THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF TANZANIA

CANDIDATES' ITEM RESPONSE ANALYSIS REPORT FOR THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION (PSLE) 2023

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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FOREWORD

Candidates Item Response Analysis (CIRA) in English Language is a report basing on the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) which was conducted in September 2023. The Examination is summative evaluation of a seven-year primary education for the year 2023. This report provides feedback to all education stakeholders on the factors which contributed to the candidates correct and incorrect responses to English Language examination questions.

The candidates who responded correctly to the questions, had adequate knowledge of basic vocabulary for use in different contexts. They were competent in applying grammatical rules, listen, read and comprehend oral and written information. In contrast, the candidates who responded incorrectly were incompetent in those areas of competency.

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) expects that this report will be useful to teachers, school managers, school quality assurers, education administrators and other education stakeholders. Furthermore, the feedback and recommendations provided in the report will help teachers and pupils to take appropriate measures to improve the teaching and learning of English Language subject in Primary Schools. Therefore, the candidates' performance in the future Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) will be improved.

The Council appreciates the contributions of all who participated in making this report a success.

Dr. Said A. Mohamed
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The report presents a comprehensive analysis of Candidates' performance in English Language subject in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) which was conducted on 14th September, 2023.

English language examination was set in accordance with the 2015 English Language Subject Syllabus and the 2020 English Language subject examination format. The examination tested candidates' competencies in *listening and comprehending information presented orally; developing and using vocabulary appropriately through listening, writing and reading; communicating simple ideas through writing and reading* and *comprehending written information*.

The English Language examination was divided into three sections; A, B and C which made a total of forty-five (45) questions. Section A and B consisted of 40 multiple choice questions. Each question carried one (01) mark, making a total of forty (40) marks for both section A and B. Section C comprised five (05) short answer questions. Each question carried two (02) marks, making a total of ten (10) marks for the whole section.

The analysis in each question is presented by indicating the task of each question, the expected response, how the candidates responded and explanations on the candidates' responses. Sample responses extracted from the candidates' scripts (Question 41 – 45) have been used to exemplify candidates' responses to examination

questions. Moreover, the benchmarks for PSLE Performance have been categorised as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Benchmarks for the PSLE Performance Grades in English Language Subject

Range of Marks	Grade	Remarks
41 - 50	A	Excellent
31 – 40	B	Very Good
21 – 30	C	Good
11 – 20	D	Satisfactory
0 - 10	F	Fail

Table 1, shows that the highest performance grade in English Language Subject is A, while the lowest is F. Although the performance grades are categorised into five groups as seen in the table, the candidates' performance in each question is described in three categories, namely Good, Average and Poor.

Based on the percentage of candidates with their scores, good performance ranges from 60 to 100 percent and average performance ranges from 40 to 59 per cent. Moreover, poor performance ranges from 0 to 39 per cent. The candidates' performance on each competency is summarised in an appendix.

The candidates registered for the English Language Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) were 1,397,393, among these 1,356,286 (97.06%) sat for the examination and 465,880 (34.35%)

passed. In contrast 1,347,933 (97.38%) candidates sat for examination in 2022. Among them, 396,139 (29.39%) passed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Candidates' Pass Grade in PSLE 2022 and 2023, English Language National Examination

Year	Sat	Passed (Grade A-C)		Grade D		Grade E	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2022	1,347,933	396,139	29.39	912,708	67.71	39,086	2.90
2023	1,356,286	465,880	34.35	833,263	61.43	57,064	4.20

Table 2 shows that general performance in English Language Examination has increased by 4.96 per cent from 29.39 per cent in 2022 to 34.35 per cent in 2023.

2.0   ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS

The analysis of the candidates' responses is based on their ability to correctly respond to a specific question. Moreover, the analysis provides reasons for the candidates' correct responses. Furthermore, the analysis provides reasons for responses which did not meet the requirements of the question. The overall performance for each question is presented in both numbers and percentages.

In this examination, the candidates showed good performance on question 18 which had 54.83 per cent. On the contrary, question 44 was the most underperformed by the candidates. It had only 9.90 per cent of all candidates who correctly responded to it.

2.1 SECTION A: COMPREHENDING ORAL INFORMATION, TENSES, GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

This section consisted of 35 questions whereby each weighed one (01) mark. Questions 1 to 5 tested candidates' ability to listen and comprehend an oral passage read by the invigilator, and then answer the questions thereafter by choosing the letter of the correct answer among the options (A-E) provided. The oral passage was as follows:

> Education, which is the tool for awareness and self-reliance, is as old as a man. It was there in the past, the time of our great grandparents. In those old days, education was provided by grandparents. This kind of education was called informal education. Boys were taught hunting and farming. Girls were taught how to take care of the family, cooking and cleaning the house.
>
> However, the missionaries came and introduced formal education. In this new form of education three basic things were taught. These were Writing, Reading and Counting. People who graduated in formal education were employed in various institutions like banks, hospitals, schools and to police force. Thus, it became a tool for employment.

The analysis of candidates' performance in question 1 to 5 is as follows:

Question 1: According to the story, when did education start?

    A   When books were introduced

    B   When man was created

C   After introduction of employment

D   Before creation of man

E   When teachers were available

The question tested the candidate's knowledge on tracing the beginning of education based on the passage. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 1

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	220,749	363,329	401,111	280,531	71,566	19,000
% of Candidates	16.28	26.79	29.57	20.68	5.28	1.40

The statistics show that the candidates' performance on this question was weak since 363,329 (26.79%) candidates chose the correct option B, (*when man was created*). The candidates who selected the correct response had good listening and comprehension skills. These candidates noticed that, education is as old as a man is and it was orally shared from one generation to another. They understood that informal and formal are the forms of education which differ in age and the modes of presentation. They were also knowledgeable that formal education was introduced by the missionaries while informal education was being practised since the history of humankind.

In contrast, the candidates who chose option A, (*when books were introduced*) did not know that, the introduction of books came during formal education. The missionaries introduced books after the advancement of science and technology. On the contrary, learning started since the creation of human beings and their actions

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according to nature. According to the passage, the missionaries came and introduced formal education. This new form of education taught people three things: Writing, Reading and Counting. This suggests that books existed later after creation of human beings. In such instances, option A was an incorrect response to the question.

Similarly, the candidates who chose C, (*after introduction of* employment) did not comprehend a flow of events in the story. This was incorrect response because according to the passage, employment was the outcome of formal education. In the passage, it was stated that, people who graduated in formal education were employed in various institutions like *banks, hospitals, schools* and *Police Force*. Thus, formal education became a tool for employment. This makes option C not to serve a correct answer to this question.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for D, (*before creation of man*) picked a wrong choice because education was meant for man and it was by man. It was a man who discovered and practised it, therefore, it could not have come before or without him. According to the passage, education was provided by people, that is, grandparents.

Furthermore, the candidates who opted for E, (*when teachers were available*), did not realise that elders provided teachings to young people. The teachings included hunting, farming and cleaning. This proves that, option E was equally a wrong choice.

Question 2: What does a man need to be in order to become self-reliant and build self-awareness?

    A   employed

    B   hanged

    C   informed

    D   educated

    E   advised

This question tested candidate's ability to assess the roles of education in making a man self-reliant and conscious of himself. The performance of candidates on this question is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 2

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	199,129	149,492	264,928	633,755	91,304	17,678
% of Candidates	14.68	11.02	19.53	46.73	6.73	1.30

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was average since 633,755 (46.73%) candidates chose the correct option D, (*educated*). These candidates knew that, an educated person can be independent in his/her life through self-employment using knowledge and skills obtained through education.

In contrast, the candidates who chose option A, (*employed*) did not know that employment alone does not make a person self-conscious and self-reliant. That is to say, education liberates human beings both mentally and physically, as it is not always the case for employment. Therefore, option 'A' was incorrect response to this question.

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Likewise, the candidates who chose B, *(changed)* were wrong. This is because the option does not suggest exhaustively the kind of change man should undergo. The candidates did not notice that the option does not state whether it is a positive or a negative change. Hence, it did not provide a plausible basis for the question because it is education that is believed to instil changes to people.

Similarly, the candidates who opted for C, (*informed*) could not make correspondence between man's self-awareness, self-reliance and information. They did not realise that, being informed alone does not make a man lead an independent life. Furthermore, there are people who are well informed of many things, yet they are dependants.

In addition, candidates who opted for E, (*advised*) were equally wrong. These candidates did not understand that *advice* is the best suggestion that one is given as a tool for decision making. They were unaware that advice can be given to any one regardless they are self-reliant or not. These candidates did not understand that advice is not an order or a law, therefore one can opt to take or ignore it. This proves that for self-reliance and self-awareness, one needs to be educated.

Question 3: What are the categories of education?
    A   Hunting and farming
    B   Cooking and family care
    C   Formal and informal
    D   Great grandparents and formal
    E   Missionaries and traditional

The question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to identify forms of education as they are stipulated in the passage. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 3

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	141,710	493,876	309,808	248,478	142,036	20.378
% of Candidates	10.45	36.41	22.84	18.32	10.47	1.50

Data indicate that the performance on this question was poor since 309,808 (22.84%) candidates opted for the correct response C, (*Formal and informal education*). These candidates were aware that education can be acquired from natural environment through grandparents. Similarly, they knew that education can be learned formally in classrooms through instructions and procedures to cover some topics in a specified period of time. So, there are two forms of education according to the passage.

In contract, the candidates who opted for the incorrect responses A, (*Hunting and farming*) and B, (*Cooking and family care*) did not understand that the activities mentioned in A and B are not the types of education. They are the roles or duties taught by grandparents to boys and girls respectively through informal education.

Similarly, the candidates who chose option D, (*Great grandparents and formal*) did not understand that the great grandparents passed informal education orally from one generation to another. On the contrary, *formal* is something official or recognised and therefore, not the type of education.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for E, (*Missionaries and traditional*) did not know that the missionaries are not one of the types of education. The missionaries were the people sent to various countries to teach about western civilisation through religion and formal education. Furthermore, the candidates did not understand that missionaries' form of education is different from traditional form of education which is as old as a man.

Question 4: What should the youths do to create a generation of well-educated citizens?

    A   They should study hard

    B   They should get missionaries' education

    C   They should get the 3Rs education

    D   They should get informal and formal education

    E   They should go to school

The question tested the candidate's ability to assess their roles and responsibilities in creating a generation of well-educated citizens. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 4

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	148,311	252,020	261,575	422,575	254,292	17,513
% of Candidates	10.94	18.58	19.29	31.16	18.75	1.29

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was poor since 422,575 (31.16%) candidates opted for the correct answer D, (*They*

should get formal *and informal education*). These candidates understood that education is the tool used to build one's awareness and self-reliance. Similarly, they noticed that through education youths are taught their roles and responsibilities in the society. So, formal and informal education are important for the youth as they expose them to different social, economic, cultural and political skills.

In contrast, the candidates who chose option A, (*They should study hard*) and B (*They should get missionaries' education*) did not know that studying hard alone is not enough. It also requires a specific objective to create a generation of well-educated citizens. Moreover, the candidates did not understand that to get missionaries' education alone cannot help youths to create a generation of well-educated citizens. Hence, they realised that the society needs both formal and informal education for awareness and self-reliance.

Furthermore, the candidates who opted for alternative C, (*They should get the 3Rs education*) and E, (*They should go to school*) were equally wrong. The candidates did not understand that 3Rs in education means *Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.* The 3Rs aims at improving the literacy and numeracy foundation for young pupils; this alone cannot help youths to create a generation of well-educated citizens. Likewise, they did not understand that going to school pursuing formal education while forgetting informal education is incomplete for the well-being of the society.

Question 5: How did formal education benefit the society?

