as it falls short of the percentage mean of about 50%.

Question 1& 2: Comprehension skills

Question 1

Majority of the candidates performed well in this question but many were unable to handle the vocabulary items: some gave alternative words with little attempt to explain the meaning of the items. Candidates should be encouraged to explain the meaning using their own words. Often, many give alternative words that do not quite capture the meaning of the given words as used in the passage. An analysis of candidates' work revealed many errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar. Given this is a language paper, these mistakes attracted penalties.

Question 2

The second Comprehension was based on the novel, *The River and the Source*. Candidates were required to not only use the information in the extract given but also to use their knowledge of the set text.

Majority of the candidates had not read the novel well enough to place the extract in its immediate context as required in 2(a)

Questions 2(c) and 2(g) were the worst performed. Both required candidates to infer information but most of them were unable to reason beyond what was presented in the passage. Some candidates merely lifted chunks of information from the passage to answer the questions. This attracted penalties.

Again, vocabulary items proved difficult to most candidates.

Teachers should train their candidates to make inferences and deductions from clues given in comprehension texts. They should also encourage reading with understanding and train students to respond to questions in a manner that displays an understanding of the demands of the given tasks.

Question 4

Section *(a) and (d)* proved difficult to most candidates. Section *(a)* required candidates to rewrite sentences according to given instructions. Besides the comprehension of the input sentence, the candidates were needed to be conversant with the rules of grammar governing the changes. This was evidently lacking in the work of most of the candidates.
Section (c) required candidates to replace the underlined idiomatic expressions with words of similar meaning. Many candidates scored zero on the two items of the test.

Teachers should cover all the grammar topics and encourage learners to use language in different contexts.

3.1.3   English Paper 3 (101/3)

The paper was reported to have been appropriately pitched with the language being within the level of the candidates. There was a significant improvement in performance but the paper mean of 33.28% is still below the ideal.

Question 1: Imaginative Composition

Both questions 1(a) and 1(b) required creativity, originality and imagination. Question 1(a) required the candidates to write a story beginning with the input sentence: "When we arrived at the crime scene…" Some candidates produced interesting pieces but then there continued to be those who wrote their compositions without using the input sentence or those who wrote unrelated stories and then simply tagged on the input sentence. Question 1(b) required knowledge of the saying "Charity begins at home", and the capacity to compose a story illustrating the meaning. Some candidates failed to interpret the saying well and wrote irrelevant pieces. Memorized pieces were also treated as irrelevant. Such accounts were penalized accordingly.

Teachers should teach composition writing skills and provide learners with ample practice.

Essays Based On Set Texts

The questions proved quite demanding because the candidates lacked both the essay development skills and the content to illustrate their claims. Many candidates displayed little knowledge of the texts by giving scanty illustrations. There were also some who failed to interpret the tasks correctly leading to irrelevant narrations.

Question 2

Candidates were required to write an essay illustrating that though Natella abashwili is the biological mother of Michael, she does not act in a manner befitting a mother. In contrast Grusha though not a biological mother puts Michael's needs before her own; thus, being a biological mother is only a first step. The real moral challenge is to be motherly. Most candidates failed to develop the contrast. Illustrative detail was painfully weak and many lacked essay development skills.

Performance in this paper remains depressed. Once again teachers are called upon to teach composition writing and ensure that learners know their texts well. Candidates should also be given ample practice in essay writing.