



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) 2021**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**



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## **FOREWORD**

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania is pleased to give feedback on the evaluation of a seven-year primary education for the year 2021. The results of the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLE) Examination is used as a basic qualification for the selection of pupils who join secondary education.

This Candidates' Item Response Analysis (CIRA) for the year 2021 offers feedback to pupils, teachers, parents, policy makers and the public in general on the candidates' performance in English Language subject. The analysis explains the factors for the candidates' good performance and the challenges the candidates faced in answering the examination questions. The candidates with good performance were able to identify the tasks of the questions, they were competent in applying grammatical rules, they had sufficient knowledge of basic vocabulary for use in different situations, and that they were able to listen, read and comprehend oral and written information. On the contrary, the candidates who performed poorly were incompetent in those areas.

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) expects that the teachers and other stakeholders will use the feedback provided in this report to take appropriate measures to improve the teaching and learning of English Language subject in primary schools. Moreover, the recommendations made in this analysis will improve the candidates' performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination.

The Council would like to thank those who participated in making this report a success.



Dr. Charles E. Msonde

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The English Language Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLE) was done 09<sup>th</sup> September, 2021. The registered candidates for the examination were 1,132,084; among these, 1,107,778 (97.85%) sat for the examination and 531,640 (48.02%) passed. There was a decrease in this year's performance by 9.22 per cent when compared to the 2020 English Language Examination performance, where a total of 1,023,950 candidates were registered for the examination, among these, 1,009,534 (98.59%) sat for the examination and 577,140 (57.24%) passed.

The English Language paper was divided into three sections, namely A, B and C with forty (40) objective type of questions and five (05) short answer type of questions making a total of forty-five (45) questions. Different specific competencies were examined in each section. Section A consisted of thirty-five (35) questions of which question one to five (1–5) were the questions from oral information read by invigilator while question six to thirty-five (6–35) measured different competencies in English which include *Communicating Simple Ideas through Writing* and *Developing and Using Vocabulary Appropriately through Listening, Writing and Reading*. Section B, consisted of five (05) jumbled sentences numbered thirty-six to forty (36–40) where a candidate was required to arrange them in a proper sequence so as to make a meaningful composition while section C, consisted of a poem which required a candidate to read it and answer the questions that followed.

The analysis of the candidates' performance in each item and topic has been done to indicate areas where the candidates were able or unable to demonstrate their competencies. The analysis shows the

number and the percentage of the candidates who answered the items correctly and those who gave incorrect answers.

The candidates' performance per question has been classified in three categories. The performance from 60 to 100 percent was categorised as good, from 40 to 59 percent as average, and from 0 to 39 percent as poor.

## **2.0 ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS**

The items have been analysed indicating the candidates' ability to answer a particular question correctly. In addition to that, the reasons for those who failed to meet the demands of a specific question are given. The general performance for each question is given in numbers and percentages.

The analysis shows that, the candidates had good performance in Question 4 (76.6%). However, the candidates had poor performance in 30 questions, of which the most poorly performed questions were 16 (16.1%) and 42 (17.3%). The analysis of the candidates' responses is as follows:

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

This section consisted of thirty-five (35) questions. Question one to five (1-5) required the candidates to listen to oral passage as read by the invigilator and answer them by choosing the letter of the correct answer. This part aimed at testing the candidates' listening and comprehension skills.

The passage was as follows:

*Everybody is supposed to behave well in any given circumstances. The act of conducting and presenting yourself with respect and honour is what is called manners.*

*Let us talk about Sheila, a class six girl from Mwenge Primary School. She is a good example of a girl with good manners. When she has a problem, she seeks help from her teachers. If it happens that she wants to go to the washroom or borrow something, she will say, "Please sir may I go out?" or "Please madam, may I borrow a pen from Ashura?" When she is given permission to do what she has asked for, she would say, "Thank you sir" or "Thank you madam."*

*When she borrows something from her fellow pupil, she uses it and carefully returns it and says "Thank you very much for your kindness." By behaving this way, she is liked by her teachers, her fellow pupils and everyone at home including her neighbours.*

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

**Question 1:** What does Sheila do when she has a problem?

- A She goes out.
- B She asks for permission.
- C She thanks her teachers.
- D She asks for help from her teachers.
- E She borrows a pen.

The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 1.



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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D*</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	132,427	140,602	194,567	521,965	100,547	17,670
<b>% of Candidates</b>	12.0	12.7	17.6	47.1	9.1	1.6

The data indicate that the candidate's performance in this question was average since 521,965 (47.1%) chose the correct option D (*she asks for help from her teachers*). These candidates managed to listen effectively and understood the oral passage which made them to choose the correct response.

In addition to that, those candidates who opted for option A (*she goes out*) failed to comprehend the task of the question during oral presentation due to the fact that, Sheila usually asks for help from her teacher whenever she encounters some problems. Those who opted for incorrect option A (*she asks for permission*) failed to understand that, Sheila asks for permission only when she wants to go out of the classroom and not when she faces a problem. Moreover, the candidates who chose incorrect response C (*she thanks her teachers*) did not understand that Sheila gives thanks when she is permitted by a teacher or helped by her fellow pupils and not when she has a problem. Furthermore, the candidates who opted for incorrect response E (*she borrows a pen*) did not understand that, Sheila usually consults her teacher for help when she has a problem and not borrowing a pen.

**Question 2:** What makes Sheila be a good example?

- A She respects everyone.
- B She borrows things.
- C She likes playing.
- D She has problems.
- E She asks for help.

The question required the candidates to identify what makes Sheila to be a good example. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 2.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	393,402	240,912	101,945	240,842	113,010	17,667
% of Candidates	35.5	21.7	9.2	21.7	10.2	1.6

The analysis indicates that the performance in this question was poor since only 393,402 (35.5%) candidates chose the correct option A (*she respects everyone*). These candidates understood the passage read and realised that the tendency of respecting everyone makes Sheila to be a good example.

The candidates who opted for response B (*she borrows things*) did not understand that borrowing things from others does not make one to be a good example. Sheila was a good example because she was respectful to everyone. In addition to that, the candidates who opted for option C (*she likes playing*) failed to realise that, there is nowhere in the passage showing that Sheila

likes playing, rather she was liked by everyone. Apart from that, the candidates who chose distractor D (*she has problems*) did not realise that problems cannot make one to be a good example. Sheila was a good example due to her general conduct to people. These candidates were easily distracted by this option because the clause/option mentioned in the passage shows that, Sheila seeks help from her teachers when she has a problem. Furthermore, the candidates who chose incorrect option E (*she asks for help*) failed to understand that asking for help does not make Sheila to be a good example to others but her respect makes her so. Sheila asks for help only when she faces some problems.

**Question 3:** According to the story, who should children respect in the society?

- A All the pupils
- B Only the teachers
- C All the people
- D Only the friends
- E All the neighbours

The question tested the candidate's ability to comprehend information presented orally and evaluate, according to the information given, who should children respect in the society. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 3.

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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C*</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	295,471	316,289	260,964	67,342	147,860	17,667
<b>% of Candidates</b>	26.7	28.6	23.6	6.1	13.3	1.6

The data in Table 3 indicate that the candidates' performance in this question was poor since only 260,964 (23.6%) candidates chose the correct option C (*all the people*). These candidates realised that every member in the society needs to be respected regardless of their age, colour, education level or other social factors. They had sufficient oral comprehension skills to enable them to relate the given information to their contemporary society.

However, those (76.4%) who chose distractor A (*all pupils*), B (*only the teachers*), D (*only the friends*) and E (*all the neighbours*) failed to understand that when it comes to respect; no one in the society is excluded. It is socially constructed that, everyone should be respected regardless of the social factors one could possess. Generally, the candidates who opted for incorrect options were easily attracted to them because all of them were mentioned in the passage.

**Question 4:** In which class was Sheila studying?

- A Class three
- B Class four
- C Class five
- D Class six
- E Class seven

The question aimed to assess the candidate's ability to tell the class that Sheila studies. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 4.

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

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	42,176	66,282	47,953	848,714	88,405	14,248
% of Candidates	3.8	6.0	4.3	76.6	8.0	1.3

The candidates' performance in this question was good as 848,714 (76.6%) candidates chose the correct option D (*class six*). The candidates who got this question correct understood that Sheila was in standard six as it was presented from the passage. However, the candidates who opted for distractors A (*class three*) B (*class four*), D (*class five*) and E (*class seven*) lacked concentration during oral presentation. This is because there was no any place in the passage where those classes were mentioned. The class which Sheila belongs to was mentioned directly in the passage.

**Question 5:** According to the story, how should a good child do after being helped?

- A Should be happy
- B Should be jealousy
- C Should be helpless
- D Should be thankful
- E Should be strong

The question tested the candidate's ability to evaluate the way a good child should be. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 5.

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

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	278,152	112,033	214,137	396,013	89,144	18,299
% of Candidates	25.1	10.1	19.3	35.7	8.0	1.7

The data in Table 5 indicate that, the candidates' performance in this question was poor since 396,013 (35.7%) chose the correct option D, (*should be thankful*). These candidates realised that if someone is helped, he/she should be thankful.

The candidates who chose distractor A (*should be happy*) did not understand that happiness is not something that indicates a child is good. Those who chose distractor B (*should be jealousy*) did not realise that the adjective (jealousy) means a situation of a person to be *envious* which, according to the passage, is different from one being *thankful*. Moreover, those who chose distractor C

(*should be helpless*) could not understand that the word *helpless*, which is the opposite of the word *helpful* means being in a situation where one lacks help. Furthermore, the candidates who opted for the incorrect option E (*should be strong*) failed to understand that being strong is to be *energetic* which is different from being thankful.