    A People were able to read, write and count

    B People were able to hunt many animals

    C People were able to cook for the family

    D People were able to play target games

    E People were able to change the education system

This question tested the candidate's ability to evaluate the benefits of formal education to the society. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 5

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	458,810	106,704	476,695	74,160	223,418	16,499
% of Candidates	33.83	7.87	35.15	5.47	16.47	1.22

Data reveal that, the performance on this question was poor since 458,810 (33.83%) candidates selected the correct option A, (*people were able to read, write and count*). These candidates understood the importance of education in the society. They realised that formal education was a new form of education in which Reading, Writing and Counting were taught to learners, hence it benefited the society by being employed and reducing illiteracy rate.

On the contrary, those who chose alternative B, (*people were able to hunt many animals*) and C, (*people were able to cook for the family*) did not understand that the hunting and cooking were not taught during formal education. They were taught to the youths in the era of

informal education besides farming and housekeeping. Thus, formal education did not benefit the society in hunting and cooking but through formal employment and the acquisition of 3Rs skills as the passage suggested.

Similarly, candidates who opted for D, (*people were able to play target* games), and E, (*people were able to change the education system*) were wrong. These candidates were unaware that games were neither taught in formal nor informal education systems. In addition, they did not realise that changing education system resulted from the introduction of colonial education and so, it cannot be stated as one of the benefits of formal education to society. Therefore, these options were wrong choices for the question.

Questions 6-35 comprised multiple-choice type question which tested the candidate's ability to apply various grammatical aspects while using the English language. The candidates were required to complete the sentences by shading the letter of the correct answer in the answer sheet (OMR) provided.

Question 6: Mrs. Johari taught me how to cook *biriani*. I _____ practice it next Saturday to improve my cooking skills.

A   have

B   could

C   has

D   had

E   will

The question tested the candidate's ability to use modal auxiliary verbs when expressing future plans or activities. Future plans are activities or plans that are going to be accomplished after the time of utterance. For example: *I will jump in the lake*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 6

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	395,023	152,457	175,044	97,040	517,981	18741
% of Candidates	29.13	11.24	12.91	7.15	38.19	1.38

Statistics indicate that the performance on this question was poor since 517,981 (38.19%) candidates opted for the correct option E (*will*). These candidates realised that the given sentence needed an auxiliary verb "will" to express willingness to practice cooking next Saturday.

In contrast, the candidates who chose alternative A, (*have*), did not understand that, when the personal pronoun "I" takes the auxiliary verb "have", the main verb must be in past participle form carrying -*ed/-en* particles. The form is used to express obligations or necessity to do or not to do something in the near future.

Likewise, the candidates who chose B, (*could*) did not understand that the modal verb "could" is commonly used in conditional sentences. It is used in expressing past ability or possibility which will never happen anymore. For example, *Extreme rain could cause the river to flood the city.* Therefore, the option was wrong because it does not express willingness or ability to do something in the future.

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Moreover, the candidates who opted for C, (*has*) were unaware that the modal auxiliary "has" is used with third person singular pronouns *he, she* and *it* to express possession. For example, *He has grey hair*. In addition, it is wrong to use the personal pronoun "I" with the modal "has" to express willingness or ability to do something.

Furthermore, the candidates who picked D, (*had*) did not understand that modal "had" is the past tense of both "has" and "have" as in *I had a strange dream last night.* Similarly, it is used to refer to present or future events that we think they should happen in a particular way or which are desirable in a specific situation. For example, *I wish we had never come here*. In addition, "had" is sometimes used in place of "if" when beginning a clause which describes a situation that might have happened but did not. For example, *Had she been elected….* meaning *if she had been elected….* Therefore, it was a wrong choice to Question 6.

Question 7: My uncle is interested in sports. He used to _____ sports TV programmes before he went out for physical exercises.

    A   watching

    B   be watch

    C   watch

    D   watched

    E   watches

This question tested the candidate's ability to use the structure {used to + infinitive} to express the past events which occurred regularly. The structure refers to a past routine or situation which no

longer exists at the present time. For example, *she <u>used to</u> be a long-distance runner when she was younger*. The performance of candidates on this question is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 7

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	295,188	190,552	549,205	172,222	130,246	18,873
% of Candidates	21.76	14.05	40.49	12.70	9.60	1.39

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was average since 549,205 (40.49%) candidates selected the correct option C, (*watch*). These candidates understood that the main verb in the sentence should be in its basic form (infinitive form) when expressing past habitual events using the phrase "used to".

However, there were others who chose A, (*watching*) which was an incorrect option. These candidates were unaware that the phrase "used to" is not used with verb ending with *-ing*. For example, it is wrong to say, *I used to <u>studying</u> in the library*. Therefore, it is wrong because it violates the rule (used to + infinitive).

Furthermore, candidates who opted for B, (*be watching*) did not understand that the phrase "be watching" is used to express temporary actions that will be in progress in the future as in *I will <u>be watching</u> you*. The candidates did not realise that the sentence given is in past tense, hence it required the use of *to infinitive* to express a habit in the past.

Other candidates selected D, (*watched*) which was equally a wrong answer. These candidates did not realise that, "used to" is not used with verbs in the past participle form as in *We used to watched TV programmes*.

Some candidates opted for E, *(watches)* which was incorrect. This is because *-s, -es*, and *-ies* particles are not used with *infinitive to*, rather they are used with the Present Simple Tense to express present habitual/regular events, for example, *She reads a novel after classes*.

Question 8: The railway company has to improve its transport services. The train _____ late three times this week.

    A   was being

    B   is being

    C   has been

    D   would be

    E   has being

This question tested the candidate's ability to use Present Perfect Continuous Tense to express something that started in the past and is continuing at the present time. For example, *Jacob has been late for work recently* or *Anna and Jacob have been arriving late for work recently.* The performance of candidates on this question is as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 8

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	214,686	275,494	545,446	166,198	136,203	18,259
% of Candidates	15.83	20.31	40.22	12.25	10.04	1.35

Analysis shows that, the performance on this question was average since 545,446 (40.22%) candidates selected the correct option C, (*has been*). These candidates knew that "has been" is the structure that is used with third person singular subject (*she, he*, and it) in the Present Perfect Continuous Tense. Also, they realised that, the Present Perfect Continuous Tense is used to emphasise that something is continuing at the present time. Therefore, according to the sentence in the question, the act of the train being late is persistent.

Nevertheless, there were candidates who selected A, (*was being*). Such candidates did not understand that "was being*" expresses activities in the past continuous tense as in *A notorious student was being punished*.

Those who selected B, (*is being*) did not know that the phrase is used to express events in the Present Progressive Tense in passive voice as in *This topic is being discussed*.

Furthermore, there were candidates who chose D, (*would be*). Their choice was incorrect because, the phrase "would be" is used to express possibility or probability. Therefore, if the sentence was attached with "would be", it would mean there is possibility or

likelihood for the train to be late three times in a week, instead of being late already in three times this week.

Likewise, some candidates picked E, (*has being*) which was also incorrect answer. Such candidates did not understand that it is ungrammatical to say, *the train has being late three times this week*. The candidates did not know that, "has*"* goes with "been" in the present perfect continuous tense, but not "being". Therefore, it is correct to say, *he has been writing a letter* but it is incorrect to say, *he has being writing a letter*.

Question 9: Mussa and Abdul like sports. They _____ tennis now.

    A   are playing

    B   had played

    C   played

    D   playing

    E   were playing

The question tested the candidate's ability to express events happening around the time of speaking by using the Present Continuous Tense. This tense is used to describe activities which are happening now as in *It is raining now*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 9

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	571,505	115,191	259,907	225,622	164,215	19,846
% of Candidates	42.14	8.49	19.16	16.64	12.11	1.46

Data indicates that the performance on this question was average since 571,505 (42.14%) candidates opted for the correct option A, (*are playing*). These candidates realized that adverbial of time "now" means "at this moment". Therefore, they understood that the verb must take *-ing* inflection which is preceded by "are" as a helping verb to agree with the plural subject "They" as in *They <u>are playing</u> tennis now*.

Conversely, the candidates who chose B, (*had played*) did not understand that the verb phrase "had played" is the Past Perfect Tense of the verb "play" which indicates an action that happened before another action in the past. For example*, By the time he arrived, the race had already been played*. Hence, it was wrong to use such verb to express an action that is happening at the moment.

Similarly, the candidates who chose option C, (*played*) were wrong because they did not understand that the verb "played" is in Simple Past Tense. The verb describes actions or events that happened in the past. For example, *My mother <u>bought</u> a dress for me.* Therefore, it was incorrect to express the action that is taking place at the moment of speaking using the verb *"played"*.

Additionally, the candidates who opted for alternative D, (*playing*) did not know that in present continuous tense, the main verb with *-ing* particle must be preceded by "is" or "are" in singular and plural respectively. For example, *she is eating chips* or *they are eating chips*. Therefore, option D, (*playing*) was a wrong answer because it lacked a helping verb "is" or *"are"* before the main verb.

Moreover, the candidates who chose E, (*were playing*) did not understand that verb phrase "were playing" was in the Past Continuous Tense. Hence, it is used for actions and states in progress at a point of time in the past. For example, *she was doing her homework*. Hence, it was wrong to use phrase "were playing" as it does not indicate that the action is happening recently.

Question 10: I like the teaching profession. I was influenced by Mr. Winga, our former teacher who _____ us happy all the time during his classes.

    A   keep

    B   keeping

    C   keeps

    D   kept

    E   had kept

This question was set to test the candidate's ability to express past activities with the use of irregular main verbs appropriately by using Simple Past Tense. Simple Past Tense is used to describe an action that happened before the present time. It is formed by adding *-d/-ed* to regular verbs but not to irregular verbs. Irregular verbs do not change their forms in a usual way as the regular verbs do.

Therefore, the Past form of irregular verb is not formed by adding -d or -ed, for example, *we buy oranges* cannot be *we buyed oranges* in the past. Table 12 shows the performance of candidates on this question.

Table 12: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 10

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	390,438	293,486	263,547	276,101	111,873	20,841
% of Candidates	28.79	21.64	19.43	20.36	8.25	1.54

The analysis indicates that, performance on this question was weak since 276,101(20.36%) candidates selected the correct option D, (kept). These candidates knew that the correct simple past form of the irregular verb "keep" is "kept".

On the contrary, those who opted for A, (*keep*) were wrong since the verb "keep" appears in its basic form hence, it does not agree with the tense of a given sentence. The candidates who opted for this alternative did not apply the rules that govern the change of irregular verbs in the Simple Past and Past Participle forms.

Likewise, those who chose B, (*keeping*) were equally wrong. These candidates did not recognise that the verb carrying *-ing* particle/suffix is used to express continuation of an action.

Additionally, there were candidates who selected alternative C, (*keeps*). Such candidates did not know that the verb "keeps" carries an -s suffix/particle, which is the verb form of the Simple Present

Tense in singular form. Therefore, the tense of the given sentence does not correspond with the form of verb selected by the candidates that is "keeps".

Moreover, other candidates chose E, (*had kept*) which was also incorrect. The candidates did not understand that the phrase "had kept" describes an event in the Past Perfect Tense to indicate a time earlier than before now. Therefore, the candidates failed to distinguish between the Simple Past Tense and the Past Perfect Tense sentences.

Question 11: Rajabu and Paul were mopping the floor _____ their sister was washing the dishes.

    A   why

    B   while

    C   what

    D   which

    E   where

The question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to use conjunctions in joining words or sentences. A conjunction is a part of speech that connect two words, sentences or clauses together. For example, *the phone rang while I was doing physical exercises*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 11

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	119,550	376,409	238,188	353,900	246,761	21,478
% of Candidates	8.81	27.75	17.56	26.09	18.19	1.58

Statistics indicate that the performance on this question was weak since 376,409 (27.75%) candidates opted for the correct option B, (*while*). These candidates understood that, "while" is used as a subordinating conjunction to describe two things which are taking place at the same time.

In contrast, the candidates who opted for A, (*why*) were wrong because the adverb "why" is used at the beginning of a clause seeking for reasons or purpose of something. For example, *Why didn't you inform your parents?* Therefore, it cannot be used to connect words or phrases.

