



# PSAC 2023

Grade 5

Modular Assessment  
History & Geography

Subject code : **P142/1**

Examiners' Report

## Key messages

Candidates should:

- read instructions, questions and items carefully, pay more attention to key words to understand the full meaning of questions and 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 and develop understanding of concepts;
- use the school atlas to locate relief / physical features in different parts of Mauritius and Rodrigues;
- develop observation skills and use inquiry skills to develop the ability to read and interpret maps, diagrams and photographs;
- be encouraged to develop right attitudes and values;
- demonstrate knowledge of the importance of preserving the environment;
- discuss orally answers to open-ended questions with their peers and practise writing them under Educator's guidance;
- check their work and revise their answers after they have finished writing;
- attempt **all** questions

## General Comments

The Grade 5 Modular History & Geography question paper for the year 2023 comprised 7 questions:

- one multiple-choice question with 8 items assessing knowledge and understanding in History and Geography (Question 1);
- one question on the relief features of Mauritius aimed at assessing knowledge and understanding in Geography (Question 2);
- three questions aimed at assessing skills, knowledge and understanding in History (Questions 3, 4 and 7);
- and two questions aimed at assessing skills, knowledge and understanding in Geography (Questions 5 and 6).

The question paper is a one-hour paper carrying a total of 50 marks. For the 2023 paper, the overall performance of candidates improved compared to previous years. Many candidates scored high marks on the whole paper. 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 performed well on questions and items assessing knowledge, mainly in the Objective type questions such as the Multiple-choice questions and one word answers. In general, concepts in History were well answered (Questions 3 and 7) whereas it was observed that candidates struggled when it came to basic geographical knowledge, concepts and skills such as interpretation of maps and drawing information from tables (Question 2 and 5). Short

answer questions were attempted less successfully on historical concepts as well as on geographical concepts where candidates were required to apply knowledge in context.

Candidates faced difficulties to look for plausible reasons why the French settlers developed agriculture and about the main activity of corsairs in the Indian Ocean. For geographical concepts, candidates struggled to explain why the leeward side in Rodrigues receives less rainfall compared to the windward side as well as to give one effect of climate change on rainfall patterns and measures taken to combat climate change.

Candidates should be encouraged to make use of comparison where appropriate. For example: variation in temperature with location of places; variation in rainfall distribution in relation to altitude and location of places. It is important to adopt the inquiry approach using a table with places, temperature and height above sea level to develop understanding and the ability to make deductions and inferences.

To improve performance, a wide variety of pedagogical strategies and resources have to be used as described at the beginning of each Unit in the Textbook.

## Specific Comments

### Question 1

- Item 1** It was well answered by candidates. Candidates had to recall the name of the line of latitude  $66\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N which is the Arctic Circle. However, some candidates chose option A: Antarctic Circle.
- Item 2** It assessed the ability to identify the continent in which the Mississippi River is found. The correct answer is 'North America'. Few candidates chose option D: South America.
- Item 3** It was generally well answered by many candidates. Candidates had to recall the percentage of the Earth's surface which is covered by seas and oceans (70%).
- Item 4** Candidates had to name the lines on a map joining places having the same height above sea level. The correct answer was "contour lines" though some candidates answered "coastlines".
- Item 5** This item was well answered by most candidates. Candidates were required to give another name by which the East Indies are now known. The correct answer was "Indonesia".
- Item 6** Candidates had to identify the explorer who sailed in the Indian Ocean and reached India in 1498. The correct answer was "Vasco da Gama". Some candidates did not take into consideration the year 1498 and opted for Pedro Mascarenhas which was a wrong answer.
- Item 7** This item was well answered. Candidates had to identify the name of a well-known corsair. The correct answer was "Robert Surcouf".
- Item 8** Candidates answered this item correctly. Candidates could easily identify that "Rodrigues" forms part of the Mascarene Islands.

## Question 2

This question assessed knowledge, understanding and map skills of candidates and was based on Map 1- a map of Mauritius showing some main relief features. The question carried 8 marks and was divided into seven-part questions. It was noted that candidates had difficulties in writing the names of mountains, mountain ranges and other geographical terms correctly.


### Item (a) (i)

Candidates were expected to identify the mountain range labeled **E** on **Map 1**. The correct answer was “Moka Range”. “Port Louis Range” was also accepted as correct answer.