Question **six to thirty-five (6-35)** were multiple choice questions which tested the candidate's competencies in different grammatical areas. The questions were as follows:

**Question 6:** The sun \_\_\_\_\_ in the morning.

- A rising
- B rises
- C rise
- D rose
- E risen

The question tested the candidate's ability to use correct verbs in simple present tense. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 6.

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

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	214,086	453,698	196,251	104,316	118,771	20,656
% of Candidates	19.3	41.0	17.7	9.4	10.7	1.9

The data in Table 6 indicate that the candidates' performance in this question was average since 453,698 (41.0%) candidates

chose the correct option B (*rises*). These candidates understood that the verb form “*rises*” was the correct word to be used to show something that happens regularly. The candidates understood that, the verb “*rises*” agrees with the third person singular (The sun) when expressed in simple present tense.

The candidates who chose distractor A (*rising*) failed to understand that this form of a verb doesn’t show the daily routine rather it is used when expressing activities in present continuous tense. Those who opted for distractor C (*rise*) did not realise that the verb form *rise* is used with first and second person singular and plural and third person plural when expressing an event in simple present tense, therefore, it cannot be used with the third person singular (the sun). The candidates who opted for distractor D (*rose*) misunderstood the action of the sentence by assuming that it happened in the past while it takes place regularly every morning. The candidates who chose distractor E (*risen*) did not know that the verb form *risen* is in the past participle, therefore it cannot be used in simple present tense to indicate actions that occur regularly.

**Question 7:** They \_\_\_\_\_ waiting for me when it started to rain.

- A was
- B be
- C were
- D would
- E are



This question tested the candidates' ability to use *verb to be* when expressing events in past continuous tense. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 7.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	196,093	77,683	417,646	102,325	294,684	19,347
<b>% of Candidates</b>	17.7	7.0	37.7	9.2	26.6	1.7

The candidates' performance in this question was poor since only 417,646 (37.7%) candidates chose the correct option C (*were*). These candidates realised that there was an action going on when another action took place in the past. They understood that the *verb to be* "were" agrees with the subject of the sentence "They", therefore they chose "were" to complete the sentence as in "They were waiting for me when it started to rain."

The candidates who opted for an incorrect distractor A (*was*) failed to realise that the singular form of a *verb to be* "was" is used in past progressive tense but when the subject is in singular form. Those who chose distractor B (*be*) did not know that the word *be* cannot be used in a sentence when it precedes a main verb with "-ing" form in past continuous tense as in "They were waiting for me when it started to rain." The candidates who opted for distractor D (*would*) did not recognize that "would" is a modal auxiliary verb which is used to predict future events or to express polite requests and therefore it cannot be used in past continuous to state past concurrent actions. Moreover, the candidates who opted for

distractor E (*are*) failed to know that “are” is the helping verb used in present continuous tense with a plural subject. In such instances, the verb cannot be used to express ongoing activity when another occurred in the past as in "They were waiting for me when it started to rain."

**Question 8:** Rose is having a graduation ceremony this weekend.

Are you \_\_\_\_\_?

- A invite
- B inviting
- C invitation
- D invites
- E invited

The question tested the candidates' ability to use verbs correctly in interrogative passive voice. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 8.

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

OPTION	A	B	C	D	E*	OTHERS
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	174,952	313,368	177,380	131,769	290,382	19,927
<b>% of Candidates</b>	15.8	28.3	16.0	11.9	26.2	1.8

The performance of the candidates in this question was poor, given that the candidates who chose the correct response E (*invited*) were 290,382 (26.2%). These candidates understood that interrogative passive voice requires the auxiliary verb to be

accompanied by a verb in past participle, as in; {*is/are* + *Subject* + *verb in past participle*}. For example: “Is he *skilled* enough?”

The candidates who chose distractor A (*invite*) were not aware that the verb *invite* is in a basic form which is used in simple present tense when the subject is in plural form (we, you, they) and in singular form (I, you), therefore it cannot be used in interrogative passive voice. Those who opted for choice B (*inviting*) failed to know that the verb *inviting* is in present continuous tense which expresses ongoing action which is contrary to the question which required a verb in past participle form. Moreover, those who opted for option C (*invitation*) could not understand that the word is a noun and so it cannot be used to express an action performed by the subject of the sentence. Furthermore, those who chose option D (*invites*) did not recognize that the verb was in simple present tense which is contrary to the needs of the question which required the *verb to be* in past participle form.

**Question 9:** My grandfather told me that during the slave trade, human beings \_\_\_\_\_ like animals.

- A are selling
- B are sold
- C was sold
- D were sold
- E were selling

This question aimed at testing the candidates' ability to express passive voice in the past. The general performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 9.

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

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	203,733	224,160	218,655	286,744	153,883	20,603
% of Candidates	18.4	20.2	19.7	25.9	13.9	1.9

The performance of the candidates in this question was poor, given that the candidates who chose the correct response D (*were sold*) were 286,744 (25.9%). These candidates realised that the sentence was in passive voice because the object (human beings) of the action (*were sold*) is at the beginning of a sentence.

The candidates who chose the incorrect option A (*are selling*) did not understand that the verb phrase *are selling* indicates the ongoing action, not past continuous tense. Those who opted for option C (*was sold*) did not know that the phrase *was sold* is in singular form which does not correlate with the object *human beings* which is in plural form. The candidates who opted for distractor D (*were selling*) could not realise that the phrase *were selling* makes the object *human beings* as a doer of an action *selling* while it should be the one that is affected by the action of being sold. In general, these candidates failed to observe rules which guide the structure of passive voice in past continuous tense.

**Question 10:** After finishing singing the birthday song for Fatuma, every child \_\_\_\_\_ given a piece of cake by her.

- A are
- B have been
- C was
- D were
- E is

This question tested the candidates' ability to express passive voice in simple past tense. The general performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 10.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	130,967	272,280	336,115	136,085	211,587	20,744
% of Candidates	11.8	24.6	30.3	12.3	19.1	1.9

The performance of the candidates in this question was poor, given that the candidates who chose the correct response C (*was*) were 336,115 (30.3%). These candidates realised that the *verb to be* "was" is used to say what happened to the object of the action in the sentence as in "After finishing singing the birthday song for Fatuma, every child *was* given a piece of cake by her". These candidates understood that the phrase *every child* is in singular form, therefore, its auxiliary verb should also be in singular (*was*), followed by verb in past participle.

The candidates who opted for distractor A (*are*) did not know that the auxiliary verb *are* is in plural form which does not match with the noun phrase *every child* which is in singular form. Those who opted for distractor B (*have been*) did not understand that the helping verb *have been* is used in present perfect continuous tense when the subject is in plural form, therefore, it cannot be used in the sentence where the subject is in singular form. Those who opted for option D (*were*) did not recognise that the helping verb *were* is used in past continuous tense with plural subject, not a singular subject (*every child*). Moreover, those who chose distractor E (*is*), failed to understand that the verb “is” is used with the present passive voice but not in past passive voice as in “..*Every child is given a piece of cake.*”

**Question 11:** The teacher told us to open the book \_\_\_\_\_ page 5.

- A on
- B in
- C at
- D into
- E onto

The question tested the candidates’ ability in using prepositions of place. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 11.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	224,360	325,414	278,067	190,890	67,829	21,218
% of Candidates	20.3	29.4	25.1	17.2	6.1	1.9

The data show that, the performance of the candidates in this question was poor, given that the candidates who chose the correct response A (*on*) were 224,360 (20.3%). These candidates knew that the preposition *on* is used to indicate the position of an object when it is on top of something else as in "The teacher told us to open the book *on* page 5."

The candidates who chose option B (*in*) did not know that preposition *in* is used when an object is inside of something. Those who chose option C, (*at*) could not understand that the preposition *at* is used to express time or place and not the position on the surface. Those who opted for alternative D (*into*), failed to understand that the preposition *into* is used to indicate the direction with movement which shows that something is entering another. Those who chose for distractor E (*onto*) failed to realise that the preposition *onto* shows movement of one object to a position on the surface.

**Question 12:** I am feeling thirsty; is there \_\_\_\_\_ water left in the jug?

- A any
- B some
- C many
- D few
- E little

The question tested the candidates' ability to use quantifiers in expressing quantity of something. The performance of the candidates in this question is shown in Table 12.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	311,510	485,665	154,055	57,888	78,159	20,501
% of Candidates	28.1	43.8	13.9	5.2	7.1	1.9

The performance of the candidates in this question was poor, since the candidates who chose the correct response A (*any*) were 311,510 (28.1%). These candidates recognised that when the sentence is in negative or in question form, the suitable quantifier is *any* to quantify both countable and uncountable nouns.

The candidates who opted for B (*some*) did not know that the quantifier *some* is used in positive statements when determining unspecified amount or number of something and so it cannot be used in asking questions as in "is there some water left in the jug?" Those who opted for alternative C (*many*), did not understand that the quantifier *many* is used to quantify the countable nouns but not



uncountable nouns such as *water*. Furthermore, the candidates who opted for D (*few*) did not know that the word *few* is used with countable nouns in negative form. Those who chose E, (*little*) did not realise that the quantifier *little* is used to express a negative quantity and so it cannot be used with *water* in a sentence which is in question form with uncountable noun as in *I am feeling thirsty; is there any water left in the jug?*

**Question 13:** The car belongs to James. Therefore, it is \_\_\_\_\_ car.

- A Jame's
- B Jamess'
- C James'
- D James
- E James's

The question tested the candidate's ability to express possession by using apostrophe. The performance of the candidates in this question is summarised in Table 13.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	237,377	99,188	420,828	142,194	187,318	20,873
% of Candidates	21.4	9.0	38.0	12.8	16.9	1.9

The data in Table 13 show that the candidates' performance in this question was poor, since those who chose the correct option C (*James'*) were 420,828 (38.0%). These candidates realised that

the apostrophe should be put in front of the last letter "s" in showing possession to nouns that end with letter "s".