Additionally, those who picked C, (*what*) did not understand that "what" is a relative pronoun used to introduce a relative clause that gives further information about the preceding noun or noun phrase. For example, *who cares what he thinks*. Moreover, these candidates were unaware that "what" is used as an interrogative that expresses inquiry about the entity, nature or value of an object or matter. For example, *What is this?* Therefore, this was a wrong choice because "what" does not join words, clauses or sentences.

Similarly, the candidates who opted for D, (*which*) were unaware that "which" is an interrogative determiner which comes before noun or a noun phrase. This determiner is used in asking about something in a set of things. In other aspects, it is used for asking about specific information as in <u>*Which bag is yours?*</u>

The candidates who chose E, (*where*) did not realise that the word "where" is used in asking a question. For example, <u>*Where are you going?*</u> Therefore, it was wrong to use it to connect two opposing ideas.

Question 12: Yesterday I saw Janeth going to school _____ foot.

    A   by

    B   for

    C   in

    D   on

    E   with

The question tested candidate's ability to use prepositions. Prepositions are words governing, and usually preceding a noun or pronoun to express relationship with other words in the sentence. For example, *she arrived <u>after</u> dinner* or *What did you do it <u>for</u>?* In these sentences, the underlined words are examples of prepositions. Other example includes, *in, at, across, to, with, by, beside, beneath, in front of, between,* and *among*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 12

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	301,468	137,437	251,791	555,689	89,655	20,246
% of Candidates	22.23	10.13	18.56	40.97	6.61	1.49

The analysis indicates that, the performance on this question was average since 555,689 (40.97%) candidates selected the correct option D, (*on*). These candidates knew that preposition "on" is used for movements or actions that involve using body parts.

In contrast, the candidates who selected A, (*by*) were wrong because "by" is a preposition used to express the means of transport like train, car, boat, and plane. For example, *the students travelled by bus to school*.

Similarly, others who chose B, (*for*) did not understand that preposition "for" is used to express reasons for something or purpose but not movement. For example, *I have kept it for my best friend.*

Likewise, the candidates who chose alternative C, (*in*) were unaware that the preposition "in" is used to express time, as in *he came in the morning*. In other way, it is used in expressing small locality, place or area, as in "*A baby is in the garden*". Hence, it is not related to movement or transportation as a case in the sentence.

Moreover, those who chose E, (*with*) did not understand that preposition "with" is not used to signify the means of transport. It is rather used to show something or someone being accompanied by something or someone else. For example, *I went to the shopping mall <u>with</u> him.* Therefore, it was a wrong response because foot is a body part that cannot taken as a separate entity to accompany somebody.

Question 13: Bats are more active _____ night than during day time.

     A   in

     B   at

     C   on

     D   by

     E   onto

The question tested the candidate's ability to use prepositions. Prepositions are words that indicate relationships among other words in a sentence. For example, *He sat <u>on</u> the chair*. Other examples of prepositions include *on, for, under, into*, *in, at, up, down, to, with, by, beside, beneath, in front of, between,* and *among*. Prepositions can convey information about location, time, or direction. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 13

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	149,463	680,043	139,849	164,159	202,131	20,641
% of Candidates	11.02	50.14	10.31	12.10	14.90	1.52

Analysis indicates that, the performance on this question was average since 680,043 (50.14%) candidates selected the correct option B, (*at*). These candidates knew that "at" is a preposition used to indicate night in relation with an event that takes place.

Conversely, the candidates who selected A, *(in)* did not understand that, "in" can be used to indicate only one specific night, not all nights in general.

Likewise, those who selected C, (*on*) did not understand that, "on" is used to refer to days of the week as in *We played football on Thursday*. Therefore, it cannot be used in expressing or telling a specific time.

Similarly, the candidates who selected option D, (*by*) did not know that "by" is used as a preposition of time that is limited for something to happen. Thus, an event must happen before a specific time reaches. For example, *please send me the report by night.*

Furthermore, the candidates who opted for E, (onto) were wrong. These candidates did not understand that, preposition "onto" describes the direction of an object moving toward a surface. For example, *she set the box onto the table*. Thus, it would sound inappropriate to say*, Bats are more active onto night than during daytime.*

Question 14: Last month, we were invited to court to learn about criminal cases. We sympathised with a man who was sentenced to serve two years _____ jail.

    A   on

    B   for

    C   to

    D   in

    E   into

The question tested the candidate's ability to use prepositions. A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. Some examples of prepositions are *in, at, on, of,* and *to.* The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 14

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	95,938	380,348	312,162	313,573	234,491	19,774
% of Candidates	7.07	28.04	23.02	23.12	17.29	1.46

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 313,573 (23.12%) candidates selected the correct choice D, (*in*). These candidates realised that "in" is a preposition of place hence, it is used to refer to a place in which something is contained. For example, *I live in Dar es Salaam*. In the question, "in" shows the place in which the sentenced man is put/contained (in jail).

On the contrary, the candidates who chose A, (*on*) were wrong since the preposition "on" is used to refer to the position on a surface. This would make a sentence in question mean that the sentenced man was put on top of the jail and not inside it. The candidates who picked this option most likely regarded a jail as a flat body while it is not.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for B, (*for*) were wrong because the preposition "for" is not related to place or area. It describes a reason for or purpose of something to be done or take place. For example, *I have bought this dress <u>for</u> you.* The candidates who chose this option regarded the sentenced man to be serving in prison on behalf of the jail (for jail), which is impossible.

Similarly, the candidates who chose C, (*to*) did not understand that, the preposition "to" indicates or describes direction or destination. For example, *he is going <u>to</u> the beach.* This option was unsuitable because it would suggest movement of a sentenced man from a particular point to the jail.

The candidates who chose E, *(into)*, did not understand that the preposition "into" is used to describe something moving in the direction of something whereby one is inside or enclosed in the other. For example, *she dived <u>into</u> the water.* Therefore*,* using "into" would suggest movement of the sentenced man from a certain point to jail but not his imprisonment.

Question 15: The whole crowd was surprised by how a thief jumped
_____ the gate.

  A on

  B over

  C to

  D in

  E into

The question tested the candidate's ability to use prepositions in expressing daily events or activities. Prepositions are words that show relationships among words in a sentence. They can express relationships of time, direction, place and other abstract or logical connections. For example: *We walked to the shop.* The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 15

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	283,877	423,627	376,549	162,646	94,014	15,573
% of Candidates	20.93	31.23	27.76	11.99	6.93	1.15

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 423,627 (31.23%) candidates selected the correct option B, (*over*). These candidates understood that preposition "over" describes the position at higher level than something else. For example, *a beautiful white bird flew over the lake*. Therefore, because the gate is always closed, the thief must pass over it. This means that there is no physical contact between two objects.

In contrary, the candidates who chose alternative A, (*through*) did not understand that "through" is used to express movement of an object from one side of something to another. For example, *they walked slowly <u>through</u> the woods*. In such instances, it was a wrong choice since no one can walk through the gate unless it is open.

Similarly, the candidates who selected option C, (*into*) did not understand that preposition "into" is used to express movement of an object inside something. For example, *the ball was kicked <u>into</u> the net* or *cover the bowl and put it into the fridge*.

Likewise, the candidates who picked option D, (*towards*) did not understand that preposition "towards" is used to express movement of an object in the direction of another. For example, *the river runs <u>towards</u> the sea*.

Furthermore, the candidates who opted for E, (*above*) did not understand that preposition "above" is used to express a place that is higher than someone or something. We usually use above when there is no contact between the things referred to. For example, *he raised his arm <u>above</u> his head*. This option was wrong since the thief would not jump in extended space over and not touching the gate.

Question 16: The beast in the jungle was not only ugly _____ dirty.

    A   also

    B   as well

    C   and also

    D   as also

    E   but also

This question tested the candidate's ability to use correlative conjunctions in joining words, phrases or clauses. These are words that occur in pairs such as *either…. or, neither…. nor, both….and,* and *whether*…. or. For example, *both* cats *and* dogs make good pets. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 16

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	193,008	143,321	212,904	88,166	703,325	15,562
% of Candidates	14.23	10.57	15.70	6.50	51.86	1.15

The statistics indicate that, the performance on this question was average since 703,325 (51.86%) candidates selected the correct choice E. These candidates realised that the conjunction "not only" goes with "but also" to join two clauses or phrases. It is used to emphasise that the second element is equally important as the first one. These candidates were aware that this conjunction is often used to add a piece of information that complements the first element as in the sentence in question. For example, *she is not only beautiful but also bright*.

In contrast, those who opted for A (*also*) were wrong. They did not understand that the conjunction "also" is placed after an auxiliary verb and before the main verb to add information to a sentence. The word "also" in other way is used to add positive information about the same object. For example, *she is a talented singer and also a fine actress*.

Likewise, the candidates who opted for B, (*as well*) were unaware that, "as well" is used when mentioning an event which happens as the first event. For example, *If the school invites one pupil to speak, all others will be invited <u>as well</u>*. In this case, "not only" cannot be used with "as well*"*.

Similarly, the candidates who chose C, (*and also*), did not understand that, "and also" is informally used to express emphasis when mentioning the last thing in a series of many things. It is used when people emphasise what they are trying to say. For example, *she was very frustrated and also very upset.* So, "and also" does not strictly go with "not only" to join phrases or sentences.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for D (*as also*) did not understand that "as also" does not agree in usage with "not only". This is because it does not express any emphasis or additional information. Hence, this alternative was incorrect.

Question 17: I am invited to a birthday party but _____ I won't be able to attend.

    A   I deny

    B   I thank you

    C   I am happy

    D   I am afraid

    E   I wish

The question tested the candidate's ability to express oneself politely, particularly when apologising, thanking or expressing a

regret. Similarly, polite expressions are used when acknowledging a gift or service, or refusing an offer. For example, _I am afraid_ I do not _understand_, or _thank you_ for your letter. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 17

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	122,613	334,135	541,911	186,317	153,366	17,944
% of Candidates	9.04	24.64	39.96	13.74	11.31	1.32

Statistics indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 186,317 (13.74%) candidates selected the correct option D, (_I am afraid_). These candidates knew how to accept or refuse an offer without annoying a proposer.

On the contrary, the candidates who opted for A, (_I deny_) did not understand that the phrase "I deny" is the state of refusing an offer which is rude. This way might make a proposer feel bad and disappointed.

Likewise, the candidates who chose option B, (_I thank you_), did not understand that the clause "I thank you" is used for accepting an invitation or an offer. This alternative was wrong because it is against the root of the question that shows clearly that the offeree is making an apology not to attend.

Similarly, the candidates who picked C, _(I am happy)_ did not understand that happiness is the state of being delighted, pleased or

glad over a particular event or action. Therefore, this was an incorrect response because it sounds contradictory that one is happy for not attending a birthday party where he/she was invited.

Moreover, the candidates who picked alternative E (*I wish*) did not understand that "I wish" is used for expression of desire, hope or need for something for a long time. For example, *I wish to travel to Singida*. It is a wrong answer because it is a positive element while the root of the question is a negative one, which denotes refusal of invitation.

Question 18: Their class teacher said that, neither John _____ Mary sat for Mock Examinations.

A   or

B   no

C   nor

D   also

E   just

This question tested the candidate's ability to use correlative conjunctions in expressing themselves correctly in English language. Correlative conjunctions work in pairs to join words, phrases or clauses. Examples of correlative conjunctions are rather*….or, but….also, neither….nor.* For example, *no sooner had I put my umbrella away than it started raining*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 18

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	185,596	122,618	743,590	125,205	163,204	16,073
% of Candidates	13.68	9.04	54.83	9.23	12.03	1.19

Statistics indicate that, the performance on this question was average since 743,590 (54.83%) candidates selected the correct choice C, (*nor*). These candidates understood that "neither" goes with "nor" when stating two or more things that will not occur. Thus, with the use of "neither…nor" the given sentence means, both *John* and *Mary* did not sit for Mock Examinations. Hence, the rule is that, "neither" is used with "nor" when expressing untrue events.

