



PSAC 2021- 2022

Grade 5 Modular Assessment History & Geography

Subject code : P142/1

Examiners' Report

Key messages

Candidates should:

- pay careful attention to what each question is asking them to do;
- write names and concept words correctly;
- work with tables (and graphs) when they study weather and climate to develop comparison skills and the ability to make deductions;
- practise the skills of 'shading', 'labelling' (e.g. marking with a letter, 'locating' and 'naming' on maps and diagrams;
- discuss orally answers to open-ended questions with their peers and practise writing them under guidance.

General Comments

The Grade 5 Modular History & Geography question paper 2021-2022 comprised 7 questions:

- one multiple-choice question with 6 items assessing knowledge and understanding of History and Geography (Question 1);
- one true or false question with 5 items assessing knowledge and understanding of History and Geography (Question 3);
- three composite questions aimed at assessing skills, knowledge and understanding of Geography (Questions 2, 4 and 7);
- and two composite questions aimed at assessing skills, knowledge and understanding of History (Questions 5 and 6).

The question paper is a one-hour paper carrying a total of 50 marks. For the 2021-2022 paper, the overall performance of candidates has improved compared to previous years. Many candidates scored high marks on the paper. The mean mark for girls (30 marks) was slightly higher than for boys (28 marks). It was however noted that a considerable number of candidates could not reach at least 15 marks out of the total of 50 marks.

Candidates did well on questions and items assessing knowledge as in the previous years, mainly the Multiple-choice, True or False and objective-type questions with one-word answers (Questions 1, 2(1,2,3,4,5,6), 3 and 5 (c)(i)). In general, items assessing concepts in History were well answered (Questions 5 and 6) whereas it was observed that candidates struggled when it came to basic geographical knowledge, concepts and skills such as interpretation of maps and shading as well as extracting information from maps (Questions

2 and 7). Short-answer structured questions which assessed historical concepts proved to be more accessible to candidates than geographical concepts. For example, Question 2 proved to be challenging for candidates though the items set were straight-forward and related to Map 1.

Specific Comments

Question 1

- Item (a)** It was well answered by candidates. Candidates had to recall what made up 70% of the area of the Earth's surface, the answer being ocean.
- Item (b)** It was about identifying the island forming part of the Mascarene Islands. The correct answer was Réunion.
- Item (c)** It assessed the ability to recall that the description of the relief feature was that of a 'plateau'. This question was answered correctly by most candidates though there were some who answered 'plain'.
- Item (d)** It was not well answered by candidates. They had to identify the nationality of Van Warwick. The correct answer was 'Dutch' but a significant number of candidates opted for 'Portuguese'.
- Item (e)** Candidates answered this item correctly, identifying 'Arabia' as the country from which the French introduced coffee to Ile de France.
- Item (f)** Many candidates chose Rivière du Poste for this item. The correct answer was 'Rivière Savanne' at the mouth of which Governor Vicomte de Souillac built a port.

Question 2

This question assessed mainly the identification and labelling skills of candidates on **Map 1**, a map of the world showing some of its main physical features. The question carried 8 marks and was divided into seven part questions, the last part carrying 2 marks and the other parts one mark each. Most candidates were able to score 6-8 marks in the question except for part 7 which proved to be the most challenging for candidates. However, it was noted that candidates had difficulties in writing important terms correctly.

Item 1

Candidates were expected to identify the **continent labelled A** on **Map 1**. The correct answer was 'North America'. It seemed that many candidates did identify the continent but answered 'America' for which no mark was allocated.

Item 2

Candidates were expected to identify the **mountain range labelled B** on **Map 1**. Many candidates could not identify the Himalayas correctly. A significant number of misspellings was noted. Some candidates answered 'Mt Everest', an answer which was not accepted.

Item 3

Candidates had to name the line of latitude 23.5° N. Candidates did get the right answer (Tropic of Cancer) though a few of them wrote Tropic of Capricorn.

Item 4

Candidates were expected to name **River R** found in Africa. The correct answer was Nile and many candidates got the correct answer.

Item 5

Candidates were expected to label the Indian Ocean using the letter 'C'. This item was very popular among candidates with a high percentage of correct answers.

Item 6

Candidates were expected to identify the continent in which **the River Q**, the Yangtse Kiang is found. Two options were provided. Candidates had to choose between Asia and South America. This was the most well answered item.