However, the candidates who opted for alternative A (*Jame's*), B (*Jamess'*), D (*James*) and E (*James's*) did not obey the rules governing the placement of apostrophe when expressing possession with the nouns that end with letter "s".

**Question 14:** Our desk can accommodate three pupils only.  
Therefore, I sit in the middle \_\_\_\_\_ Anna and Jane.

- A among
- B between
- C besides
- D beside
- E within

The question tested the candidates' ability to use prepositions of place. Table 14 shows the candidates' performance in this question.

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

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	133,575	564,759	158,877	156,813	73,408	20,346
% of Candidates	12.1	51.0	14.3	14.2	6.6	1.8

The performance of the candidates in this question was average, since the candidates who chose the correct response B (*between*) were 564,759 (51.0%). These candidates understood that

preposition *between* is used to show position or the space that an object is placed separating two other objects. They were able to know that in order to use the preposition *between*, there must be three objects where one is at the middle of the remaining objects.

The candidates who opted for A (*among*) did not know that the preposition *among* is used to describe the position of one object placed centrally in relation to more than two other objects. Those who opted for option C (*besides*) did not realise that the word *besides* is used to describe the additional things or extra information. Those who chose D (*beside*) could not recognise that the word *beside* is used to describe something placed at the side of or next to something, not at the middle of other objects. The candidates who opted for alternative E (*within*) could not understand that the preposition *within* is used to show that something is inside of something else or not further off than.

**Question 15:** There were seven men in the room. One of \_\_\_\_\_ wore broken sun- glasses.

- A they
- B the man
- C them
- D their
- E their men

The question tested the candidates' ability to use personal pronouns. Table 15 shows the candidates' performance in this question.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	216,137	242,046	386,119	151,547	97,608	14,321
% of Candidates	19.5	21.8	34.9	13.7	8.8	1.3

The data presented in Table 15 show that the candidates' performance in this question was poor, since those who chose the correct option C (*them*) were 386,119 (34.9%). These candidates realised that the noun phrase *seven men* was in plural form; and so it needs objective case *them* to complete the sentence as in "There were seven men in the room. One of them wore broken sun- glasses".

The candidates who chose alternative A (*they*) did not know that the word *they* is used to indicate personal pronoun in plural form of a subject and not of an object as the question demanded. Those who opted for option B (*the man*) could not understand that the noun phrase *the man* is a subject of a sentence, hence it cannot be repeated as an object of the same sentence. Those who chose distractor D (*their*) did not know that the word *their* is used to show possession when the subject or the object is in plural form but not with the object in singular form as in "There were seven men in the room. One of them wore broken sun- glasses." Furthermore, the candidates who chose distractor E (*their men*) did not understand that the noun phrase *their men* is used to mean a group of men who are owned by others but not a possessive pronoun as the needs of the question.

**Question 16:** No sooner had she arrived home \_\_\_\_\_ it started raining.

- A than
- B when
- C so
- D that
- E as

This question tested the candidates' ability to use correlative conjunctions when joining different ideas in a sentence. This question was one of those with low performance. Table 16 indicates the performance of the candidates in this question.

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

Option	*A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	178,504	371,199	229,534	240,800	74,247	13,494
% of Candidates	16.1	33.5	20.7	21.7	6.7	1.2

The candidates' performance in this question was poor. This performance owes to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response A (*than*) were only 178,504 (16.1%). These candidates knew how to join together two different ideas which happened consecutively by using correlative conjunctions. They understood that the conjunction *no sooner* ... goes with *than* to indicate that one thing happened very soon after another in the past.

On the other hand, 915,780 (83.9%) candidates chose incorrect answers. The candidates who chose alternative B (*when*) did not

understand that the conjunction *when* is used to indicate time, therefore it cannot be used to express an event that happened before another. Those who opted for option C (*so*) did not realise that the word *so* is a coordinating conjunction which is used to express reasons or references as in "We studied hard *so* as to pass the exams". The candidates who opted for D (*that*), did not know that the word *that* is a demonstrative pronoun used to point out persons or things in a sentence as in "I was hanging out with *that* person". Other candidates who chose E (*as*) were not aware that the conjunction *as* is used to show comparison as in "Aisha looks the same *as* Mariam".

The analysis indicates that the candidates' poor performance in this question was attributed to incompetency in the uses of conjunctions to join ideas in sentences.

**Question 17:** A boy and a girl were competing in a race, the girl was the first in the race\_\_\_\_\_ she had trained well.

- A also
- B but
- C so
- D and
- E because

The question tested the candidate's ability to use conjunctions to express reasons for something to happen. The candidates' performance in this question is summarised in Table 17.

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

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	91,678	187,081	98,152	177,829	537,234	15,804
<b>% of Candidates</b>	8.3	16.9	8.9	16.1	48.5	1.4

The candidates' performance in this question was average due to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response E (*because*) were 537,234 (48.5%) as indicated in Table 17. These candidates understood that the conjunction *because* is used to express reasons for an action. Therefore, they managed to use the conjunction *because* to link up the reason for the girl to be the first in the race.

The candidates who opted for A (*also*) did not know that conjunction *also* is used to express the additional information and so it cannot be used to express reasons for something to happen. Those who opted for option B (*but*) could not realise that the conjunction *but* is used to join contrastive actions or sentences as in "Jane is beautiful *but* she is troublesome". Moreover, the candidates who chose C (*so*) were not aware that the conjunction *so* is used with *that* to give a reason for an action. The candidates who selected the distractor D (*and*) did not know that the conjunction "*and*" is used to connect words, phrases or sentences of the same part of speech as in "Juma *and* Ali were happy".

**Question 18:** How could the sentence “Musa is running to school” be in the past continuous form?

- A Musa runs to school.
- B Musa ran to school.
- C Musa has been running to school.
- D Musa was running to school.
- E Musa will run to school.

This question tested the candidate's ability to use past continuous tense to express continuing action or state that was happening at some point in the past. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 18.

**Table 18: Number and Percentage of the Candidates’ Choices in Each Option in Question 18**

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	91,678	187,081	98,152	177,829	537,234	15,804
% of Candidates	8.3	16.9	8.9	16.1	48.5	1.4

Table 18 shows that the candidates’ performance in this question was poor because the candidates who chose the correct response D (*Musa was running to school*) were 177,829 (16.1%). These candidates knew how to change the sentence from present continuous tense to past continuous tense. They realised that the rule governing the past continuous tense in singular form is that, the auxiliary *is*, is changed to *was* and the verb inflection *–ing* is added to the main verb.



The candidates who opted for option A (*Musa runs to school*) did not know that the verb “*runs*” is used with singular subject in simple present tense to express daily routines or habitual actions. In addition to that, those who chose option B (*Musa ran to school*) did not realise that the main verb *ran* is in simple past form showing completed actions in the past. Therefore, it cannot be used to express continuing events in the past. Those who opted for option C (*Musa has been running to school*) did not know that the auxiliary verb *has been* is used in present perfect continuous tense to express something that started in the past and is continuing at the present time. Moreover, those who chose the option E (*Musa will run to school*) could not understand that the auxiliary verb *will* is used to express the planned actions which will be taking place in the future.

**Question 19:** The thief who stole our things, entered into the house \_\_\_\_\_ the open window.

- A at
- B through
- C in
- D with
- E from

The question tested the candidate's ability to use preposition of movement. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 19.

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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B*</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	123,025	453,559	227,932	109,496	178,690	15,076
<b>% of Candidates</b>	11.1	40.9	20.6	9.9	16.1	1.4

The analysis shows that the candidates' performance in this question was average as the candidates who chose the correct response B, (*through*) were 453,559 (40.9%). These candidates understood that the word *through* is a preposition showing the object moving from one side to the other one through a hollow space as in "The thief who stole our things, entered into the house *through* the open window".

The candidates who chose option A (*at*) did not know that the preposition *at* is used to show time or place and so it cannot be used to express movement. In addition to that, those who chose C (*in*) could not understand that the preposition *in* is used to show either manner, time or the positions of persons or things normally surrounded or enclosed by something else and so it does not express movement of objects. Those who opted for option D (*with*) did not realise that the preposition *with* is used to show togetherness or anything which is carried or accompanied to another thing. Furthermore, those who opted for E (*from*) did not know that the word *from* is used to indicate direction or the point in space in which the journey, motion or action starts.

**Question 20:** Change the sentence; they said, “We work together” into indirect speech.

- A They said that we worked together.
- B They said that they are working together.
- C They said that we work together.
- D They said that they worked together.
- E They said that they work together.

The question tested candidate’s ability to use direct and indirect speech to report information. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 20.