Nonetheless, the candidates who opted for A, (*or*) did not realise that "either" takes "or" when joining words in sentences. The structure is used to join two or more events which are possible to occur. For example, *either you can talk to him or I will*.

Likewise, the candidates who selected B (*no*), did not know that "no" is used to express disagreement or to give a negative response or decision. For example, *for a long time, I had no regular exercises.*

In the same way, the candidates who chose D, (*also*) did not understand that, "also" is used when giving more information about something. It occurs after a verb to express an additional idea. For example, *she is a medical Doctor and also a physician*. The candidates who chose this option did not understand that the

sentence given is negative and it expresses an untrue event not additional information.

Moreover, those who opted for E, (*just*) did not understand that the conjunction "just" does not link with "neither" to express impossibility or uncertainty. It is used to mean that something happened a very short time ago, or is about to happen at the present time. For example, *Halima has just arrived*; it means Halima arrived a very short time ago.

Question 19: How would you change the statement "He said that he was watering the flowers" into direct speech?

    A   He said, "I will be watering the flowers."

    B   He said, "I would be watering the flowers."

    C   He said, "I am watering the flowers."

    D   He said, "I was watering the flowers."

    E   He said, "I will be watering the flowers"

The question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to report information direct to others. Specifically, the candidates were required to change the sentence in reported speech into direct speech. Reported/indirect speech is the form of speech used to convey what someone at some point of time said (telling someone what another person said). In contrast, direct speech involves conveying information by using the exact words that the speaker used (saying exactly what someone said). For example, the statement in direct speech, *It has been raining since this afternoon,* it reads *He said that it had been raining since that afternoon* in

indirect speech. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 19

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	259,454	254,552	424,633	251,803	146,218	19,626
% of Candidates	19.13	18.77	31.31	18.57	10.78	1.45

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 424,633 (31.31%) candidates selected the correct option C, (*He said, "I am watering the flowers."*) These candidates realised that personal pronouns and tenses are important changes to make when reporting. Therefore, they changed the singular third person pronoun "He" into a singular first-person pronoun "I" to make the statement direct. They also correctly changed an auxiliary verb "was" into "am" to achieve tense change. The candidates also knew that, direct speech uses direct quotations of the reported words.

Contrariwise, the candidates who opted for response A, (*He said, "I will be watering the flowers."*) and E, (*He said, "I will be* watering *the flowers"*) were incorrect. They wrongly changed the past continuous auxiliary "was" to a model auxiliary "will" marking futurity.

Moreover, those who opted for B, (*He said, "I would be* watering *the flowers."*) incorrectly changed an auxiliary verb "was" into "would". This act makes a statement to become future conditional instead of reporting it directly.

In the same way, those who chose D, (*He said, "I was watering the flowers."*) did not realise that the singular third person pronoun "He" was supposed to be changed. The pronoun should be changed into a singular first-person pronoun "I" to make the statement direct. Therefore, they reported information in the way it was in indirect/reported speech.

Question 20: "He is a standard seven pupil at Kijito primary school."

     A   is he?

     B   isn't he?

     C   he isn't?

     D   he is?

     E   he is not?

The question tested the ability to use question tags to seek for approval or ask for confirmation. A tag question is a statement followed by a short question for confirmation of the information communicated. For example, *he is a clever, isn't he?* A question tag is governed by some rules such as in affirmative (positive) sentence, the tag becomes negative. For example, *A good student always works hard, doesn't he?* Likewise, in negative statements the tag question becomes positive. For Example, *All the children were not present at home, were they?* Moreover, if the subject of the sentence is made of an indefinite pronoun like *everybody, no one,* or *nobody* which are in singular, a plural auxiliary verb and a plural pronoun will be used to form a tag question. For Example, *everybody has to pay his own bill, haven't they?* The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 20

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	151,213	718,254	163,915	124,774	182,640	15,490
% of Candidates	11.15	52.96	12.09	9.20	13.47	1.14

Data indicate that, performance on this question was average since 718,254 (52.96%) candidates selected the correct option which was B, (*isn't he?*). These candidates knew that when the sentence is positive and so, the tag question becomes negative as in *Mosha is climbing a tree, isn't he?*

Conversely, those who selected A, (*is he*?) did not understand that when a sentence is positive then the tag question must be negative. Hence, they did not change the tag into negative form.

Likewise, the candidates who picked C, (*he isn't?*) did not know that an auxiliary verb must precede a personal pronoun and not the opposite. They did not understand that the personal pronoun "he" was supposed to be placed after an auxiliary verb "is" and a negative contracted marker (n't).

Moreover, those who opted for D, (*he is?)* and E, (*he is not*) did not understand that when the statement is positive, the tag question must be negative. Similarly, they did not understand that in the structure of tag question, an auxiliary verb comes before the personal pronoun and not as it is shown in this alternative.

Question 21: What is the correct reply to the sentence, "Excuse me sir, may I come in?"

  A   Yes, you may not.

  B   No, you may.

  C   No, come in.

  D   Yes, do not.

  E   Yes, you may.

The question tested the candidate's ability to reply to a polite request made by another person seeking for permission or services. A polite reply is a response of a person to the request made by another person. For example, *will you go with me?* Reply*: Yes! I will.* This means that the request is accepted. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 21

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	226,752	125,635	213,761	190,655	579,603	19,880
% of Candidates	16.72	9.26	15.76	14.06	42.73	1.47

Data indicate that, performance on this question was average since 579,603 (42.73%) candidates selected the correct option E, (*Yes, you may*). These candidates realised that if a speaker begins with 'yes' the auxiliary verb (*may*) is used for asking permission which should also remain in positive form.

In contrast, the candidates who opted for A, (*Yes, you may not*) did not understand that if one begins with "yes", other words coming

thereafter should be positive to accept the offer or request. Therefore, one cannot use "yes" and "not" within the same clause or phrase to accept/refuse a request.

Similarly, the candidates who opted for B, (*No, you may*) did not understand that the word "no" is used in expressing negation to a statement. Therefore, the word "no" needs to be followed by a contracted negative marker "don't" to indicate that there is no permission to come in.

Likewise, the candidates who chose C (*No, come in*) did not understand know that when a reply starts with "no", its verb phrase also should be in negative for the correlation. For example, *can we go out? No, you can't*.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for alternative D (*Yes, do not*) did not understand that "yes" does not go with a negative marker (*do not*) when not allowing a person to come in.

Question 22: Our aunt gave us her choice of food for dinner, but we told her that we would prefer eating rice _____ potatoes

  A to

  B too

  C than

  D over

  E in

The question tested the candidate's ability to express preferences using English Language. Preference is the situation of liking something over another. It is the right or chance to choose one thing over the other. Preference can be explained by using such words as *dislike, prefer, prefer…to, love,* and *like*. For example, *I prefer Coke to Pepsi*. This means that one likes Coke than Pepsi. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 22

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	592,740	257,829	220,112	114,289	154,437	16,879
% of Candidates	43.70	19.01	16.23	8.43	11.39	1.24

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was average since 592,740 (43.70%) candidates selected the correct option A, (*to*). These candidates understood that the structure {prefer …to} is used in comparing two things in which one is more favourable than the other. For example, *I prefer reading books to watching TV*. This means the person enjoys reading books more than watching TV.

In contrast, the candidates who chose B, (*too*) did not understand that the word "too" is used to express something of higher degree than it is desirable as in *He was driving too fast*. Therefore, it is not used to express preferences.

Furthermore, the candidates who picked C, (*than*) did not understand that the conjunction "than" is used to introduce the

second element of a comparison. In doing so, it takes a structure of {more/er…. than} as in *I like Potatoes _more than_ Banana*.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for D, (*over*) and E, (*in*) did not know that the words "over" and "in" are prepositions. These propositions are used to express something that is extending directly upwards from a certain point, and instances of things enclosed or surrounded by something else respectively. For example, *He kicked the ball _over_ the house* or *The ball is _in_ the box.*

Question 23: Children who do not eat a balanced diet become _____.

    A   healthier

    B   healthy

    C   healthiest

    D   in healthy

    E   unhealthy

The question tested the candidate's ability to use adjectives appropriately when communicating simple ideas. An adjective is a word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun in a sentence. In English language, adjectives describe the qualities of someone or something independently or in comparison to something else. For example, *I like that _old_ house.* The word *old* in the sentence is an adjective because it qualifies the noun *house* that precedes it. Other examples of adjectives include, *strong, happy, dangerous, beautiful, careful, fast* and *quick*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 23

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	186,665	328,537	241,382	272,212	308,259	19,231
% of Candidates	13.76	24.22	17.80	20.07	22.73	1.42

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 308,259 (22.73%) candidates selected the correct choice E, (*unhealthy*). These candidates were aware that the word "unhealthy" is an adjective, which means *not in good health condition.* Therefore, this answer was correct because it is true that when children do not get balanced diet they become weak or unhealthy.

On the contrary, the candidates who opted for A, (*healthier*) did not know how to use comparative adjectives such as *stronger, better, thinner* and *healthie*r. These adjectives are used to compare features or qualities between two objects they modify. In that regard, option A, (*healthier*) was unsuitable for the sentence because it expresses both comparison and positivity.

Furthermore, the candidates who selected B, (*healthy*) did not know that the adjective "healthy" is positive in meaning while the sentence required an adjective with a negative meaning. Thus, it is impossible for children to be strong (healthy) when they do not get a balanced diet. Hence, these candidates did not understand that to be healthy means to be in a good physical and mental condition, which cannot be attained without eating a balanced diet.

Moreover, some candidates picked C, (*healthiest*). These candidates were unfamiliar with the use of superlative adjectives such as *the strongest, the best, the thinnest, the most beautiful* and *the fastest*. These adjectives are used for expressing extreme or the highest degree of a quality of things or people and an article "the" must precede them. In such instances, the option was incorrect because the question sentence was not in third degree or comparative form.

Those who chose D, (*in healthy*) were wrong. This is because they did not realise that "in healthy" is not a correct negative form of the word "healthy". Thus, one cannot say; *The child is <u>in healthy</u>* to mean that the child has bad health. Hence, the correct negative form of the word "healthy" is "unhealthy". These candidates did not understand the appropriate way of changing adjectives into their correct negative forms.

Question 24: Cooks who are _____ have many burn marks on their hands.

A   careless

B   care

C   carelessly

D   carefulness

E   careful

This question tested the candidate's ability to use adjectives. Adjectives are descriptive words that modify nouns or pronouns. They provide further information about a noun or pronouns, indicating things like *colour, origin, nationality, size, condition, sound*

and *appearance*. For example, *she bought a <u>big wooden round Tanzanian dressing</u> table*. Other examples of adjective include *cruel, fantastic, gentle, huge, perfect, rough,* and *sharp*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 26.

Table 26: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 24

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	325,392	327,746	179,514	154,910	350,622	18,102
% of Candidates	23.99	24.16	13.24	11.42	25.85	1.33

Data indicate that, performance on this question was weak since 325,392 (23.99%) candidates selected the correct choice A, (*careless*). These candidates knew that "careless" means not giving sufficient attention or thought to avoid harm or errors. Therefore, they understood that being careless results to negative consequences that the cooks suffer (getting burn marks on their hands).

Moreover, the candidates who chose B, (*care*) did not recognise that *care* is an action word (verb) and sometimes it is used as a noun. Therefore, the word does not indicate that the occurrence of burn marks on the cooks' hands as a result of the cooks' behaviour of being careless.

Those who opted for C, (*carelessly*) did not know that "carelessly" is an adverb that shows manner; how something happens. For example, *He is reading <u>carelessly</u>*. In such instances, it does not describe the behaviour of the cooks.

Similarly, the candidates who chose D, (*carefulness*) did not understand that the word "carefulness" is a noun used to express the situation of giving a lot of attention to what one does. For example*, I noticed her <u>carefulness</u> during the examination.*

Moreover, those who selected E, (*careful*) did not understand that "careful" means making sure of avoiding any potential danger. For example, *I begged her to be more <u>careful</u> in the kitchen*. Therefore, if the cooks were careful, they would have not been burned while cooking*.* This choice means opposite of the correct answer to the question.

