



PSAC 2023

Grade 6

Modular Assessment
History & Geography

Subject code : **P142/2**

Examiners' Report

Key messages

Candidates should:

- read questions carefully paying attention to the instructions and the key words in the items;
- be encouraged to:
 - listen, read and discuss tropical cyclone bulletins issued by the meteorological services;
 - to develop knowledge of weather conditions in different parts of a tropical cyclone;
 - to develop an awareness of the precautions to be taken before, during and after the occurrence of a tropical cyclone;
- be given opportunities to read, extract and interpret geographical and historical information presented in tables, maps, diagrams, pictures and short texts;
- give examples of the work indentured labourers were doing on sugar cane plantations, the conditions of their settlement and their contribution to the economic development of Mauritius during the British colonial period;
- demonstrate knowledge of the importance of preserving the environment;
- practise a variety of question formats under guidance, communicating and writing down their answers to open-ended questions;
- verify the spelling and revise their answers after they have finished writing.

General Comments

The Grade 6 Modular History & Geography question paper 2023 comprised 7 questions:

- one multiple-choice question with 7 items assessing knowledge and understanding in History and Geography (Question 1);
- three questions assessing skills, knowledge and understanding in Geography (Questions 2, 4 and sub-question 5(1);
- and three questions assessing skills, knowledge and understanding in History (Questions 3, 6 and 7 and sub-question 5(2).

In this paper, candidates were provided opportunities to tackle questions of different difficulty level and assessing different objectives. The questions were set in simple formats, in an accessible English language, for Grade 6 candidates. The structured questions were graded in such a way as to encourage the candidates to attempt the different items.

The majority of candidates showed a fair acquisition of the basic skills and knowledge in the subject. The overall performance was good with a pass rate of 80.49 %. However, the quality of performance in terms of standards of achievement should be improved. Many candidates were not able to answer questions which required higher order skills; as a result, they were not able to score higher grades. To raise standards of achievement, it must be ensured that all pupils are exposed to creative teaching strategies and learning activities so as to meet the curriculum objectives.

Candidates performed generally well on the items in Multiple-Choice Question 1. Some of them did remarkably well. A few candidates even justified why they opted for the correct answer for each item though this was not required. Such a practice may be useful in the classroom when MCQs are used in unit activities or during revision. It would contribute in formative ways to develop a good knowledge and understanding across topics. Poor performance of some candidates in multiple choice items, may be largely due to language difficulties: lack of proficiency in reading with understanding. Candidates should be encouraged to practise multiple-choice items regularly. They should be advised to circle their answers clearly and to avoid choosing more than one option.

Performance in Question 2- the study of tropical cyclones, varied quite significantly between part questions 2(a) and 2(d), which assessed basic skills and parts 2(b) and 2(c), which assessed knowledge with understanding. Performance was better on the three items in part question 2(a) assessing the skills of reading maps. Map 1 showed tracks of major tropical cyclones that have affected Mauritius in the past and part 2(d) was about giving two weather conditions in the eye of a cyclone. Part questions 2(b) and 2(c) assessed the ability to explain why a tropical cyclone is a natural hazard and when a cyclone warning class 4 is issued respectively.

The Indian indentured labourers played an important role in the history of Mauritius after the abolition of slavery. Question 3 assessed the candidates' ability to recall knowledge about the arrival of the Indian indentured labourers in Mauritius such as; the date they arrived; the place they landed in Mauritius; the names of the ports in India where they embarked to come to Mauritius; the specific types of work they did; the payments they received and the reasons why many of them chose to stay in Mauritius after the completion of their contract. It is advised to refer to the notes to Teachers in the Teachers' Book to discuss the reasons why the indentured labourers chose to stay in Mauritius after completing their contract of five years.

Generally, candidates attempted successfully the 'True or False' items in Question 4 set on the positive and negative impacts of our activities on the environment. Environmental problems have become an important issue and much emphasis should be laid on civic actions such as using biodegradable plastic bags, using less or no pesticides, recycling of objects, avoiding illegal dumping, stopping the clearing of forests, and practising organic farming as effective means to protect the environment and our health.

Candidates should be more exposed to both the historical and geographical aspects of Rodrigues. In question 5, they were expected to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application skills when tackling questions on agriculture, which is a very important feature in Rodrigues. More practice should be given to pupils on map work, labelling or shading of required regions or features.