**Table 20: Number and Percentage of the Candidates’ Choices in Each Option in Question 20**

OPTION	A	B	C	D*	E	OTHERS
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	217,883	316,391	221,310	225,719	111,155	15,320
<b>% of Candidates</b>	19.7	28.6	20.0	20.4	10.0	1.4

The candidates’ performance in this question was poor. This performance owes to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response D (*They said that they worked together*) were 225,719 (20.4%). These candidates understood the changes in tenses, pronouns and adverbs that take place when the sentence is changed from direct to indirect speech. For example; simple present tense changes to simple past tense as in *Jane said that “I live in Dar es Salaam” (direct speech), Jane said that she lived in Dar es Salaam (indirect speech).*

The candidates who chose A (*they said that we worked together*) did not know that the statement in the question used the first person plural *we* which is supposed to be changed to the third person plural *they*. Moreover, the candidates who chose option B (*they said that they are working together*) did not know that if the direct speech is in simple present tense, the indirect speech should be changed to simple past. Those who opted for option C (*they said that we work together*) did not know that the pronoun *we* should be changed into the third person plural *they* and the tense should be changed from simple present tense to simple past tense. Furthermore, those who chose option E (*they said that they work together*) did not know that the verb should be changed to simple past tense as in "They said that they *worked* together".

**Question 21:** Amina wants to cross the road safely. Which point would you advise her to cross the road?

- A At road lights
- B At a roundabout
- C At the zebra crossing
- D At the road hump
- E At a bridge

The question tested the candidate's ability to use the various signs and symbols according to their meanings. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 21.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	132,416	181,960	586,369	103,514	88,147	15,372
<b>% of Candidates</b>	12.0	16.4	52.9	9.3	8.0	1.4

The analysis shows that the candidates' performance in this question was average because the candidates who chose the correct response C (*at the zebra crossing*) were 586,369 (52.9 %). These candidates knew that zebra crossing is a road sign used by pedestrians to cross the road for their safety.

However, the candidates who opted for option A (*at road lights*) did not know that the preposition phrase *at road lights* means the lights that illuminate the road. In addition to that, the candidates who chose distractor B (*at a roundabout*) did not understand that the *roundabout* is used by vehicles to enable them to change directions and so it is not used by the pedestrians for crossing the road. The candidates who opted for choice D (*at the road hump*) did not know that *the road hump* is a raised band across a road, designed to make motorists reduce their speed, especially in built-up areas. Moreover, the candidates who opted for choice E (*at a bridge*) did not know that the word *bridge* means a structure carrying a pathway over a depression or obstacle such as a river.

**Question 22:** Which of the following prefixes has a negative meaning when used in a word?

- A re-
- B pre-
- C un-
- D fore-
- E post-

The question tested the candidates' ability to form various words by using prefixes. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 22.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	126,247	296,206	305,752	121,124	241,536	16,913
% of Candidates	11.4	26.7	27.6	10.9	21.8	1.5

The data show that the candidates' performance in this question was poor as the candidates who chose the correct response C (*un-*) were 305,752 (27.6%). The candidates who chose the correct answer understood the prefixes that are used to form negative words such as *in-*, *un-*, *non-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *a-*, *anti-*, *im-*, *il-* and *ir-*.

The candidates who opted for choice A (*re-*) did not know that the prefix *re-* 'is used to express the repetitive actions of something and it does not show the negative meaning of something. Apart from that, the candidates who chose B (*pre-*) did not understand that the prefix *pre-* does not express negative meaning rather it

expresses the time before something else happened as in "Pre-colonial activities". In addition, the candidates who opted for D (*fore-*) did not realise that the prefix *fore-* refers to "before". Moreover, those who opted for distractor E (*post-*) did not know that the prefix *post-* does not have negative connotations, rather it is used to indicate the time after a certain event that happened before.

**Question 23:** Our grandparents always tell us, in their \_\_\_\_\_ they were so disciplined that it was rare to find a child disobeying the elders.

- A children
- B child
- C childless
- D childhood
- E childish

This question tested the candidate's ability to use suffixes to form new words. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 23.

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

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	554,238	184,275	117,952	195,037	41,506	14,770
% of Candidates	50.0	16.6	10.6	17.6	3.7	1.3

The data presented indicate that, the candidates' performance in this question was poor, since 195,037 (17.6%) chose the correct option D (*childhood*). These candidates understood that suffixes

are grammatical elements added after the root or stem and for that case the stem *child* required a suffix *hood* to complete the sentence *Our grandparents always tell us, in their childhood they were so disciplined that it was rare to find a child disobeying the elders.*

The candidates who opted for distractor A (*children*) did not understand that the particle *-ren* in *children* denotes the plural form of the word (*child*). In addition to that, those who opted for distractor B (*child*) did not know that the word (*child*) does not have any suffix attached to it to make it adjective so as it can suit to the sentence as *childhood*. Apart from that, the candidates who chose distractor C (*childless*) did not realise that the suffix *-less* means *nothing* or *zero*. Therefore, when it is attached to a root or stem *child*, it changes it to an adjective to mean without any child. Furthermore, the candidates who opted for distractor E (*childish*) did not know that the suffix *-ish* means belongs to or having the character of; and when it is attached to a root or stem it forms an adjective such *childish* which means appropriate to a child.

**Question 24:** Ngole saw a poster which read “Do not Cross” but he crossed the road because he \_\_\_\_\_ the poster.

- A misunderstood
- B over understood
- C reunderstood
- D disunderstood
- E preunderstood



The question tested the candidate's ability in using different prefixes to form words. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 24.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	359,232	309,078	166,283	146,451	110,486	16,248
% of Candidates	32.4	27.9	15.0	13.2	10.0	1.5

The candidates' performance in this question was poor. This performance owes to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response A (*misunderstood*) were 359,232 (32.4%). These candidates understood that when the prefix *mis-* is added to the word *understood* it means wrong understanding of something.

The candidates who opted for choices B (*over understood*), C (*reunderstood*), D (*disunderstood*) and E (*preunderstood*) did not understand that the words they chose were grammatically incorrect. These candidates were incompetent in word formation process by using prefixes.

**Question 25:** We live in a well decorated house. Therefore, our house is

- A handsome
- B beautifully
- C beautiful
- D more beautiful
- E most beautiful

The question tested the candidate's ability to describe things by using adjectives. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 25.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	106,705	238,087	334,922	191,625	219,529	16,910
% of Candidates	9.6	21.5	30.2	17.3	19.8	1.5

Table 25 shows that the candidates' performance in this question was poor due to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response C (*beautiful*) were 334,922 (30.2%). These candidates knew how to use adjectives when expressing the features or qualities of a noun or pronoun and so they chose *beautiful* to describe the quality of the house that was decorated.

The candidates who chose option A (*handsome*) did not realise that the adjective *handsome* does not correlate with *a well decorated house* but it means 'good looking or attractive especially for men'. In addition to that, those who selected option B (*beautifully*) did not understand that the word *beautifully* is an adverb which gives more information about the verb and so it cannot be used to describe a noun or pronoun. Apart from that, the candidates who opted for choice D (*more beautiful*) did not realise that the phrase *more beautiful* is the second degree of adjective used in comparison of two things, but the house is only one, it is not compared with another thing. Furthermore, those who selected option E (*most beautiful*) did not know that the phrase *most*

*beautiful* is the third degree which expresses a superlative degree; that is to compare one thing with more than two things.

**Question 26:** How would you call the person walking along the roadside?

- A Pedestrian
- B Cyclist
- C Walker
- D Stranger
- E Traveller

The question assessed the candidate's ability to develop and use vocabulary which describe people in various situations. Table 26 shows the candidates' performance in this question.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	375,605	183,192	227,535	151,948	153,140	16,358
<b>% of Candidates</b>	33.9	16.5	20.5	13.7	13.8	1.5

The general performance in this question was poor because the candidates who chose the correct response A (*pedestrian*) were 375,605 (33.9%). These candidates understood that a person who walks along the roadside is called pedestrian.

On the other hand, the candidates who opted for choice B (*cyclist*) did not understand that a *cyclist* is a person who rides a bicycle or a motorbike. In addition to that, the candidates who opted for option C (*walker*) did not know that a *walker* is just a person who

walks especially for exercise or enjoyment. Apart from that, those who opted for distractor D (*stranger*) did not realise that a *stranger* is a person who is new or unfamiliar with an environment. Furthermore, those who opted for choice E (*traveller*) could not understand that a *traveller* is a person who travels from place to place, often living in a van or other vehicle, rather than living in one place.

**Question 27:** Julius performs medical operations. He is a

- A Doctor
- B Chemist
- C Nurse
- D Psychiatrist
- E Pharmacist

The question tested the candidate's ability to develop and use vocabulary of occupations. The candidates were required to identify a name used to describe a person who performs medical operations. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 27.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	529,691	144,194	127,138	143,704	146,846	16,205
% of Candidates	47.8	13.0	11.5	13.0	13.3	1.5

The statistics in Table 27 show that the candidates' performance in this question was average as the candidates who chose the

correct response A (*doctor*) were 529,691 (47.8%). These candidates realised that a doctor is the person who treats sick people and performs medical operations.

However, the candidates who opted for choice B (*chemist*) did not know that a *chemist* does not perform medical operation but he/she engages in chemical research or in other meaning it is a shop where medicinal drugs are dispensed and sold, and in which toiletries and other medical goods can be purchased. Those who opted for distractor C (*nurse*) did not understand that a *nurse* does not perform medical operation but is a person who engages in taking care of sick people. Apart from that, the candidates who chose distractor D (*psychiatrist*) did not realise that a *psychiatrist* is a person who deals with people with mental illness or instability. Furthermore, the candidates who selected choice E (*pharmacist*) could not understand that a *pharmacist* is a health care professional licensed to dispense prescription drugs, monitoring drugs interactions, administering vaccine and counseling patients regarding the effects and proper usage of drugs.