Question 25: Tandi and Nina are both intelligent, but Nina is the _____ of the two girls.

    A   most intelligent

    B   more intelligent

    C   intelligent

    D   best intelligent

    E   good intelligent

The question tested the candidate's ability to use superlative adjectives when communicating. A superlative adjective is an adjective used to describe something as being of the highest degree or extreme. It is used when making comparison of three or more people or things. For example, *she is <u>the most beautiful</u> girl I have ever met.* The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 25

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	422,732	263,093	167,986	258,297	225,306	18,872
% of Candidates	31.17	19.40	12.39	19.04	16.61	1.39

The data indicate that the performance on this question was weak since 422,732 (31.17%) candidates selected the correct option A, (*most intelligent*). These candidates understood that the use of article "the" basing on quality, suggests that the object is only one in a particular category. Hence, it is required to be followed by the superlative adjective. These candidates also realised that "intelligent" consists of more than two syllables, hence it must be preceded by "most" to make superlative adjective (the most intelligent).

In contrast, the candidates who chose B, (more intelligent) did not understand that article "the" indicates third degree of comparison (superlative). The superlatives are formed by adding the word "most" before the adjective. This is because the word "intelligent" consists of more than two syllables and it is in superlative form.

Likewise, candidates who opted for C, (*intelligent*) did not know that the word "intelligent" should not remain in its basic form in third degree of comparison (superlative). The candidates did not understand how to compare qualities of more than two things or people.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for D, (*best intelligent*) and E, (*good intelligent*) did not understand how superlative adjectives are

formed. They did not understand that the word "best" and "good" are also adjectives which cannot modify or describe another adjective. In other words, they failed to know "more" is considered a comparative form while "most" is considered a superlative form when attached with the adjectives with more than two syllables.

Question 26: Matumbi was not in good terms with his friends who were always misbehaving. He decided to break off with them. In other words, he decided to _____ their relationship.

A   join with

B   punish

C   drop up

D   end

E   depart

The question tested the candidate's ability to use words with multiple meanings when communicating. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 28.

Table 28: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 26

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	276,204	356,991	203,984	318,043	183,986	17,078
% of Candidates	20.36	26.32	15.04	23.45	13.57	1.26

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 318,043 (23.45%) candidates selected the correct option D, (*end*). These candidates realised that "break off" means to stop something

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to continue. For example, *they have <u>broken off</u> their engagement*. This means that they are not engaged anymore.

In contrast, the candidates who chose A, (*join with*) did not know that "join with" is an opposite of "break off". The candidates misinterpreted the given phrasal verb.

Similarly, the candidates who opted for B, (*punish*), did not understand that the word "punish" means to inflict pain or penalty on someone for an offence which is different from ending something.

Likewise, those candidates who picked alternative C, (*drop up*) did not understand that an idiom "drop up" means to come for a visit to a particular place. Therefore, it cannot serve as an alternative to the phrasal verb "break off".

Moreover, the candidates who chose E, (*depart*) did not understand that the word depart means deviate from normal course or leave especially when you want to start a journey. This was a wrong response because it doesn't mean to end something.

Question 27: The teacher told us that most of the pupils who fail to follow <u>instructions</u>, fail in their examinations. The underlined word also means _____.

A   laws

B   rules

C   directions

D   subjects

E   questions

This question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to use synonyms. Synonyms are words having the same or nearly the

same meaning as another word in the same language. Some synonyms in English include, *abandon - desert, all - every*, *ask - inquire*, *awesome - impressive*, and awful - terrible. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 29.

Table 29: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 27

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	120,264	227,074	370,409	427,363	194,058	17,118
% of Candidates	8.87	16.74	27.31	31.51	14.31	1.26

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 370,409 (27.31%) the candidates selected the correct choice C, (*directions*). These candidates understood that "directions" are set of orders or directives that tell someone what to do. Usually, instructions are relayed in imperative form. For example, in the examination room, pupils can listen and follow directions from the teacher such as *read the whole paper to know the specific instructions per each section*, *fill your particulars, read the question twice or thrice before attempting it*. Hence, the candidates who selected this option had an understanding that pupils who do not follow instructions/directions fail in their examinations.

In contrast, those who selected A, (*laws*) did not understand that laws do not guide people about how to carry out a particular task; but regulate the actions of the members of a particular country or community with the enforcement of the imposition of penalties.

During the examination, the candidates need directives, and not laws to accomplish their examinations.

Furthermore, the candidates who opted for B, (*rules*) did not understand that "rules" are sets of explicit or regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure within a particular area of activity. For example, *it is not allowed for employees to dress casually during working hours at this school.* Therefore, the words, "instructions" and "rules" are not synonymous.

Likewise, those who chose D, (*subjects*) did not know that subjects are agendas/topics being discussed, described, or dealt with by some people at a particular area. Examples of subjects at school level include, *English, Music, History, Science,* and *Geography*. In this regard, the word "instructions" is not related meaning wise with "subjects".

The candidates who opted for E, (*questions*) were equally wrong because they did not understand that "questions" are interrogative statements or phrases that seek/find information from someone. Usually, question sentences bear question marks in the end. For example*, Is it cold outside? Are you feeling better? Was the film good?* Hence, instructions are expressed imperatively and questions interrogatively. This suggests that, the words "instructions" and "questions" are different in use and meaning.

Question 28: The teacher always tells us to make sure that we are <u>clean</u> all the time. The opposite of the underlined word is _____.

A   good

B   smart

C   rough

D   dirty

E   naughty

This question tested the candidate's ability to use antonyms (words with opposite meanings). Examples of antonyms include *close-open, start-end.* The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 28

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	297,166	373,920	121,910	436,799	109,943	16,548
% of Candidates	21.91	27.57	8.99	32.21	8.11	1.22

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 436,799 (32.21%) candidates selected the correct choice D, (*dirty*). The candidates knew that a clean person is one who keeps oneself and their surroundings hygienic by taking bath, washing and ironing clothes. On the contrary, a dirty person is one who does not attend oneself and surroundings hygienically. Thus, the two words "clean" and "dirty" are opposite in meaning.

Others opted for A, (*good*) as they did not know that being good means to have the required qualities or high standards in many aspects. For instance, a good person behaves well, respects oneself and others as well as one who is responsible and honest. Therefore, a clean person can also be termed as good. Therefore, the word "good" is not the opposite of "clean".

Moreover, there were those who chose B, (*smart*). These candidates did not understand that a smart person is one that is clean, tidy, and always well dressed. Therefore, the word "smart" cannot be treated as an opposite of "clean".

Some of them selected C, (*rough*) because they failed to understand that *"rough"* refers to the behaviour in which a person is not gentle or is violent and unorganised. Thus, it cannot be an antonym of "clean".

Moreover, others chose E, (*naughty*) due to lack of understanding that a naughty person is one who behaves badly or one who is disobedient. For example, *you have been a really <u>naughty</u> boy; its two weeks now you have been skipping lessons.* So, "naughty" is not the opposite of "clean".

Question 29: A chameleon is an animal that does not move fast. It walks _____.

   A   smartly

   B   suddenly

   C   quickly

   D   speedily

   E   slowly

The question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to use adverbs in expressing events or activities. An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, another adverb or entire sentence. Adverbs can describe manner, how action was done, degree that is to what extent something happened, place (where) and time (when). Examples of adverbs include *weekly*, *quickly*, *beautifully* and *mostly*. For example, *Nana walked <u>quickly</u> to school*. The underlined word describes how Nana walked when going to school. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 31.

Table 31: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 29

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	186,471	152,999	317,802	165,615	517,639	15,760
% of Candidates	13.75	11.28	23.43	12.21	38.17	1.16

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 517,639 (38.17%) candidates selected the correct choice, which was E, (*slowly*). These candidates realised that most adverbs are usually formed by adding *-ly* at the end of an adjective. For example, *she danced <u>nicely</u>*. Therefore, these candidates understood that the word "slowly" describes the verb or action on how chameleon moves.

In contrast, there were candidates who chose A, (*smartly*). These candidates did not understand that "smartly" does not describe movement rather a way one looks clean and neat, in a fashionable and formal clothes.

Likewise, the candidates who opted for B, (*suddenly*) did not understand that "suddenly" is used to refer to something that happens quickly in an unexpected manner. Therefore, this was a wrong choice because this kind of movement cannot happen to an animal like a chameleon that moves sluggishly.

Moreover, the candidates who chose C, (*quickly*) and D, (*speedily*) did not understand that "speedily" and "rapidly" are synonymous words. The words are used to explain how fast the action happens.

Question 30: Good pupils respect their teachers. Bad pupils always _____ their teachers.

      A   disrespect

      B   respects

      C   respectful

      D   over respect

      E   in respect

The question tested the candidate's ability to use antonyms in describing behaviour or situation. Antonym refers to words that have opposite meanings in the same language. These words are usually in pairs, for example, *hot-cold, tall-short, loud-quiet,* and *agree-disagree*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 30

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	386,116	189,699	337,419	227,588	197,764	17,993
% of Candidates	28.47	13.99	24.88	16.78	14.58	1.3

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 386,116 (28.47%) candidates selected the correct choice A, (*disrespect*). These candidates understood that when good pupils respect their teachers, it means that they show care and polite behaviour towards them. For example, *there was no <u>disrespect</u> intended, it was just a joke*. Therefore, they understood the opposite of "respect" is "disrespect" that is lack of respect toward people or something else.

In contrast, the candidates who chose B, (*respect*) did not understand that "respect" means positive behaviour or showing care and regard to others including teachers and parents. They did not know that good behaviour is always shown by good pupils and not by bad pupils. Therefore, this was an incorrect answer since bad pupils do not respect teachers.

Similarly, the candidates who picked C, (*respectful*) did not understand that the required answer should be in a verb form that is opposite of "respect". These candidates were unaware that "respectful" apart from being a noun, it does not make antonym with the word "respect".

Likewise, the candidates who chose D, (*over respect*) and E, (*in respect*) did not realise that "over" and "in" are improper prefixes to make opposite of "respect". The candidates did not understand that "in respect" means concerning to or in payment for something as in *The money received <u>in respect</u> of overtime*.

Question 31: Today is my sister's birthday. She has dressed _____.

     A   smart

     B   shabbily

     C   smartly

     D   more smart

     E   most smart

The question tested candidate's ability to use adverbs. Adverbs are words that modify or qualify an adjective, verb, or other adverbs or a word group, expressing a relation of place, time, circumstance, manner, cause and degree. Examples of adverbs include *gently, nicely, slowly* and *immediately*. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 31

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	386,116	189,699	337,419	227,588	197,764	17,700
% of Candidates	28.47	13.99	24.88	16.78	14.58	1.30

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 337,419 (24.88%) candidates selected the correct choice C,

(*smartly*). Such candidates knew that the word "smartly" describes how the sister dressed.

However, there were candidates who chose A (smart). These candidates did not know that the word "smart" is adjective which describes quality of things or people. In this case, it cannot be used to tell how something happens or looks.

Those who chose B, (*shabbily*) did not know that dressing shabbily means a way one looks untidy and in poor condition because of wearing things that have been worn or used a lot. Therefore, this is opposite to what is expected for the one who celebrates birthday or attends a party.

Others opted for D, (*more smart*) and E (most smart) did not realise that the choices were grammatical incorrect. There is no way one can use "more" and "most" with "smart" to indicates comparison.

Question 32: There are _____ oranges left in the fridge.

      A   more

      B   little

      C   much

      D   a little

      E   few

The question aimed at testing the candidate's ability to use determiners. A determiner is a word that modifies, quantifies, describes or introduces a noun. These words can be articles, demonstratives, modifiers, pronouns, numbers, or quantifiers.