Candidates should develop a keen interest in learning the history of Mauritius especially those features such as museums that form part of our heritage. For question 6, candidates were expected to know the names of important museums, their locations and the story which each museum tells us. Candidates should not confuse the purpose for which the Frederick Hendrick Museum was built with the monument built to commemorate the first landing of the Dutch at Ferney.

The National Flag, the Coat of Arms, and other significant features such as birds, animals, plants, and flowers represent the national symbols of a country. Candidates should know that the national symbols inspire and instill a sense of pride, honour and patriotism in the people of the country. Candidates should learn what the different features of the Coat of Arms represent. Similarly, they should know what the different colours of the national Flag represent.

To enhance the quality of learning, candidates should be encouraged to read questions carefully, identify key words and apply reasoning skills before they attempt an open-ended question. They may further hone their learning and examination skills by asking questions, thinking about why some answers may not be relevant. They should be encouraged to express relevant ideas orally and in writing sentences in English. An inquiry-based approach to learning in core topics has the potential to develop enthusiasm and motivation for deeper understanding and to bring more confidence in writing about ones' own learning.

Specific Comments

Question 1

This question was fairly well done. It comprised seven multiple-choice items which assessed knowledge of facts and terms in Geography (items a, b and c) and History (items d, e, f and g). It carried a total of 7 marks. The history items (e), (f) and (g) proved to be quite challenging to some candidates.

- Item (a) It was the most well answered multiple choice item. The majority of candidates chose the key, option **C**. 'recreational'.
- Item (b) It was well attempted by most candidates. Candidates were required to recall that the growing of one crop on a large area is known as plantation agriculture- option **D**.
- Item (c) This item assessed the ability to identify the natural hazard caused when an earthquake occurs below the ocean floor. It was well attempted by more than three quarter of the candidate population who chose 'tsunami', option **D**.
- Item (d) This item assessed the ability to recall the year when slavery was abolished in Mauritius. It was generally well answered. The correct answer is option **C**-1835.
- Item (e) This was the least well answered multiple choice item as nearly half of the candidate population did not choose the correct answer, option **A**-Sir Abdool Raman Osman. It was important to read the item and the key words **first Mauritian** carefully.
- Item (f) Many candidates opted for the correct answer, option **B** - Jean Georges Prosper. However, the main distractor was option C- Philippe Gentil as the candidates confused Jean Georges Prosper who wrote the national anthem with Philippe Gentil who composed the music of the national anthem. Short biographical notes, old pictures and audio-visual records may foster a deeper knowledge of the respective roles of these people when Mauritius acceded to independence in 1968.
- Item (g) This multiple choice item was not well answered by many candidates who did not know the location of the monument which commemorates the shipwreck of the Saint Gérân, Option **D**-Poudre d'Or.

Question 2

This question carried 9 marks and comprised four-part questions based on Unit 3- Natural Hazards – sub-topic ‘Tropical cyclones’ in Geography.

Item (a) which comprised three parts was based on **Map 1** which showed the tracks of some major tropical cyclones that had affected Mauritius in the past.

Part question 2(a) (i)

Candidates were required to find out in which month there was the highest number of tropical cyclones. It was a fairly easy question and more than 60 % of the candidates got the correct answer - **February**. Candidates had to study **Map 1** to find out that three tropical cyclones affected Mauritius in the month of February, one in January and two in December. However, many candidates could not write February correctly. Feb was also accepted as correct answer though pupils were expected to write the word in full.

Part question 2(a) (ii)

Nearly three quarter of the candidate population was able to score the mark allocated for this part question. Candidates were required to name one tropical cyclone that did **not** pass directly over Mauritius. Candidates had to use their observation skill and follow the track of each tropical cyclone on **Map 1** to answer this item. The correct answer was **Daniella**. Many candidates wrongly wrote Daniella. **Dina** was also accepted as a correct answer.

Part question 2(a) (iii)

For this item, candidates had to find out which tropical cyclone travelled the longest distance before passing over Mauritius. Two options were given. Candidates had to tick in the box showing the correct answer. Candidates had to use their observation and inference skills to answer this question. It was the most well answered part of item (a) and most candidates attempted it well.

Part question 2(b)

(b) Why is a tropical cyclone considered a natural hazard?

[2]

Candidates were asked to explain why a tropical cyclone is considered a natural hazard. Only half of the candidate population were able to give a complete correct answer associating harm caused to people and the environment and they scored 2 marks.

Some good answers were: 'because crops are destroyed and people may die'; 'because it affects people and the environment'; 'damages are caused to houses and crops are damaged'; 'trees are uprooted and damages are caused to roads, bridges, electric wires and electric poles'.