Item 7

Candidates were expected to state the environmental importance of site P on Map 1 which is a big conservation forest, the Amazonian forest. Two marks were allocated for this item. It was encouraging to see that more candidates obtained 2 marks rather than a partial mark (1 mark). This was an open ended question and many answers provided by candidates were correct. Full marks were allocated for answers such as ‘it prevents global warming’, ‘it absorbs/stores carbon dioxide’, ‘it protects the rich flora and fauna’ and partial mark was allocated to answers such as ‘it protects plants’, ‘it protects animals’ and ‘it provides oxygen’.

Question 3

This question assessed knowledge and understanding through 5 True or False items. The question carried a total of 5 marks. One item was already done as an example for candidates. Candidates performed well on this alternate type question. Most candidates were able to score 4-5 marks. The correct answers are:

1.	<i>The island nearest to Mauritius is Madagascar.</i>	<i>False</i>
2.	Sustainability is about taking actions to maintain and take care of the world we live in.	True
3.	The Dutch and the Portuguese took the same route to reach the East Indies.	False
4.	The British lost the battle of Grand Port in 1810.	True
5.	Agalega was a dependency of Mauritius in the 19 th century.	True
6.	The higher a place is located the warmer is its climate.	False

Question 4

This question was a structured question which assessed knowledge, understanding and application on the topic of 'soil erosion in Rodrigues'. It carried 9 marks and most candidates were able to secure high marks.

Item (a)

Candidates had to define 'soil erosion'. This part question carried 2. Many candidates obtained full marks for answers such as 'The removal of the topsoil by heavy rains/ by floods' and 'Soil is washed away by heavy rainfall'. Partial marks were given to incomplete answers such as 'Soil is removed'.

Item (b)

Candidates had to classify four causes of soil erosion as 'natural causes' or 'man-made causes' for a total of 4 marks. The four causes given were 'Overgrazing, Steep slopes, Heavy rainfall and Deforestation'. Overgrazing and Deforestation are man-made causes whereas Steep slopes and Heavy rainfall are natural causes. Many candidates were able to classify them properly.

Item (c)

This part question carried one mark and was a straight forward question. Candidates had to mention 'what has been done to reduce soil erosion in Rodrigues'. Examples of correct answers are 'land terracing', 'afforestation' and 'terrace farming'. No mark was allocated to answers such as 'planting of mangroves'.

Item (d)

This item carried 2 marks. Candidates had to mention 'how does soil erosion affect the crop production of farmers'. Two marks were allocated to answers such as 'crop yield/ harvest is reduced', 'crops get damaged/ washed away/ uprooted', 'land becomes rocky and it becomes difficult to grow crops' and 'farmers cannot grow crops that require deep soils'. Partial marks

were allocated to simple statements such as 'less crops' and 'less profits'. It is to be noted that candidates have difficulties in expressing their answers in proper English finding it difficult to construct simple phrases/sentences. They should be encouraged to write simple phrases/sentences in proper English to enhance their writing abilities.

Question 5

This question carried 8 marks and was based on the history topics the Dutch and the French in Mauritius. The question was divided in 3 parts, the first part about the Dutch period and the two other parts on the French period in Mauritius. It is important to note that there were many candidates who left this whole question blank. It is therefore recommended that candidates be given more writing practice so that they can pull together simple phrases to attempt open-ended questions like this one.

Item (a)

For this item, candidates were required to 'give three reasons why the Dutch decided to abandon Mauritius in 1710'. This part carried 3 marks, one mark for each reason provided. The majority of the candidates were able to provide three correct answers for this item. Some of the correct answers were: 'cyclones destroyed their crops', 'shortage of food', 'price of ebony fell in Holland', 'maroon slaves burnt their houses' and 'rats/monkeys ate their food'.

Item (b)

This item carried 2 marks and candidates had to 'give two reasons why the French took possession of the island in 1715', one mark being allocated for each reason provided. In this part too, many candidates provided relevant answers scoring full marks. Examples of correct answers were: 'to use the island as a stop-over for their sailors', 'to set up a naval base in the Indian Ocean', 'to prevent other countries to take possession of the island', 'there was a safe harbour' and 'to defend themselves against pirates and enemy ships'.

Item (c)

This item was for 3 marks and was divided into 2 parts: **c(i)** and **c(ii)**. This part of the question was about the contribution of Pierre Poivre to spice cultivation.