Examples of determiners include *few, a little, an, these, many, few* and *two.* For Example, <u>these *books are new*</u>. The word "these" is a demonstrative adjective indicating the number of new books (plural). The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 34.

Table 34: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 32

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	236,935	275,693	401,443	151,317	272,370	18,528
% of Candidates	17.47	20.33	29.60	11.16	20.08	1.37

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 272,370 (20.08%) candidates selected the correct choice E (*few*). These candidates understood that "few" is a quantifier that was supposed to be used with plural countable noun to express amount of oranges.

In contrast, the candidates who picked A, (*more*) and C, (*much*) did not understand that "more" and "much" are comparative quantifiers which are used to express a larger or extra number of something. For example, *she poured herself <u>more</u> coffee* or *She did not get <u>much</u> sleep*. These alternatives were wrong answers because they are used with uncountable nouns in comparative degrees.

Moreover, the candidates who opted for B, (*little*) and D, (*a little*) did not understand that "little" and "a little" are quantifiers that are used with uncountable nouns to mean "hardly any" or "not much" and "some" or "small enough" respectively. For example, *I have <u>little</u>*

money or *I have a little money*. Therefore, these were incorrect responses because oranges are countable nouns.

Question 33: Mr. Chapakazi is a farmer. In order to grow maize, rice and potatoes, he tills the soil by using _____.

    A   a rake

    B   an axe

    C   a hoe

    D   a machete

    E   a spade

The question assessed the candidate's ability to use vocabulary that name equipment/tools, especially those used for farm works. The equipment includes *a rake, an axe, a* hoe, *a machete* and *a spade*. These tools among others, make farm and house chores easier and faster. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 33

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	294,017	214,779	383,623	281,595	164,552	17,720
% of Candidates	21.68	15.84	28.28	20.76	12.13	1.31

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 383,623 (28.28%) candidates selected the correct choice C, (*a hoe*). These candidates understood that, a hoe is a long-handled tool with a thin metal blade, used mainly for weeding or digging land. In this case, a hoe is used in tilling and weeding as required in the question sentence.

In the contrary, other candidates chose A, (*a rake*). Such candidates did not understand that a rake is a long-handled tool with a row of metal or wooden teeth at its head used to move leaves, gravel or loosen soil. Since growing maize, rice and potatoes requires deep land tilling, a rake could not fit for use but a hoe.

Similarly, the candidates who opted for B, (*an axe*) and D, (*a machete*) did not realise that both of them are not used for land tilling. An axe is used for chopping wood while a machete is a heavy knife used for clearing brushes and slushing long grasses. In some societies like the Maasai in Africa, a machete is used as an implement or weapon for self-defence.

Moreover, others opted for E, (*a spade*) which is a sharp-edged metal blade and a long handle, used for digging or cutting the surface of the earth, sand and turf. The candidates who picked this option were unaware that a spade does not deeply till the land as a hoe does. It is usually used at home for collecting sand or concrete especially during construction. Hence, it would not be used in cultivating maize, rice or potatoes.

Question 34: It is commonly known that the word 'ring' refers to a piece of jewelry one wears on a finger. However, the same word also means a sound of _____.

A a bird

B a car

C a bell

D an insect

E a metal

The question was set to test the candidate's ability to use multiple-meaning words. These are words that have the same spelling and usually sound alike but have different meanings. Example of those words is such as Bark - dogs bark, tree bark. The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 36.

Table 36: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 34

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	213,163	299,860	440,129	227,920	156,630	18,584
% of Candidates	15.72	22.11	32.45	16.80	11.55	1.37

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 440,129 (32.45%) candidates selected the correct choice C, (*a bell*). These candidates knew that the word "ring" has another meaning apart from being a jewellery, which is a sound of a bell.

Conversely, there were those who opted for A, (*a bird*). These candidates did not know that birds do not ring but they chirp/tweet.

Similarly, some candidates selected B, (*a car*). These candidates were not familiar with the sound made by cars. The cars do not ring but they vroom.

However, others chose D, (*an insect*). This indicates that the candidates did not know that different insects produce various sounds that are not related to ringing. For example, crickets chirp, katydids buzz, mosquitoes buzz/whine, frogs croak and rats and mice squeak.

Moreover, those who opted for E, (*a metal*) did not understand that the sound of a metal is known as sonority. When metals are struck with some hard material, they produce a sonorous sound.

Question 35: Kaunda was told to cut the meat into small pieces by his mother. While cutting the meat, he cut _____ with the knife.

    A   itself

    B   herself

    C   themselves

    D   yourself

    E   himself

The question tested the candidate's ability to use reflexive pronouns in expressing information. Reflexive pronouns are pronouns that reflect back to the subject. Thus, they refer to the noun or pronoun used in the sentence. For example, *He can care for <u>himself</u>*. Reflexive pronouns usually end with -*self* or -*selves* and are used when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same.

Examples of relative pronouns include *myself, yourself oneself, itself and ourselves*. For example, *I cut it <u>myself</u> when I was preparing the meeting.* The reflexive pronoun "myself" refers back to the subject "I". The performance of the candidates on this question is shown in Table 37.

Table 37: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 35

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	225,690	235,596	229,627	184,468	462,366	18,539
% of Candidates	16.64	17.37	16.93	13.60	34.09	1.37

Data indicate that, the performance on this question was weak since 462,366 (34.09%) candidates selected the correct choice E, (*himself*). These candidates understood that the noun "Kaunda" is a masculine singular gender in which its object is supposed to be "him" and the reflexive pronoun to be "himself".

In contrast, the candidates who picked A, (*itself*) did not understand that the introduced subject (Kaunda) is a masculine singular gender while "itself" is a reflexive pronoun from neuter/inanimate singular gender. Therefore, this option was incorrect because the pronouns "himself" (male) and "itself" do not express the same gender.

In addition, the candidates who selected B, (herself) did not understand that the reflexive pronoun (*herself*) is used for subjects (nouns or pronouns) representing female gender. For example, *she made it <u>herself</u>*. The subject used in the given sentence (he) was for male gender, so it must be used with "himself" and not "herself".

Likewise, those candidates who opted for C, (*themselves*) did not know that "themselves" is derived from the object "them" in third person plural (they). The subject of the sentence is in third person singular while the response is in third person plural, hence they cannot agree each other.

Similarly, the candidates who picked D, (*yourself*) did not understand that pronoun "yourself" is from the subject "you" which is second person singular or plural. Therefore, it was an incorrect response because there is no correlation between "Kaunda" and "yourself".

2.2   SECTION B: COMPOSITION

This section comprised five (5) jumbled sentences (36 – 40) in which the candidates were required to arrange them in a logical order to make a good composition by giving them letters A – E. This section tested the candidate's ability to organise ideas, and communicate them through composition. The following were the jumbled sentences:

Question 36: At the end, each team had one goal.

Question 37: Dogo boys were the first to score in the first half.

Question 38: There was a football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys.

Question 39: Both teams played tirelessly as the time was about to be over.

Question 40: In the second half, Goma boys scored a goal to level the score.

Composition is a creative piece of writing in a way a writer assembles words and sentences to create a coherent and meaningful work. Composition writing has three main stages which are introduction, main body and conclusion. Introduction paragraph introduces the main idea of what is going to happen. The main body describes the subject and explains clearly what is it about. In addition, conclusive paragraph summarises and support all concepts covered in the main body. The following is the arranged composition:

There was a football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys. Dogo boys were the first to score in the first half. In the second half, Goma boys scored a goal to level the score. Both teams played tirelessly as the time was about to be over. At the end, each team had one goal.

In answering this question, the candidates were required to arrange the jumbled sentences to make a meaningful composition. The correct choices of the jumbled sentences were as shown in Table 38.

Table 38: Correct Choices of the Jumbled Sentences

Question Number	36	37	38	39	40
Response	E	B	A	D	C

Analysis on the candidates' responses in each question (36 – 40) is as follows:

Question 36: At the end, each team had one goal.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence number 36 as the fifth and last sentence in the paragraph by assigning it letter E in the sequence. This is because it contains a finality clause "at the end, each team had one goal". Therefore, the sentence marks the end of football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 39.

Table 39: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 36

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	88,786	149,427	219,291	263,098	610,327	25,357
% of Candidates	6.55	11.02	16.17	19.40	45.00	1.87

Question 37: Dogo boys were the first to score in the first half.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence number 37 as the second sentence in the paragraph by assigning it letter B in the sequence. This is because after an introduction of a football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys, information is given on which team that scored first before the other. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 40.

Table 40: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 37

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	305,033	408,930	300,039	181,988	135,176	25,120
% of Candidates	22.49	30.15	22.12	13.42	9.97	1.85

Question 38: There was a football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence number 38 as the first sentence in the paragraph by assigning it letter A in the sequence. This is because, the sentence introduces information that there was a football match between Dogo boys and Goma boys. This information is new as it was not mentioned anywhere. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 41.

Table 41: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 38

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	640,321	256,985	196,907	125,327	112,947	23,799
% of Candidates	47.21	18.95	14.52	9.24	8.33	1.75

Question 39: Both teams played tirelessly as the time was about to be over.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence number 39 as the fourth sentence in the paragraph by assigning it letter D in the sequence. It is the part of the main body that continues to explain how the teams competed tirelessly through the competition. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 42.

Table 42: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 39

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	173,237	307,617	209,688	372,591	267,853	25,300
% of Candidates	12.77	22.68	15.46	27.47	19.75	1.87

Question 40: In the second half, Goma boys scored a goal to level the score.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence number 40 as the third sentence in the paragraph by assigning it letter C in the sequence. After the introduction of the football match, information on the team that scored first, then the reader is introduced to the third sentence that the second team levelled the score board in the second half. The candidates' performance on this question is shown in Table 43.

Table 43: Number and Percentage of the Candidates' Choices in Each Option in Question 40

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	143,969	231,585	419,401	358,868	177,852	24,611
% of Candidates	10.61	17.07	30.92	26.46	13.11	1.81

2.3 SECTION C: READING AND COMPREHENDING WRITTEN INFORMATION

This section consisted of five (5) questions, 41 to 45 in which the candidates were required to read the passage and answer the questions that followed. The section assessed the candidate's ability

to read and comprehend written information. The following was the passage:

Mbuto was supposed to be in school with his friends, but at the age of thirteen, he was working at Majeje Gold Mine. His troubles started when he was in Standard Five. His father Mr. Kikuko whose activity was to make furniture got sick and eventually passed away. His mother also got sick and could not work anymore. There were no relatives to take care of his family. Mbuto being the eldest of the four children and the only boy, dropped out of school.

Life became tough for Mbuto. He tried selling sweets and cigarettes on the street but the money was not enough. He then got a job in a mine. There were eleven children under the age of eighteen years old: two girls and nine boys including him working in the mine. Their work was to carry soil from deep down the mine up to the surface. One day while Mbuto was carrying a heavy bucket, he fell over and broke his left leg. He cried in pain knowing that he could not look after his family. He was then carried to the hospital. One nurse felt pity for him and promised to take care of his family and send him back to school. Mbuto went back to school, worked very hard and had a very good performance in his final examinations.

Questions

Question 41: What is Mr. Kikuko's occupation?