However, a few candidates obtained only 1 out of 2 marks as they limited their answers to harm caused either to people/animals or environment and not both. For example, 'it causes harm to people', 'it causes harm to animals' or 'it causes harm to crops. Moreover, some candidates focused their answers to 'natural' instead of 'hazard'. Only one mark was awarded to 'it is a natural event related to climate'.

More than 40 % of the candidates were not able to score any mark.

Part question 2(c)

This item aimed at assessing the candidates' knowledge about when a cyclone warning class IV is issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Station. This item was not well answered by most candidates and it proved to be the least well attempted part of question 2

Only around 20 % of the candidates were able to give correct answers like: 'when gusts of the order of 120 km per hour or more have been recorded'; 'when violent/strong winds of 120 km / h are occurring'.

Some candidates obtained partial mark as they did not use the correct unit for the recording of winds / gusts – they used mm/h, km/p; km/m; gusts 120 km; strong winds 120.

More than three quarter of the candidate population did not score any mark. A common confusion noted among many candidates was that they misunderstood a cyclone warning

class IV with the occurrence of torrential rainfall. They wrote that a cyclone warning class IV is issued when 100 mm of widespread rainfall occurs in less than 12 hours.

Part question 2(d)

Candidates were required to give **two** weather conditions in the eye (centre) of a tropical cyclone. This item carried 2 marks – 1 mark for each weather condition. The 2 marks were allocated to any two of the following expected answers: ‘clear sky’; ‘calm weather’; ‘no violent winds/light winds’; ‘no heavy rain/light rain’; ‘partly cloudy’, ‘no thick clouds. Nearly 45 % of the candidates were not able to score any mark.

No mark was awarded to vague answers like ‘sun’; ‘dry’.

Many candidates wrote ‘clam’ for ‘calm’.

Question 3

This question which carried 8 marks assessed knowledge and understanding of the life of the Indian indentured labourers in Mauritius.

Part question 3 (a) (i)

Candidates were given a picture of the Aapravasi Ghat as stimulus. They were asked to tick the correct box indicating where the Aapravasi Ghat is located. Three options were given. This part question was the most well answered item of Question 3, with more than 85% of the candidates attempting it correctly by choosing ‘Port Louis’. Nevertheless, some candidates chose the second option ‘Mahebourg’, most probably they were confused with the monument commemorating the abolition of slavery.

Part question 3(a) (ii)

Candidates were given three options and were required to tick the box showing the date on which the arrival of Indian indentured labourers is commemorated in Mauritius. Around 65 % of the candidates answered this part question well. Some candidates ticked the first option, 1st February, which marks the date slavery was abolished in Mauritius.

Part question 3(b)

Candidates were required to name one port from which indentured labourers embarked in India to come to Mauritius. More than half of the candidate population were able to give the name of one of the ports - Bombay, Calcutta, Madras. The new names of the three ports were also accepted. However, no mark was awarded to Bengal and Pondicherry as they were places from which Mahé de Labourdonnais brought skilled workers to build the town and harbour of Port Louis.

Part question 3(c)

Candidates had to describe **two** types of work that the indentured labourers did on the sugar estates. Around 65 % of the candidates gave two correct answers as follows: 'they cleared the land / forests'; 'they removed rocks'; 'they tilled / ploughed the land / soil'; 'they planted sugar cane'; 'they harvested sugar cane'; 'they worked in sugar mills/factories'; 'they carried/loaded sugar cane'.

The two answers given by some candidates were: 'They harvested sugar cane' and 'They cut sugar cane'. This was considered as telescoping and only one mark was awarded to them.

Some candidates could not differentiate between sugar cane and sugar. They wrote: 'They cut / harvested sugar' instead of 'They cut / harvested sugar cane'.

Part question 3(d)

This item on "How much were the indentured labourers paid for their work each month?" was a straight forward question based on recall of fact. Around three quarter of the candidate population were able to score.

Most candidates wrote: 'Rs 5'; '5 rupees'; 'five rupees' as correct answers. Some candidates also gave as correct answer 'Rs 5 for men and Rs 4 for women'. A few candidates did not write the unit 'Rs' and just wrote '5'.

Part question 3 (e)

Candidates were required to give one reason why many indentured labourers chose to stay in Mauritius after completing their contract of 5 years. This item proved to be challenging to many candidates as only 50 % of the candidates were able to score the full 2 marks. Correct responses from candidates were: 'because they had already started a life / a new life in the island'; 'they had the chance to be re-engaged / re-employed and to continue their work'; 'they

thought life was better in the island than in India'; 'they wanted to get more money'; 'they were able to buy land'.