**Question 28:** The underlined word in the sentence “Continue” with your discussion” is the same as

- A carry on
- B carry of
- C carry out
- D carry off
- E carry in

The question assessed the candidate's ability to use different words with the same meaning (synonyms). The overall

performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 28.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	364,580	239,820	211,189	168,622	108,553	15,014
% of Candidates	32.9	21.6	19.1	15.2	9.8	1.4

The general performance in this question was poor as the candidates who chose the correct response A (*carry on*) were 364,580 (32.9%). These candidates understood that the word “*continue*” and *carry on* have the same meaning.

The candidates who opted for distractor B (*carry of*) and E (*carry in*) did not understand that *carry of* and *carry in* are grammatically incorrect and they do not denote any meaning that is related to the word *continue*. In addition to that, those who opted for option C (*carry out*) did not know that the phrase means to pursue or perform a task. Apart from that, those who chose D (*carry off*) did not understand that the phrase *carry off* means to take someone or something away by force.

**Question 29:** In the family of three children; Aisha is

- A the most old
- B the eldest
- C the old
- D the elder
- E the older

The question tested the candidate's ability to use adjectives to describe family relation and age. The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 29.

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

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	308,355	327,790	216,869	106,562	133,213	14,989
% of Candidates	27.8	29.6	19.6	9.6	12.0	1.4

The general performance in this question was poor. This performance owes to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response B, (*the eldest*) were 327,790 (29.6%). These candidates managed to show their understanding that adjectives appear in three levels; that is the positive degree, the comparative degree and the superlative degree. This helped them to realise that the family consisted of three members and the comparison was made of one member out of three. They also knew that in comparison; the third member (she) is supposed to take third degree (superlative) where *-est* particle is added after the adjective. Therefore, they chose *the eldest* which is a correct answer.

Those candidates who opted for distractor A (*the most old*) did not understand that the word *most* is used in superlative degree when the adjective has more than two syllables such as *attractive* and *intelligent*. Therefore, it cannot be used to monosyllabic words such as *old*. Those who opted for alternatives C (*the old*), D (*the elder*) and E (*the older*) did not understand that article *the* is used

with adjectives in superlative degree before the word *most* or adjectives with addition of *-est* and so it cannot be used with the words *old*, *elder* and *older*.

**Question 30:** King Lion story was written in old English. The opposite of the word “old” in this context is

- A ancient
- B modern
- C stylish
- D current
- E natural

The question tested the candidate's ability to use words which have opposite meaning (antonyms). The overall performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 30.

**Table 30: Number and Percentage of the Candidates’ Choices in Each Option in Question 30**

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	154,183	420,880	176,072	178,403	159,991	18,249
% of Candidates	13.9	38.0	15.9	16.1	14.4	1.6

The general performance in this question was poor. This performance owes to the fact that the candidates who chose the correct response B (*modern*) were 420,880 (38.0%). The candidates who got this question correct understood that the opposite of the word *old* is modern.

Those candidates who opted for distractor A (*ancient*) did not know that the word *ancient* means *long time ago* which is not the



opposite of the word *old*. In addition to that, those candidates who opted for choice C (*stylish*) did not understand that the word *stylish* means the appearance related to the current trending style, meaning being fashionable, elegant and sophisticated. Moreover, the candidates who chose D (*current*) did not realise that the word *current* means present time. Furthermore, those who opted for choice E (*natural*) did not know that the word *natural* means original state and so it is not the opposite of the word *old*.

**Question 31:** The underlined word in the sentence “The old man shut the door “quietly” belongs to a word class called

- A a noun
- B a verb
- C an adverb
- D an adjective
- E a pronoun

The question tested the candidate’s ability to use word classes in sentences in expressing information. The general performance of the candidates in this question is presented in Table 31.

**Table 31: Number and Percentage of the Candidates’ Choices in Each Option in Question 31**

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	116,078	234,857	294,432	317,289	128,684	16,438
% of Candidates	10.5	21.2	26.6	28.6	11.6	1.5

The general performance in this question was poor because the candidates who chose the correct response C (*an adverb*) were

294,432 (26.6%). These candidates understood that an adverb is used to express or to tell more about verbs or adjectives and in most cases many adverbs take form of ending with *-ly*.

The candidates who opted for distractor A (*a noun*) did not know that a noun is the name of a person, a place, an animal, a thing and a place such as Ashura, Mwanza, elephant and celebration respectively while an adverb is a word which modifies a verb, adverb and adjective. Not only that but also, those candidates who opted for choice B (*a verb*) did not realise that a verb describes a word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as *hear*, *become* and *happen*. In addition to that, those who chose distractor D (*an adjective*) did not understand that the adjectives are words that express some features or qualities of a noun or pronoun. Furthermore, those who selected distractor E (*a pronoun*) did not realise that a pronoun is a word that stands for a noun or a noun phrase and so it does not describe a verb.

**Question 32:** Our dog died and left a puppy which was unable to take care of itself. Therefore, the puppy was left

\_\_\_\_\_.

- A helpful
- B helping
- C helped
- D help
- E helpless

This question tested the candidate's ability to form words by using suffixes. Table 32 shows the performance of the candidates in this question.

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

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	164,350	278,609	165,207	228,125	253,851	17,636
<b>% of Candidates</b>	14.8	25.2	14.9	20.6	22.9	1.6

The general performance in this question was poor as the candidates who chose the correct response E (*helpless*) were 253,851 (22.9%). These candidates knew that the suffix *-less* is used to mean *without* or *not giving* which agrees with the state in which a puppy misses a help.

However, those candidates who opted for distractor A (*helpful*) did not understand that the word *helpful* means giving or ready to give help. In addition to that, those who opted for choice B (*helping*) did not know that the word *helping* is a verb in the present continuous tense and for that reason it cannot be used to indicate the state of missing a help. Moreover, those who chose distractor C (*helped*) did not know that the verb carries ‘-ed’ particle or inflection to denote simple past tense which has nothing to do with a helpless puppy. Furthermore, the candidates who opted for choice D (*help*) did not recognise that the word *help* is a verb which is in a positive state without any attachment of a suffix to indicate the state of missing a help.

**Question 33:** Usually the sun rises in the East and sets in the

- 
- A West
  - B South
  - C West-east
  - D North
  - E South- west

The question tested the candidate's ability to identify and use cardinal points. Table 33 shows the performance of the candidates in this question.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	518,641	157,967	168,053	136,268	111,317	15,532
% of Candidates	46.8	14.3	15.2	12.3	10.0	1.4

The candidates' performance in this question was average, since 518,641 (46.8%) opted for the correct response A (*West*). These candidates knew the fact that the sun rises in the East and sets in the West.

In addition to that, the candidates who opted for B (*South*), C (*West-East*), D (*North*) and E (*South-West*) did not understand that the earth usually spins from West to East and so the sun rises from the East to the West.

**Question 34:** My sister's son is called Maendeleo. Therefore, Maendeleo is my \_\_\_\_\_.

- A husband
- B uncle
- C nephew
- D father
- E brother

This question tested the candidate's ability to develop and use vocabulary of family relation or kinship. The performance of the candidates in this question is summarised in Table 34.

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

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	110,950	199,441	487,115	140,885	152,351	17,036
% of Candidates	10.0	18.0	44.0	12.7	13.8	1.5

The candidates' performance in this question was average, since 487,115 (44.0%) opted for the correct response C (*nephew*). These candidates knew that nephew is a son of one's brother or sister, or of one's brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

Apart from that, the candidates who opted for distractor A (*husband*) did not know that a *husband* is a married man considered in relation to his spouse. In addition to that, those who chose distractor B (*uncle*) did not realise that the word *uncle* means a brother to one's mother or father. Furthermore, those who opted for choice D (*father*) did not know that the word *father* refers to one's male biological parent. Furthermore, the candidates who

opted for option E (*brother*) did not know that the word *brother* means a man or boy in relation to other sons and daughters of his parents.

**Question 35:** Mrs. John signed a contract after she had made the payment. Which of the following words is pronounced the same as the underlined word but has different meaning?

- A mid
- B mat
- C mode
- D mad
- E maid

This question tested the candidate's ability to develop and use vocabulary especially the words with the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homophones). The performance of the candidates in this question is summarised in Table 35.

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

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Others
No. of Candidates	134,325	127,798	419,797	149,322	259,471	17,065
% of Candidates	12.1	11.5	37.9	13.5	23.4	1.5

The candidates' performance in this question was poor, since 259,471 (23.4%) candidates opted for the correct response E (*maid*). These candidates understood that the word *made* means the act of creating something in the past while *maid* is a female

domestic servant. Both words *made* and *maid* are pronounced as /meɪd/.

However, the candidates who opted for choice A (*mid*) did not know that the word is pronounced as /mɪd/ referring to the central position or middle of a range. Those who chose B, (*mat*) did not understand that the word *mat* is pronounced as /mæt/ to mean a piece of coarse material placed on a floor for people to wipe their feet on. Apart from that, some candidates opted for option C (*mode*), not knowing that the word *mode* is pronounced as /məʊd/, meaning a way or manner in which something occurs or is experienced, expressed, or done. Those who picked alternative D (*mad*) did not realise that the word *mad* is pronounced as /mæd/ to mean mentally ill; insane.

## 2.2 SECTION B: COMPOSITION

This section consisted of five (05) mixed sentences (36 - 40) whereby the candidates were required to arrange them by giving them letters A – E to make a meaningful composition. The section tested the candidate's ability to put things in the correct sequence.