The question tested the candidate's ability to identify Mr. Kikuko's occupation. To provide a correct answer to this question, the candidates were supposed to understand the meaning of occupation, which refers to a legal profession or job one does to earn income. The correct answer to the question was "a carpenter", a person who makes furniture. The analysis of the candidates' performance on this question is shown in Figure 1.
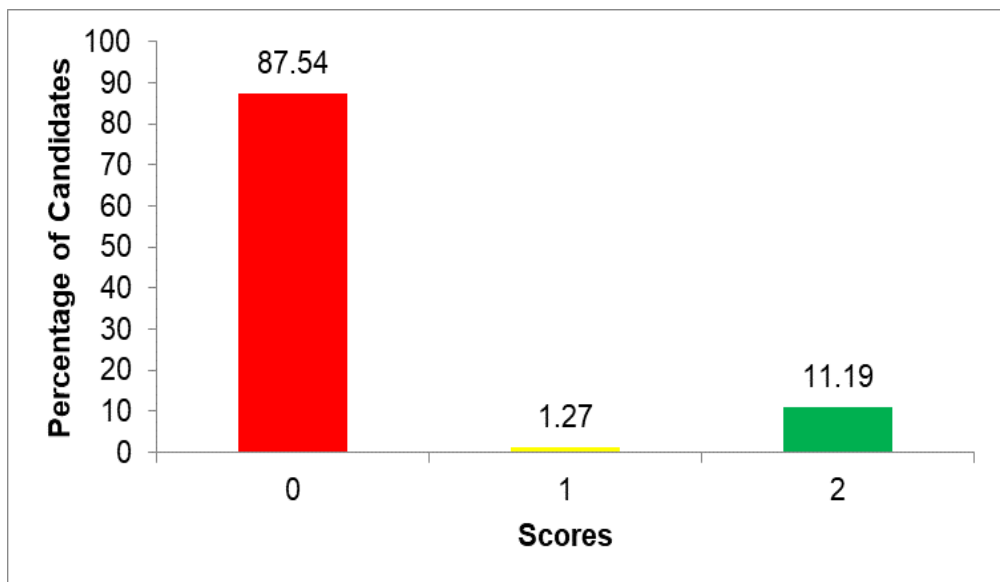

Figure 1: *Candidates' Performance on Question 41*

Statistics show that, the performance of the candidates on this question was poor since 168,963 (12.46%) of them scored from 1 to 2 marks. These candidates read the passage and realised that Mr. Kikuko was a carpenter. The passage indicates that, Mbuto dropped from school when he was in Standard Five, then he started working

in a mine. He did so because he wanted to take care of his family after the passing of his father Mr. Kikuko, who used to make furniture. Hence, the candidates who got this question correct understood that a person whose activity is to make furniture is called a carpenter. Extract 1 is a sample of response from a candidate who correctly responded to Question 41.

Extract 1: A sample of correct responses to Question 41.

In Extract 1, the candidate wrote the correct answer. This candidate understood that a person whose activity is to make furniture is a carpenter.

On the contrary, there were candidates who provided incorrect responses to this question. The analysis indicates that such candidates did not comprehend the message from the passage. Some of these candidates copied some phrases or sentences from the passage as the answers such as *he tried to selling sweets and cigarettes, there were eleven children at the age of thirteen*, *and his mother also got sick* and *but at the age of thirteen*. Extract 2 shows a sample of an incorrect response to Question 41.

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QUESTION NO. 41
FURNITURE GOT SICK AND EVENTUALLY PASSED AWAY.
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Extract 2: A sample of incorrect responses to Question 41.

In Extract 2, the candidate copied an incomplete sentence from the passage to answer the question. The full sentence was, *His father Mr. Kikuko whose activity was to make furniture got sick and eventually passed away.*

Question 42: Why did Mbuto engage in child labour?

The question tested the candidate's ability to understand the story and come up with a reason that made Mbuto to engage in child labour. The correct answer was, "he wanted to take care of his family". The analysis of the candidates' performance on this question is shown in figure 2.
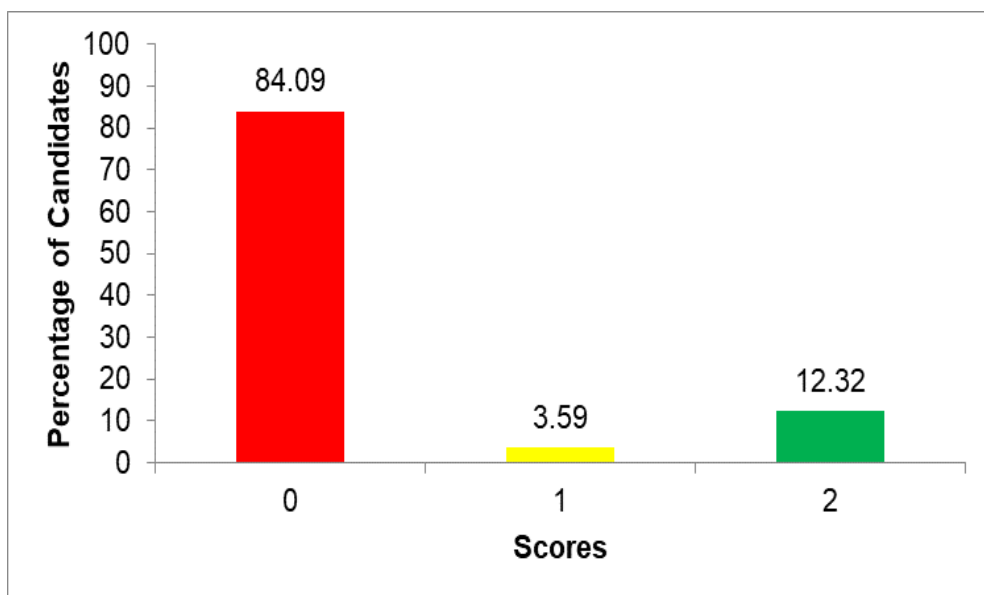
Figure 2: *Candidates' Performance on Question 42*

The statistics in Figure 2 show that, the performance of the candidates on this question was poor since 215,777 (15.91 %) of them scored from 1 to 2 marks.

The candidates who correctly responded to the question understood that, at a younger age, Mbuto was already employed in a gold mine. In such instances, some of them expressed such correct answers as, *Mbuto engaged himself in child labour because he wanted to take care of his family after his father had passed away* and *Mbuto engaged in child labour to help his relatives and his helpless sick mother*. Extract 3 shows a sample response from a candidate who correctly attempted Question 42.

Mbuto engaged in child labour because there was no relative to take care of his family.

Extract 3: A sample of correct responses to Question 42.

In extract 3, the candidate gave a reason as to why Mbuto engaged himself in child labour. The candidate's response suggests that he/she had good reading and comprehension skills.

On the contrary, majority of the candidates (84.09%) provided incorrect responses to this question. Such candidates did not comprehend the passage. They copied letters, words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs from the passage as answers. For example, some of them wrote *he was thirteen years old, carrying heavy bucket, two girls and nine boys including himself working in the mine,* and *eleven children under the age of eighteen years old*. Extract 4 shows a sample of an incorrect response to the question 42.

QUESTION NO. 42

Carrying a heavy bucket

Extract 4: A sample of incorrect responses to Question 42.

In Extract 4, the candidate clipped one of the sentence in the paragraph that explains the bucket that fell down and broke Mbuto's leg while working in the mine. The candidates' response indicates that he/she did not understand the question.

Question 43: Why did Mbuto cry a lot after he broke his left leg?

This question tested the candidate's ability to assess a reason that made Mbuto to cry after his left leg was broken while working in the mine. The correct answer to the question was *because he knew he could not look after his family.* An account of the candidates' performance on this question is shown in Figure 3 below.
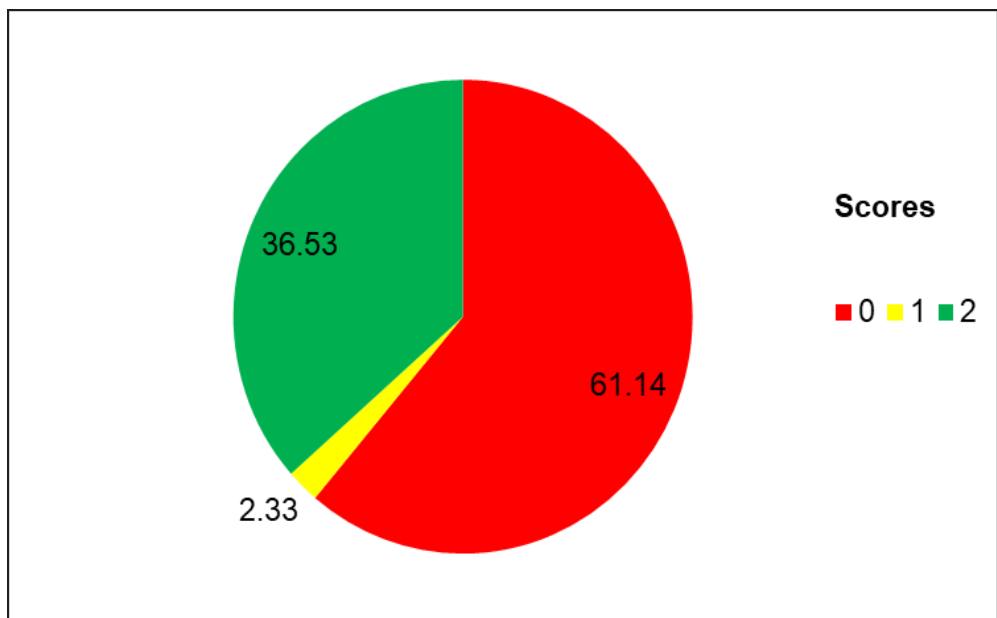

Figure 3: Candidates' Performance on Question 43

Data show that, the performance of the candidates on this question was poor since 527,068 (38.86%) of them scored from 1 to 2 marks. The candidates who correctly responded to this question understood Mbuto's feelings following his accident. They correctly answered that,

Mputo's cry was *because he knew he could not look after his family after the accident.* Therefore, these candidates knew that, Mbuto cried not only because of an injury, but also the pain of not being able to take care of family. Extract 5 shows a sample response from a candidate who correctly responded to the question.

QUESTION NO. 43

Mbuto cried a lot after he broke his left leg because he knew that he could not take care of his family.

Extract 5: A sample of correct responses to Question 43.

In Extract 5, the candidate gave a reason that made Mbuto cry after he broke his left leg. This is an evidence that he/she comprehended information from the passage.

On the contrary, 61.14 per cent of the candidates provided incorrect responses to this question. These candidates failed to read and comprehend the information from the passage. This made them to provide such responses that were irrelevant as *His troubles were not few, He then got a job in a mine, because of heavy bucket,* and *Mbuto was supposed to be in school*. Extract 6 shows a sample response of an incorrect answer to Question 43.

QUESTION NO. 43

Mbuh was supposed to go in School

Extract 6: A sample of incorrect responses to Question 43.

In Extract 6, the candidate copied some words from the passage as answers. The candidate's response suggests that he/she did not understand the question.

Question 44: Why did Mbuto go to work at Majeje Gold mine instead of going to school?

The question aimed to test the candidate's ability to give reasons as to why Mbuto went to Majeje Gold mine instead of school. The candidates were required to comprehend the passage and assess Mbuto's decision. Figure 4 presents the candidates' performance on the question.
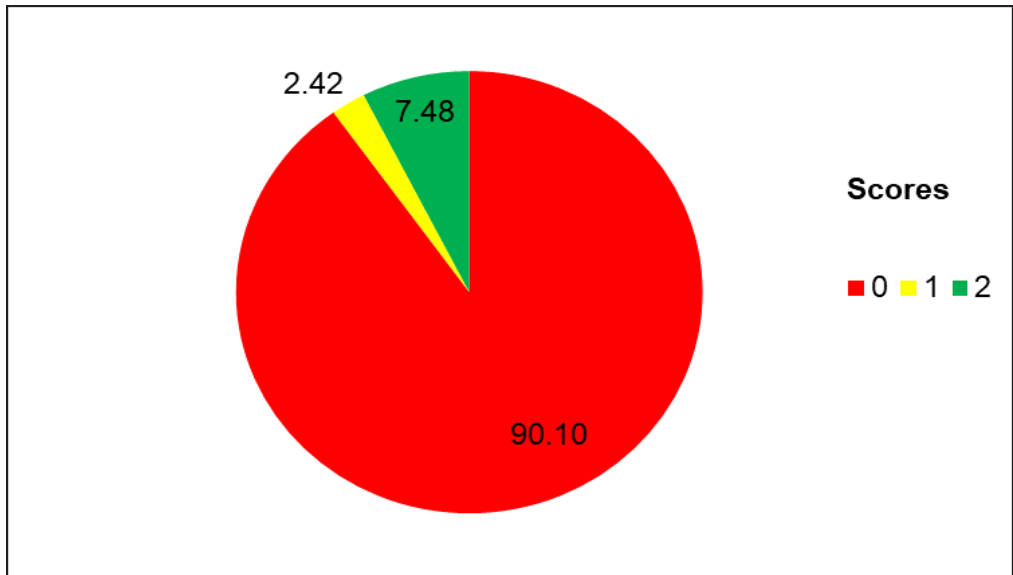
Figure 4: *Candidates' Performance on Question 44*

Data indicate that, the performance of the candidates on this question was poor since 134,232 (9.90%) of them scored from 1 to 2 marks. These candidates reasoned that Mbuto's drop out of school was due to family problems. They understood that Mbuto's situation became worse after the death of his father, and so all the burden was left to him. It is from this context that the candidates correctly stated Mbuto went to work at Majeje Gold mine instead of going to school *because he needed money to take care of his family.* Extract 7 illustrates a sample of a correct response to Question 44.