Partial mark was allocated to answers like: 'they were having many facilities'; 'there were jobs in Mauritius'; 'they were given Rs 60 to stay'; 'life was miserable in India'; 'they did not want to go on long / difficult / tiring / disgusting voyage'; 'their wives came to the island'. No mark was allocated to 'it was peaceful and safe in Mauritius'.

Question 4

This question was generally well attempted by candidates who recalled the impacts of our activities on the environment. It was a **True** or **False** type question. Six statements were given. The first one, **Item (a)**, was worked out as an example.

Item (b)

Biodegradable plastic bags are banned in Mauritius and Rodrigues. This statement is **False** because the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags has been banned. This item was fairly well attempted by the candidates.

Item (c)

Rainwater can dissolve pesticides and contaminate ground water. This statement is **True**. This item was fairly well attempted by the candidates.

Item (d)

The clearing of forests protects our environment. This statement is **False** because the clearing of forests is harmful to the environment as it causes a lot of problems such as soil erosion, imbalance in the composition of air, affects the habitats of animals and birds, affects the fauna and flora, amongst others. This item was well attempted by more than three quarter of the candidate population.

Item (e)

Waste dumping is illegal. This statement is **True**. We have no right to dump waste anywhere in the island. This item was well attempted by nearly three quarter of the candidate population.

Item (f)

Organic farming protects the environment and our health. This statement is **True**. Organic farming is a type of sustainable agriculture which involves choosing not to use pesticides and fertilisers. So, it protects both the environment and our health. Nearly 75 % of the candidates successfully attempted this item.

QUESTION 5

This question carried 8 marks. It was wholly based on Rodrigues. It comprised two parts-Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 was a question on Geography while Part 2 was on History.

Part 1 (a) (i)

Candidates had to shade a river valley on **Map 2** (Map of Rodrigues) where market gardening is practised. Eight rivers were shown on the map. Candidates could shade the correct area on any one of the rivers. The correct region to be shaded is mainly near the mouth of the rivers and not at the source. The alluvial deposits are mostly found at the mouths of the rivers.

This item was not correctly answered by many candidates. Some candidates shaded the area between two rivers completely, that is, there was an overlapping in the shading. A few candidates shaded the whole part from the source to the mouth. More than half of the candidate population seems not to have a notion of river valleys where market gardening is practised.

Part 1 (a) (ii)

Candidates were asked to give one reason why market gardening is practised in river valleys. Many candidates did quite well in this item. Some of the correct answers given were: 'because of alluvial soil found in the river valleys'; 'because the land is flat and fertile'; 'because water is available for irrigation' and the candidates scored full marks. Only one mark was allocated to candidates whose answers were partially correct, like: 'the land is flat'; 'the land is fertile'; 'water is available'; 'alluvium / alluvial soil'.

Part 1 (b)

Candidates were required to suggest one measure that the government has taken to help farmers in Rodrigues. A wide variety of good answers was awarded two marks: 'seeds of vegetables are provided to farmers'; 'loan facilities are provided to farmers'; 'regular fruit fly control on crops is carried'; 'veterinary advices and services are provided'; 'scheme to promote bio-farming / organic agriculture / sheltered farming /sustainable agriculture is provided'; 'loan facilities/loan schemes are provided'; 'rain water harvesting scheme is provided'; 'counselling / training to farmers'. More than half of the candidate population scored full two marks.

Only one mark was allocated to answers like; 'loan / loans' and 'government provides medicines'.

Part 2

This part question consists of three items (a), (b) and (c). Candidates had to fill in the blank in each item. Only two options were provided for each item.

Item (a)

(a)	Rodrigues was granted autonomy in the year	
	(1968, 2002)	[1]

The correct option was **2002**. More than three quarter of the candidate population got the correct answer.

Item (b)

(b)	Which bird has become extinct in Rodrigues?	
	(Dodo, Solitaire)	[1]

The correct option was **Solitaire**. This item was the most well answered one for Part 2 with more than 90% of the candidate population getting it correct.

Item (c)

(c) One place of historical interest in Rodrigues is
(St Gabriel Church, Mt Limon) [1]

The correct option was **St Gabriel Church**. More than three quarter of the candidate population got the correct answer.

QUESTION 6

This question carried 6 marks. It aimed at assessing learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and understanding on the Unit 'Our Heritage'. The main focus of the question was on the topic 'Museums'. Part questions (a) and (b) were based on **Picture 2** which showed the Frederick Hendrick Museum.