The following were the mixed sentences:

**Question 36:** *In his speech, he promised to buy the products produced by the pupils.*

**Question 37:** *Standard Seven pupils had a cooking project.*

**Question 38:** *The head teacher talked to the pupils.*

**Question 39:** *The pupils thanked him and invited him again.*

**Question 40:** *They invited the head teacher to see the project.*

In responding to the question, the candidates were supposed to rearrange the sentences to make a meaningful paragraph as follows:

36	37	38	39	40
D	A	C	E	B

Further analysis on candidates' responses in each question (36-40) is as follows:

**Question 36.** In his speech, "he promised to buy the products produced by the pupils".

The candidates were required to arrange the sentence numbered 36 as the fourth sentence by assigning it letter D in the sequence in order to make a meaningful composition. The candidates' performance is shown in Table 36.

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

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Others
No. of Candidates	80,869	152,558	192,422	379,543	279,895	22,491
% of Candidates	7.3	13.8	17.4	34.3	25.3	2.0

The analysis shows that the performance of the candidates was poor as those who chose letter "D" were 379,543 (34.3%). These candidates recognised that a pronoun *his* referred to a subject or a person introduced already in the previous sentences. They were able to link this with the sentence numbered 38 which informs that the head teacher talked to the pupils.



**Question no 37.** Standard seven pupils had a cooking project.

The candidates were required to arrange this sentence numbered 37 as the first in the sequence by giving it letter A. The candidates' performance is shown in Table 37.

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

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Others
No. of Candidates	585,032	180,877	141,840	101,831	79,027	19,171
% of Candidates	52.8	16.3	12.8	9.2	7.1	1.7

The general performance in this question was average because the candidates who chose letter "A" were 585,032 (52.8%). These candidates discovered that the origin (source) of the story is standard seven pupils having a cooking project and for that reason, sentence number 37, is the introductory sentence. Therefore, in the correct order of events, it is qualified to be the first sentence in the sequence and so it should be given letter "A". Those who failed to do that, were not able to discover the introduction of new idea in the sentence.

**Question 38:** The head teacher talked to the pupils.

In this question, the candidates were required to indicate that the sentence was the third in the sequence and so it should be assigned letter C. Table 38 is the analysis of the candidates' performance in this question.

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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C*</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	209,978	181,238	428,337	157,717	108,053	22,455
<b>% of Candidates</b>	19.0	16.4	38.7	14.2	9.8	2.0

The data presented in Table 38 shows that, the candidates' performance was poor. This owes to the fact that 38.7 per cent of the candidates identified the sentence as the third sentence in the sequence by assigning it letter C. The candidates who misplaced the sentence did not realise that the action that was going on after the head teacher had been invited to the event was for him to talk to the pupils.

**Question 39.** The pupils thanked him and invited him again.

The candidates were required to identify this sentence as the fifth sentence. Therefore, they were to assign it letter E in the sequence to make a meaningful composition. The performance of the candidates is indicated in Table 39.

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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E*</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	127,158	163,104	161,414	185,225	448,885	21,992
<b>% of Candidates</b>	11.5	14.7	14.6	16.7	40.5	2.0

The data in Table 39 show that, the performance of the candidates in this question was average because 40.5 per cent of the

candidates identified the sentence 39 as the fifth sentence in the sequence and assigned it letter E. These candidates understood that the act of the pupils to thank the head teacher was supposed to be the last event in the sequence. In addition, the candidates indicated that this sentence was preceded by the sentence numbered 36 which tells about the head teacher who promised to buy products made by the pupils. In such instances, they realised that the act of the pupils to thank and invite again the head teacher was supposed to come after that promise made by the head teacher.

**Question 40.** They invited the head teacher to see the project.

The candidates were required to arrange the sentence numbered 40 as the second sentence by assigning it letter B in the sequence in order to make a meaningful composition. The candidates' performance is shown in Table 40.

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

<b>Option</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B*</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	103,191	432,167	173,135	235,438	143,069	20,778
<b>% of Candidates</b>	9.3	39.0	15.6	21.3	12.9	1.9

The data presented in Table 40 shows that the candidates' performance was average. This owes to the fact that 39.0 per cent of the candidates identified the sentence as the second sentence in the sequence by assigning it letter B. These candidates understood that the sentence numbered 40 was supposed to be

the second since it follows the introduction made in sentence numbered 37 which states about the Standard Seven having a cooking project.

## **2.3 SECTION C: COMPREHENDING WRITTEN INFORMATION**

This section tested the candidate's ability to read and comprehend written information. The candidates were given a poem and from that poem they were required to answer five questions (41 – 45).

The poem was:

*My clansmen  
The virus erupted  
Extremely dangerous  
Killing thousands of people every day.*

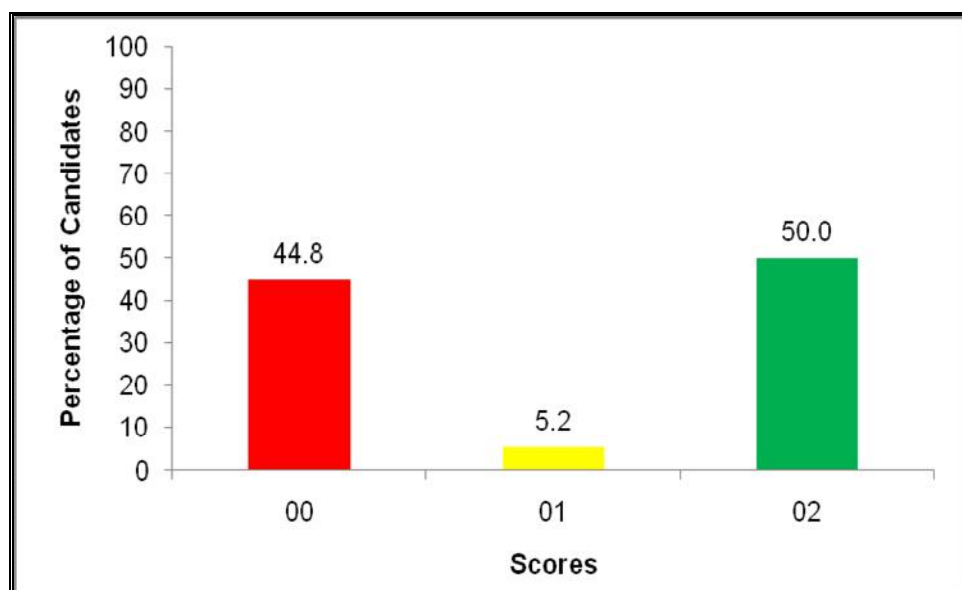
*China is crying  
The USA is crying  
Italy is crying  
Brazil feeling the most severe impact.*

*It spreads through the contact  
People wear face masks  
To prevent it from spreading  
Coughing, breathing difficulties  
These are some of the symptoms.*

*People fear to work  
Children are no longer going to school  
Thousands have died of it  
Information can save the victims  
Ooh! Covid-19  
Why did you come to us?*

**Question 41:** What is the poem about?

The question assessed the candidate's ability to identify what was the poem about. The candidates were supposed to write that *the poem was about COVID -19*. The analysis of the candidates' performance in this question is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** *Candidates' Performance in Question 41.*

The *analysis* shows that the performance of the candidates in this question was average, since 611,823 (55.2%) scored from 01 to 02 marks (Average to Good Performance). These candidates understood that the disease that was mentioned in the fifth verse in stanza four *Covid-19* was the intention of the whole poem. The poem starts with attention about the Covid-19 to clansmen and it ends with the impacts brought by the disease. Extract 1.1 is a sample of a response from a candidate who answered the question correctly.

<p>QUESTION NO. 41</p> <p>The disease which is COVID 19.</p>
--

Extract 1: *Sample of a correct response.*

In Extract 1, the candidate wrote correctly what the poem was about. The response suggests that, the candidate had enough comprehension skills and for that reason he/she could interpret the passage and identify what the poem was about.

Further analysis indicates that, 495,955 (44.8%) candidates performed poorly by scoring 00 mark. These candidates did not comprehend the poem and for that reason they wrote incorrect answers such as (a) *coughing and breathing difficulties* (b) *killing thousands of people every day* and (c) *China is crying* which are among the symptoms and impacts of the Covid-19. In addition, other candidates wrote phrases from the poem without considering what they were asked. These candidates wrote incorrect answers such as (a) *My clansmen* (b) *Why did you come to us* and (c) *People fear to work*. Extract 2 is a sample response of a candidate who wrote an incorrect answer to question 41.