QUESTION NO. 44

Mbuto went to work at Majeje Gold mine instead of going to school because he didn't have enough money to take care of his family.
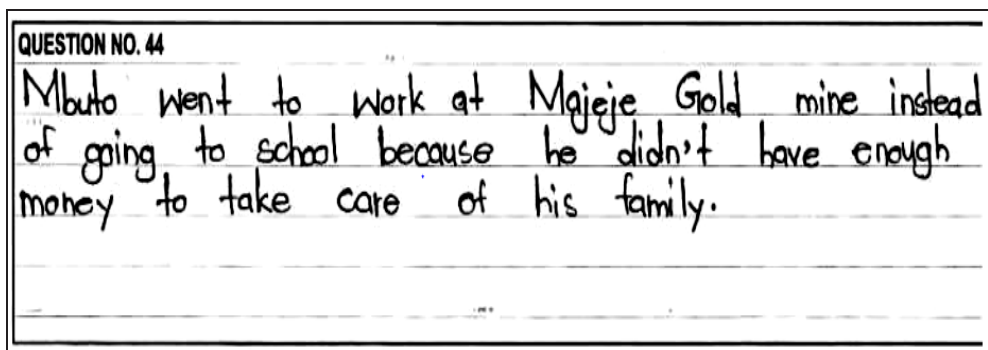
Extract 7: A sample of correct responses to Question 44.

In Extract 7, the candidate wrote the reason that made Mbuto go to gold mine instead of school. The candidate's response indicates that he/she had adequate comprehension skills.

Conversely, 90.10 per cent of the candidates failed to provide correct answers to this question. These candidates were unable to understand the passage and so, they provided incorrect answers. They wrote such incorrect answers as *death of his mother, drop out from school, he never liked school and Sickness, he was thirteen years old life,* and *his troubles started when he was in standard five.* Extract 8 shows a sample of an incorrect response from one of the candidates on this question.

Extract 8: A sample of incorrect responses to Question 44.

In Extract 8, the candidate wrote a part of a sentence that was in the first paragraph of the passage. This implies that the candidate could not comprehend the passage.

Question 45: What made Mbuto to return back to the school?

This question aimed at assessing candidate's ability to recall information and reason when reading. The candidates were required to identify a reason that made Mbuto to return back to the school. The anticipated response was that, *he got help from one of the nurses from the hospital where he was taken care of.* Figure 5 shows the analysis of the candidates' performance on this question.
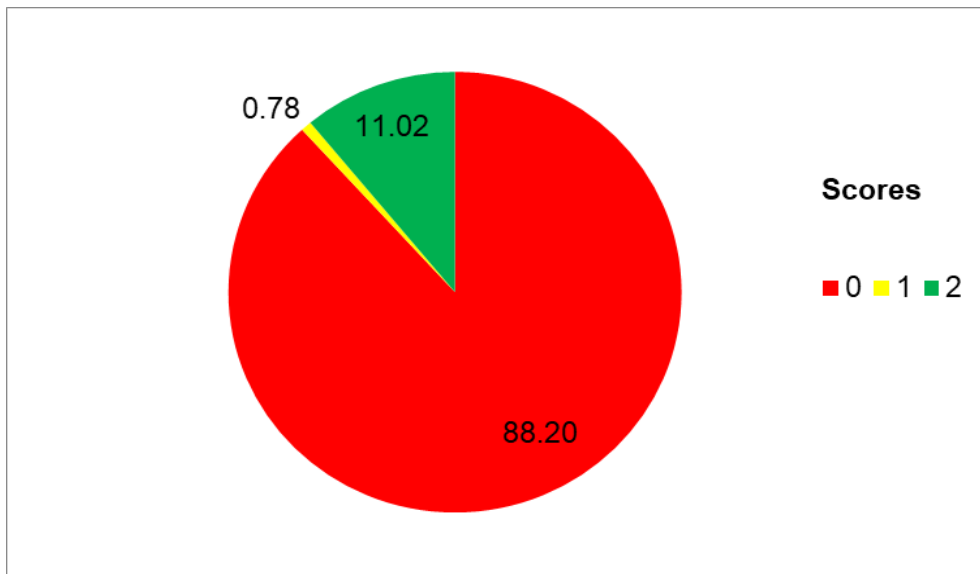

Figure 5: *Candidates' Performance on Question 45*

Statistics show that, the performance of the candidates on this question was poor since 160,031 (11.80%) of them scored from 1 to 2 marks. The candidates who correctly answered this question reasoned about Mbuto's decisions. They understood that the nurse who was taking care of Mbuto had solved what kept Mbuto out of school as she promised of taking care of Mbuto's family. A sample of the correct responses to this question is shown in Extract 9.

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QUESTION NO. 45
The  nurse's  help  made  Mbuto  to  return  back
to  the  school.
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Extract 9: A sample of correct responses to Question 45.

In Extract 9, the candidate identified that, the nurse's help made Mbuto to return back to the school. This candidate had adequate reading skills.

However, 88.20 per cent of the candidates incorrectly responded to this question. These candidates did not comprehend the passage. Some of them copied some sentences or phrases directly from the passage. The candidates wrote such incorrect answers as *Mbuto tried selling sweets and cigarettes*, *Mbuto went back to school*, *he was then carried to hospital*, *he worked very hard* and *performance in his final examinations*. A sample of incorrect responses from candidates to this question is shown in Extract 10.


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QUESTION NO. 45
a)  mbuto He tried Selling Sweets and Cigarettes
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Extract 10: A sample of incorrect responses to Question 45.

In Extract 10, the candidate copied one of the sentences from the passage as an answer. The sentence was about the previous activities that Mbuto engaged with before the decision of going to Majeje Gold mine. This indicates that the candidate did not read and comprehend the passage.

3.0 THE CANDIDATES PERFORMANCE IN EACH COMPETENCY

The analysis of the candidates' performance in English Language in PSLE for 2023 indicates that, the average performance of specific competencies was 31.52 per cent. The performance in *listening and comprehending information presented orally* was 35.09 per cent. The performance in *communicating simple ideas through writing* was 35.79 per cent. Moreover, the performance in *developing and using appropriately vocabulary through listening, reading and writing* was 30.62 per cent. Furthermore, the performance in *reading and comprehending written information* was 24.57 per cent. The candidates' performance in each specific competency is summarised in the Appendix.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Generally, the performance of the candidates in English Language subject in the PSLE for 2023 was poor. This is because 465,880 (34.35%) candidates only out of 1,356,286 passed the examination as they got grades from A to C. Other candidates (61.43%) got grade D indicating that the performance was unsatisfactory.

Further analysis shows that candidates failed to choose and write correct responses due to their incompetency in comprehending

written and oral information, using the English language to communicate simple ideas and using vocabulary in various communicative contexts.

However, there were candidates who correctly responded to the examination questions. These candidates had ability to comprehend written and oral information, use appropriate vocabulary in various language contexts and use the correct English language grammar in communication.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

The findings in this report show that the candidates' performance in English Language PSLE 2023 was poor just like it was in PSLE 2022. In order to improve the candidates' performance in the future examinations, the following measures are recommended:

(i) Teachers should guide the pupils to read simple texts and listen to various narrations with the content about social issues and then interpret and comprehend what has been presented. After reading and listening to the information, the pupils should be given the task to mention the main ideas taken from the information presented. By using this approach, the pupils will acquire reading and listening skills that will improve their proficiency in *listening and reading for comprehension of oral and written information*.

(ii) Teachers should use passages indicated in the primary school textbooks to teach various specific competencies. The passages should be used as a tool to provide high level of

proficiency in all the English Language areas as indicated in the 2015 English Language syllabus for Primary Education. The passages to be read or listened by the pupils has been put at the beginning of every specific competency that is going to be taught. This approach will also build pupils' ability to comprehend written and oral information which has been noted as a challenging specific competency to most pupils.

(iii) Teachers should guide pupils to read and use appropriate vocabulary about family, occupations, places, food and time. Other things that should be considered are words with the same or opposite meanings, using the words with the same pronunciation but different meanings and formulating new words by using affixation. These techniques can be used during class learning activities and various events outside the class. As a result, the pupils are expected to be able to *develop and use new vocabulary*.

(iv) Teachers should guide pupils to participate fully in debates made of proposals on social issues. During debates, the pupils should be encouraged to use English language, and at the end they should be corrected if they break grammatical rules. By using this approach, the pupils will acquire confidence to speak in English language and so, their *vocabulary level will be upgraded*.

(v) Teachers should direct pupils to use cards, pictures and letters containing common issues. The pupils also should write free and guided compositions in order to build their

ability to communicate simple ideas while applying grammatical rules of the English language appropriately. In such instances, the pupils will be equipped with the skills to improve their competency in *communicating simple ideas through writing*.

CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE BY SPECIFIC COMPETENCY IN PSLE 2022 AND 2023

S/N	Specific Competency	PSLE 2022				PSLE 2023			
		Performance on each Question		(%) Average	Remarks	Performance on each Question		(%) Average	Remarks
		Qn. Number	(%) Performance			Qn. Number	(%) Performance		
1.	Listening and Comprehending Information Presented Orally	1	63.33	36.16	weak	1	26.79	35.09	weak
		2	25.80			2	46.73		
		3	29.19			3	22.84		
		4	35.67			4	31.16		
		5	42.14			5	33.83		
		18	22.52			19	31.31		
		20	34.47			20	52.96		
2.	Developing and Using Vocabulary Appropriately Through Listening, Writing and Reading	21	36.82	25.69	weak	21	42.73	30.62	weak
		22	23.66			22	43.70		
		23	23.78			23	22.73		
		24	32.42			24	23.99		
		25	22.11			25	31.17		
		26	24.73			26	23.45		
		27	34.31			27	27.31		
		28	31.55			28	32.21		
		29	20.24			29	38.17		
		30	25.75			30	30.42		
		31	22.81			31	28.47		
		32	19.06			32	20.08		
		33	22.62			33	28.28		
		34	20.79			34	32.45		
		35	24.83			35	34.09		
3.	Communicating Simple Ideas Through Writing	6	20.26	34.76	weak	6	38.19	35.79	weak
		7	43.73			7	4049		
		8	24.91			8	40.22		
		9	32.10			9	42.14		
		10	49.49			10	20.36		
		11	25.06			11	27.75		
		12	21.30			12	40.97		
		13	26.23			13	50.14		
		14	18.29			14	23.12		
		15	46.13			17	13.74		
		16	14.44			18	54.83		
		36	47.93			36	45.00		
		37	44.57			37	30.15		
		38	45.18			38	47.21		
		39	46.05			39	27.47		
		40	50.56			40	30.92		
4.	Reading and Comprehending Written Information	17	31.60	17.08	weak	15	31.23	24.57	weak
		19	31.21			16	51.86		
		41	11.33			41	12.46		
		42	7.50			42	15.91		
		43	7.68			43	38.86		
		44	21.14			44	9.90		
		45	9.13			45	11.80		