Part question 6 (a)

Candidates had to tick the correct box to show where the Frederick Hendrick Museum is found. Three options were given. Many candidates ticked the box for Vieux Grand Port which was the correct answer.

Part question 6 (b)

For this item, candidates were required to give a reason why the Frederick Hendrick Museum was built. This part proved to be the most challenging item for Question 6 as more than 50 % of the candidates could not score any mark.

Some of the correct answers which were awarded full marks were: 'it makes us learn about Dutch settlement in Mauritius'; 'it reminds us of / commemorates the arrival of the Dutch in Mauritius'; 'it reminds us how the Dutch lived in the island'; 'to promote heritage tourism'.

Only one mark was allocated to answers like: 'to show valuable things'; 'for future generation to know the past'; 'to commemorate/ know past events/ the first settlers'; 'to remember the history of the island' where no mention was made of the Dutch.

Part question 6 (c)

This item was generally well attempted by candidates. They were required to name another museum found in Mauritius. The most common answers were: 'National History Museum'; 'L'Aventure du Sucre'; 'Blue Penny Museum'; 'Post Office Museum'.

'Mahebourg Museum'; 'Port Louis Museum'; 'Mahebourg Naval Museum' were also accepted as correct answers.

It is worth mentioning that candidates should know the existence of other museums like: 'La Nef Museum'; 'Bank of Mauritius Museum'; 'MGI Folk Museum'; 'S. Bissoondoyal Memorial Museum (Tyack)'; 'Nelson Mandela Centre (La Tour Koenig)'; 'Intercontinental Slavery Museum (Port Louis)'; 'Martello Tower'; etc.

Part question 6 (d)

This part question assessed the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the description/definition of a museum.

(d) A museum is a public (**building, garden**) in which
valuable things such as (**paintings, monuments**)
are kept to be shown to people. [2]

Most candidates worked out this item fairly well.

QUESTION 7

This question carried 7 marks. It was based on the Unit 'Celebrating Independence' and it was meant to assess knowledge and understanding of candidates. Overall, it was well attempted by many candidates.

Part question 7 (a)

Candidates had to complete sentences (i), (ii) and (iii) with correct words of their own as no option was given.

Item (i)

(i) Mauritius is known as the and Key of the Indian Ocean. [1]

The correct answer was **Star**. Nearly three quarter of the candidate population got the correct answer. However, some candidates were unable to write 'star' correctly. They wrote: 'stay'; 'start'; 'stray'.

Item (ii)

(ii) There are two animals on the Coat of Arms of Mauritius: a dodo and a [1]

The correct answer was 'stag' or 'deer'. However, 'sambur' was also accepted as a correct answer. This item was well answered by most candidates.

Item (iii)

<p>(iii) In 1992, Mauritius became a _____, with a President as Head of State. [1]</p>
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The correct answer was Republic/republic. This was the least well answered item of Question 7(a). It was noted that many candidates could not write the word “republic” correctly. No mark was awarded to ‘independent’ and ‘autonomy’.

Part question 7 (b)

Candidates were required to give a reason why it is important for a country to have a Coat of Arms. This part question proved to be challenging to many candidates as they could not express themselves clearly.

However nearly half of the candidate population were able to score full two marks. Some of the correct answers given by candidates were: ‘Gives our country its identity / to have a unique national identity’; ‘develops a sense of belonging /sense of pride/ nationhood /patriotism/ citizenship’; ‘it is a national symbol of a country’; ‘it distinguishes our country from other countries’; ‘it represents pride and honour of the people’.

Few candidates scored partial mark for answers like: ‘to know / remember a country’; ‘to remember history / the past / past events’; ‘pride and honour / citizenship’.

Many candidates did not score any mark for this item. No mark was awarded to: ‘represents independence’; ‘pride’; ‘honour’.

Part question 7 (c)

For this part question, candidates were asked about what the colour **green** represents in the National Flag. Each of the four colours in the National Flag has a significance. Candidates are supposed to know what each colour represents. Reference has to be made to the Teachers’ Book.

Less than 50 % of the candidate population were able to get the full two marks. The correct answers given by most candidates were: ‘it represents the green vegetation’; ‘the abundant vegetation’; ‘the dense vegetation’.

Only one mark was awarded for: 'forests/ trees/ crops/ flora/ nature'; 'agriculture'; 'vegetation' as the answer was not complete.

It was noted that many candidates committed a lot of spelling mistakes in writing the key words.