<p>QUESTION NO. 41</p> <p>people wear face masks</p>
--

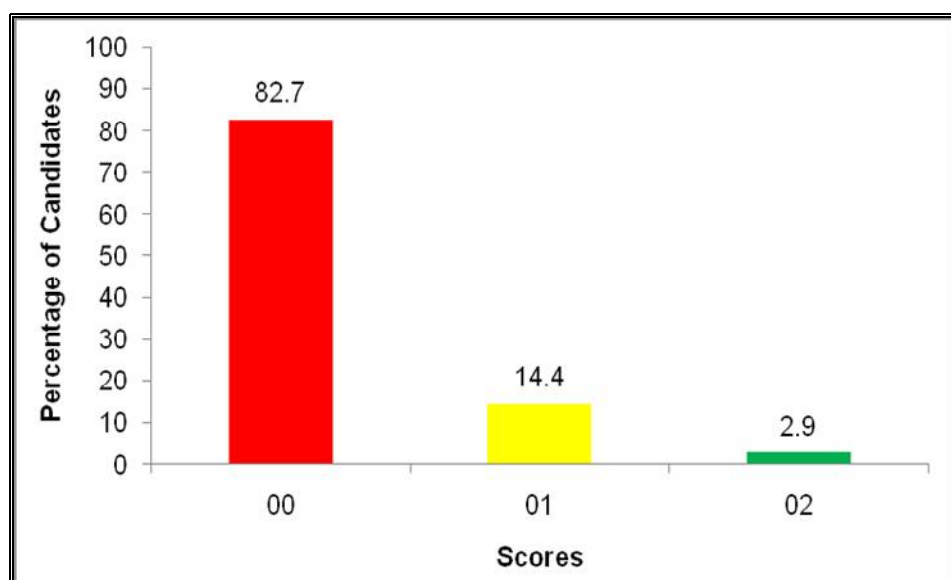
Extract 2: *Sample of an incorrect response.*

In Extract 2, the candidate wrote one of the ways in which people can protect themselves from Covid-19. This candidate lacked

comprehension skills especially on interpretation of information presented in the passage.

**Question 42:** Who is speaking in the poem?

The question tested the candidate's ability to identify the speaking voice in the poem. The correct response was *a member of the affected clan*. The analysis of the candidates' performance in this question is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Candidates' Performance in Question 42.

The data in Figure 2 show that, the performance of the candidates in this question was poor, since few candidates (17.3%) scored from 01 to 02 marks. These candidates comprehended the poem and realised that the one who is speaking in the poem is the member of the community affected by the Covid-19. The candidates noticed the phrase "*My clansmen*" in stanza one which hinted out who is speaking in the poem. The uses of the pronoun "My" indicate that the speaker belongs to the people he/she is

QUESTION NO. 42

The COVID-19 victim is speaking in the poem.

In Extract 3, the candidate wrote the correct answer because he/she knew that the person who was speaking in the poem was one of the members from affected community, clan or society. This candidate understood the requirement of the question and he/she was competent in basic elements of poetry such as persona.

Furthermore, there were candidates who wrote that, the person speaking in the poem is *unknown*. These candidates wrote this because they thought that the speaker in the poem was supposed to be named on the top of the poem. Extract 4 is a sample of an incorrect response to this question.

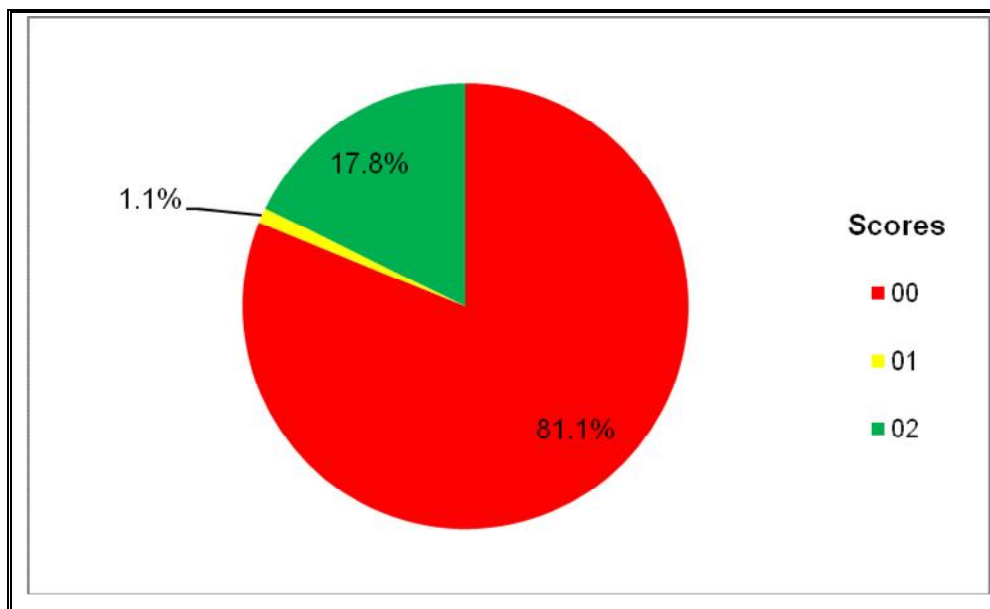


QUESTION NO. 42
The poet is speaking in the poem.

Extract 4: Sample of an incorrect response.

In Extract 4, the candidate wrote *poet* as a person who speaks in the poem. This candidate confused the meaning of the term *persona* and *poet* in that a *persona* is a person who speaks in the poem while a *poet* is a person who composes poems. This candidate had knowledge about poetry but he/she did not understand the requirement of the question.

**Question 43:** According to the poem, how does the virus spread?  
The question tested the candidates' ability to identify the ways in which the virus spreads. The correct response was; *it spreads through the contact*. The candidates' performance in this question is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Candidates' Performance in Question 43.

The data in Figure 3 show that the performance of the candidates in this question was poor, since few candidates (18.9%) performed well by scoring from 01 to 02 marks. These candidates had comprehension skills which enabled them to answer the question correctly. These candidates realised that in stanza 3 verse 1 there is a sentence “it spreads *through the contact*” which indicates how the virus spreads. Extract 5 is a sample of a correct response to this question.

<b>QUESTION NO. 43</b>
According to the poem the virus spreads through contact:-

**Extract 5:** Sample of a correct response.

Further analysis shows that, 898,587 (81.1%) candidates performed poorly by scoring 00 marks. These candidates did not understand the poem and for that reason they responded with incorrect answers, for example, some pupils wrote causes of Covid-19. In addition to that, some of them mentioned preventive measures such as keeping distances, washing hands, and avoiding coughing without covering the mouth. The candidates also wrote incorrect answers such as (a) *Covid-19* (b) *extremely dangerous* (c) *information can save the victims*. Extract 6 is a sample of an incorrect response to this question.

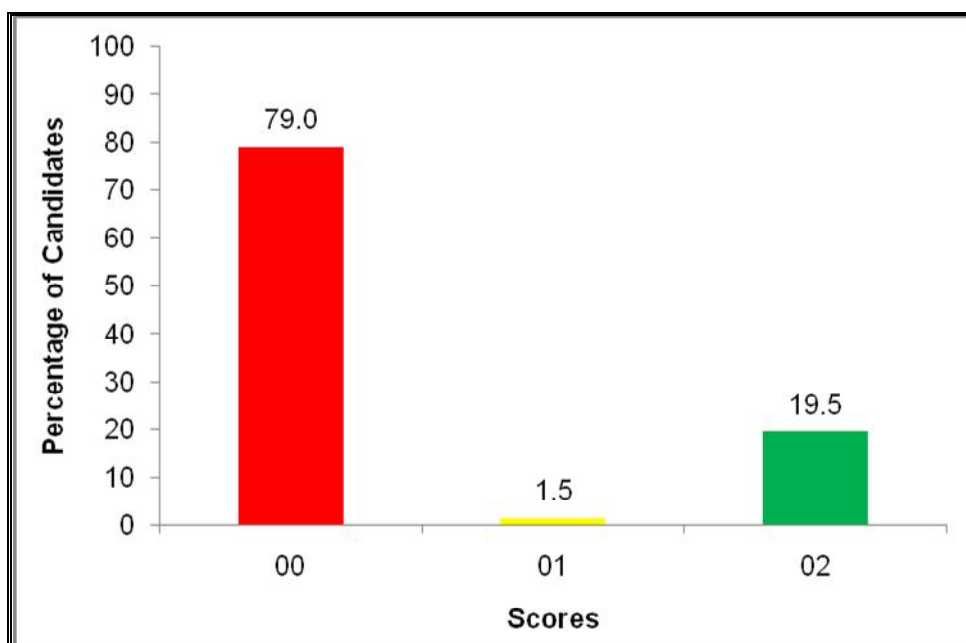
QUESTION NO. 43
To wear face masks

**Extract 6:** *Sample of an incorrect response.*

In Extract 6, the candidate wrote a way in which one can prevent oneself from being affected by Corona virus. The candidate lacked comprehension skills as he/she could not understand how the virus spreads according to the poem.

**Question 44:** What is suggested to prevent the spread of the disease?

The question tested the candidate's ability to analyse and identify suggested ways for preventing the spread of disease. The correct response was *wearing face masks/giving information about the Covid-19*. The measures of prevention were given in the third stanza when it states *People wear face mask* and in the fourth stanza which it states *Information can save the victims*. The analysis of the candidates' performance in this question is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** *Candidates' Performance in Question 44.*

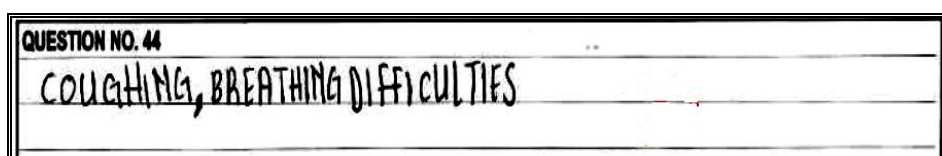
The data in Figure 4 show that the performance of the candidates in this question was poor, since only 232,594 (21.0%) candidates performed well by scoring from 01 to 02 marks. The candidates understood the poem and identified what is suggested to prevent the spread of the disease as shown in Extract 7.

<p>QUESTION NO. 44</p> <p>People to <u>wear face masks</u>.</p>
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*Extract 7: Sample of a correct response.*

In Extract 7, the candidate wrote what was suggested to be done so as to prevent the spread of the disease. This candidate understood the poem and for that reason he/she could interpret and come out with the correct answer.