Item c (i)

This item was a straight forward question where candidates had to name one spice that Pierre Poivre cultivated at the Botanical Garden at Pamplemousses. Most candidates gave a correct answer. Expected answers were 'cloves', 'nutmeg' and 'pepper'.

Item c (ii)

This item carried 2 marks and candidates had to respond to the question 'why was Pierre Poivre interested in cultivating spices'. Many of those who attempted the question were able to secure 2 marks. Examples of correct answers were: 'spices were in great demand', 'it was rare and precious', 'spices were sold at high prices in Europe' and 'spices were expensive and profitable'. One mark was allocated to weaker answers such as 'to get money', 'for trade' and 'for export'.

Question 6

This question which carried a total of 6 marks was on the British period in Mauritius, more specifically on the contributions of Sir Robert Farquhar. Many candidates provided above average responses with a majority securing full marks. However, some candidates left the question blank or wrote one word answers which could not secure any mark. It seems that many candidates are not confident enough to tackle open-ended questions but the underlying reason could be mainly their inability to express their ideas in writing. It is therefore highly recommended that candidates are given the time and opportunity to practise their writing skills under guidance so that they can formulate their ideas in proper English.

Item a (i)

Candidates were required to 'give one reason why Sir Robert Farquhar built more roads in Mauritius'. Some correct answers which were credited were: 'to facilitate the travelling of people', 'to facilitate transportation of goods', 'to link/join different parts of the island' and 'for people to be able to send their goods to Port Louis'. One mark was given to partially correct answers such as 'there were only paths' and 'to travel the island'.

Item a (ii)

For this item, candidates had to name two means of transport in Mauritius during the 19th century. One mark was provided for each correct answer. Correct answers were 'ox cart', 'ox', 'horse', 'horse carriage', 'boats', 'walk on foot', 'bicycle', 'trains' and 'donkeys/mules'. Candidates were able to obtain full marks on this part question.

Item (b)

It was a two-mark item. The question was 'why did Sir Robert Farquhar encourage the cultivation of sugar cane'. In this part also, many candidates were able to obtain full marks. Some answers that were credited were 'sugarcane was resistant to cyclones', 'to produce more sugar for export', 'sugar was sold at high prices', 'sugarcane was a profitable crop' and 'to get more revenue'. Answers which were allotted only one mark were not elaborate enough or not specific to the question: 'to develop agriculture', 'to produce more sugar' and 'other crops were easily damaged by cyclones'.

Question 7

Question 7 carried a total of 8 marks. There were two part questions. Part (a) was on temperature and Part (b) was on rainfall. Part (a) of the question was based on map reading. Candidates were provided with two temperature maps of Mauritius in January and July. Candidates had to fill in a table by extracting information from the maps provided. They were also required to produce a shading on the maps according to the question.

Part question (a)

Item (i): Candidates were expected to draw information from the maps provided to fill in the provided table with the temperatures for Belle Rive in July which was 17°C (which was to be read from **Map 2**) and the temperature of Pamplemousses in January which was 26°C (which was to be read from **Map 1**). A vast majority of candidates got the correct answers.

Item (ii): Candidates were expected to 'shade the area where the temperature is less than 17°C on **Map 2**' for one mark. In this part also, many candidates were able to shade correctly the area that needed to be shaded.

Part question (b)

This part question focused on the formation of relief rainfall based on a diagram. It assessed interpretation as well as labelling skills.

Item(i): Candidates were expected to label 'windward side' and 'leeward side' correctly on Diagram 1 for 2 marks. Most candidates labelled the diagram correctly.

Item (ii): Candidates had to provide the 'cause for the air to rise from Mahebourg to Place A'. Some correct answers were 'the relief', 'increase in height/altitude', 'the Central Plateau' and 'high slopes'. Most candidates managed to secure the mark for this item.

Item (iii): Candidates were expected to explain 'why the SETW are also called the prevailing winds'. Some correct answers are 'they blow most of the year' and 'they blow almost throughout the year'. One mark was allotted to answers such as 'they always blow' and 'they do not stop blowing'. The majority of candidates failed to secure the mark for this item. Prevailing winds is an important concept when it comes to understanding of the SETW and it seems students do not pay much attention to this while revising. The number of candidates who could not answer this item correctly was inconsistent in comparison to other parts of the question.