However, 875,184 (79.0%) candidates performed poorly by scoring 00 mark. The candidates in this group could not understand the requirement of the question and for that reason they wrote the symptoms of the disease such as *coughing and breathing difficulties*. In addition, some of them were confused with the word *prevent* which was used in the question, therefore they mentioned the impact of the disease such as (a) *death of thousands of people* (b) *fear to go to work* and (c) *children to postpone going to school*. Extract 8 is a sample of an incorrect response to this question.

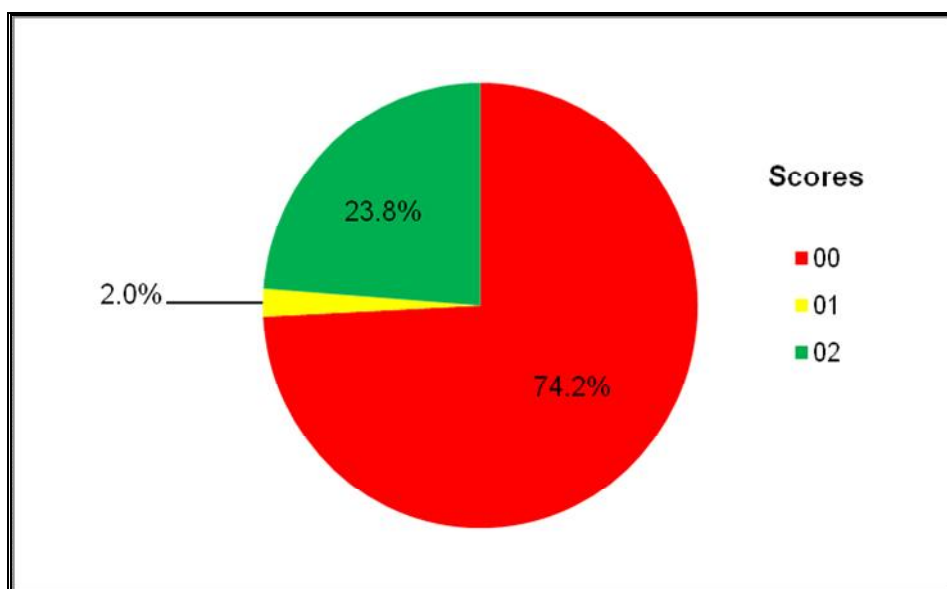


Extract 8: *Sample of an incorrect response.*

In Extract 8, the candidate wrote the symptoms of the Covid-19. This candidate misinterpreted the requirement of the question thinking that it required symptoms instead of measures to be taken for prevention.

**Question 45:** What is the impact of the disease mentioned in the poem?

The question tested the candidate's ability to show what has been mentioned in the poem as the impact of the Covid-19. The correct response to this question was; *people fear to work; children are no longer going to school or the death of thousands of people*. The analysis of the candidates' performance in this question is shown in Figure 5.

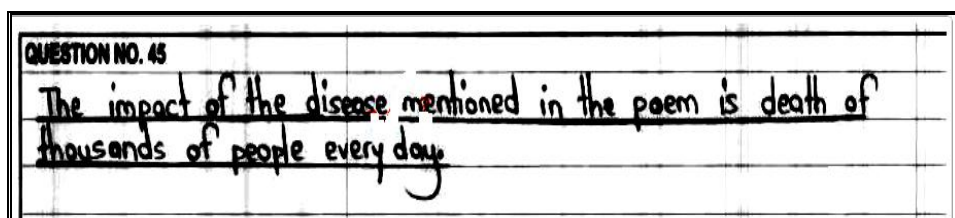


**Figure 5:** *Candidates' Performance in Question 45.*

The data in Figure 5 show that the performance of the candidates in this question was poor, since only 285,808 (25.8%) candidates performed well by scoring from 01 to 02 marks. These candidates understood the poem and that enabled them to realise that the impact of the disease was found in stanza four that reads:

*“People fear to work  
Children are no longer going to school  
Thousands have died of it”*

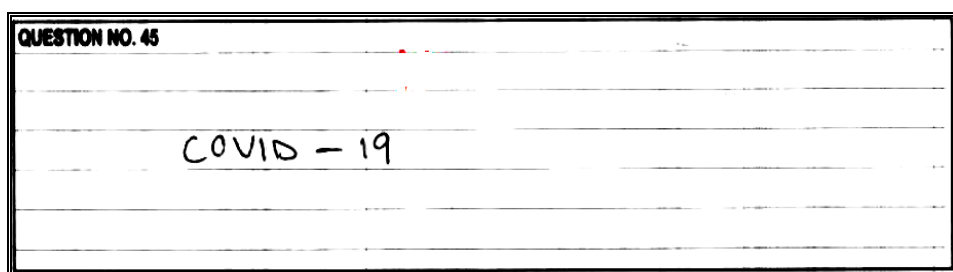
Therefore, they wrote the correct answer as required. Extract 9 is a sample of a correct response to this question.



Extract 9: *Sample of a correct response.*

In Extract 9, the candidate wrote the correct answer as it was expressed in the poem. This candidate's response indicates that he/she had adequate skills in comprehending written information.

However, 821,970 (74.2%) candidates performed poorly as they scored 00 mark. These candidates could not understand the poem; something which made them come out with incorrect answers such as (a) *Brazil feeling the most severe impact* (b) *China is clansmen* and (c) *Covid -19*. Moreover, other candidates wrote words from the poem without considering what they were asked, for example they wrote (a) *Why did you come to us* (b) *Information can save the victims* and (c) *Virus erupted*. Extract 10 is a sample of an incorrect response to this question.



A sample of a handwritten response on a lined paper. The paper has a header that reads "QUESTION NO. 45". The response, written in black ink, is "COVID - 19". The paper has horizontal lines and a vertical margin line on the right side.

Extract 10: *Sample of an incorrect response.*

In Extract 10, the candidate wrote the name of the disease that is discussed in the poem instead of the impact the disease has brought to the affected clan. This response suggests that the candidate was confused with the term disease as it appeared in the question and for that reason he/she misunderstood the task of the question by writing the name of the disease mentioned in the poem instead of the impact of that disease.

### **3.0 THE CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE IN EACH COMPETENCY**

The analysis of the candidates' performance in English Language in the PSLE for 2021 shows that, generally the performance was poor in each specific competency. The performance in *listening and comprehending information presented orally* was by 39.15 per cent. The performance in *developing and using appropriate vocabulary through listening, reading and writing* was by 35.81 per cent. The performance in *communicating simple ideas through writing* was by 34.67 per cent. Moreover, the performance in *reading and comprehending written information* was by 32.51 per cent. The candidates' performance in each specific competency is summarised in the Appendix A.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Generally, the performance of the candidates in the English Language subject in the PSLE for 2021 was average. This owes to the fact that 531,640 (48.02%) candidates passed the examination as they got grades from A to C.

Further analysis shows that the candidates' failure to choose and write correct responses might have been attributed to their incompetency in communicating simple ideas through writing; reading and comprehending written information, developing and using vocabulary appropriately through listening, writing and reading and listening and comprehending information presented orally. However, the candidates who scored high marks in the examination had adequate skills in those areas.



## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The performance in the English Language PSLE 2021 was average. Therefore, some measures are recommended in order to improve the pupils' performance in the future examinations. The suggested measures are:

- (i) Teachers should guide the pupils to read simple story books, complex textbooks, and magazines so as to develop and use vocabulary to communicate in everyday simple transactions.
- (ii) Teachers should guide pupils to read simple texts on different topics to interpret and comprehend the contents. In addition, the pupils should be guided to listen to narration about general topics and list main ideas. As a result, the pupils will acquire skills pertaining to comprehending oral and written information in future assessments.
- (iii) Teachers should guide pupils to use cards, pictures or letters with common topics to converse and interact in a simple way. In such instances, the pupils will be proficient in communicating through writing.
- (iv) Teachers should facilitate pupils to listen and recite poems, identify and use figures of speech correctly in sentences. As a result, the pupils will be familiar with poems and specifically poetic features including persona, metaphors and simile.

## CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE BY SPECIFIC COMPETENCY IN PSLE 2021

S/N.	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY	PSLE 2021			
		Performance on each Question		(%) Average	Remarks
		Qn. Number	(%) Performance		
1.	<i>Listening and Comprehending Information Presented Orally</i>	1	47.1	39.15	Poor
		2	35.5		
		3	23.6		
		4	76.6		
		5	35.7		
		18	35.2		
		20	20.4		
2.	<i>Developing and Using Vocabulary Appropriately Through Listening, Writing and Reading</i>	21	52.9	35.81	Poor
		22	27.6		
		23	17.6		
		24	32.4		
		25	30.2		
		26	33.9		
		27	47.8		
		28	34.3		
		29	58.8		
		30	38.0		
		31	26.6		
		32	22.9		
		33	46.8		
		34	44.0		
		35	23.4		
3.	<i>Communicating Simple Ideas Through Writing</i>	6	41.0	34.67	Poor
		7	37.7		
		8	26.2		
		9	25.9		
		10	30.3		
		11	20.3		
		12	28.1		
		13	38.0		
		14	51.0		
		15	34.9		
		16	16.1		
		36	34.3		
		37	52.8		
		38	38.7		
		39	40.5		
		40	39.0		
4.	<i>Reading and Comprehending Written Information</i>	17	48.5	32.51	Poor
		19	40.9		
		41	55.2		
		42	17.3		
		43	18.9		
		44	21.0		
		45	25.8		