### Item (a) (ii)

Candidates were expected to name one mountain in mountain range **E**. Many candidates attempted this question correctly. Marks were allocated for answers such as Pieter Both, Le Pouce, Signal Mountain, Mount Ory or Calebasses Mt.

### Item (b)

Candidates had to identify the relief feature shaded like this  and fill in the blank in the spaces provided. The correct answer was “central plateau”. Some candidates got the answer wrong as they wrote “central ridge” which is a relief feature found in Rodrigues. Other candidates did not notice that two words were required as there were two blank spaces and wrote “highlands” instead.

### Item (c)

Candidates were expected to name the relief feature **K** which is a plain. The correct answer is “Flacq”. It was noted that many candidates were unable to write “Flacq” correctly. Examples of wrong spelling were: ‘Flac’; ‘Flak’; ‘Flake’; ‘Flaq’. Many candidates also identified plain **K** as “Plaine des Roches” for which the mark was not allocated.

**Item (d)**

This item was the most well answered by candidates. It was a multiple-choice item and candidates had to identify the name of river **L**. The correct option was B: Grand River South East.

**Item (e)**

Candidates were required to name mountain **M** by filling the blank and two options were provided. Candidates had to choose between “Tourelle du Tamarin” and “Corps de Garde”. This was well answered by the majority of the candidates. The correct answer was “Corps de Garde”.

**Item (f)**

Candidates were asked to name one dormant volcano in the northern part of Mauritius. Many candidates managed to give the name of one dormant volcano in the northern part. The correct answers were ‘Forbach Hill’; ‘Butte aux Papayes’; ‘The Mount’; ‘Mt Piton’ and ‘Mt Virer’. A few candidates wrote “Trou aux Cerfs, Bar Le Duc or Alma Hill” and no mark was awarded as these dormant volcanoes are not found in the northern part but rather in the central part of the island.

**Item (g)**

This item was a multiple-choice type question. Candidates were required to circle either the letter A or B or C which showed the oldest relief feature in Mauritius. The correct answer was the letter A. The plains and the central plateau had been formed by the youngest volcanic eruptions.

### Question 3

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of facts in History. The question carried a total of 7 marks. The question comprised two parts. Part (a) was about difficulties that Dutch settlers faced in the island while part (b) was based on the activities of the French in the island.

#### Item (a)

Candidates were required to describe two difficulties that the Dutch settlers faced during their stay in Mauritius. This question was well attempted by most candidates. A wide range of answers are found on the Dutch settlement with illustrations in the Grade 5 Part 2 textbook on pages 13 and 14 (Pictures 8 to 13) – associated with the difficulties the Dutch faced. Many candidates successfully gave two correct answers. Some of the correct answers are: Cyclones destroyed their houses/crops; Rats destroyed their crops; Maroon slaves attacked the settlers/ set fires to their houses; The price of ebony wood fell in Holland/in Europe; Lack of food as they killed more animals than necessary; Labour problem as many of the Dutch settlers were not hard working.

No mark was allocated to one-word answers such as “rats; cyclones; fires; slaves” because candidates were required to **describe** the difficulties and enough space were provided to do so.

Some candidates were confused and misinterpreted the question with difficulties that François Leguat faced during his stay in Rodrigues. Consequently, no mark was allocated to answers such as “no other ships came to the island; no other settlers/visitors came to the island; no ships came to provide food/goods; there was no food”.

Some candidates mentioned the difficulties that sailors faced for example “the south east trade winds made it difficult to leave the bay; because of shallow water; presence of coral reefs in the bay”. Here the candidates were referring to difficulties that the harbour of Grand Port represented to sailors. So, these answers were not rewarded.



**Item (b)**

Candidates were required to write down the names of the countries from where the given plants, animals or food items were brought to Mauritius during the French period. The question was presented in a table format and candidates were given the names of the countries in a jumbled list. One additional option was provided in the list of countries to prevent candidates from automatically getting two answers wrong and thus losing two marks. Most candidates generally well attempted this part question. Nevertheless, some candidates wrote Brazil for the country from where coffee was brought and France for the country from where ayapana was brought. It was also noted with concern that candidates wrongly wrote the names of countries although the names of the countries were provided.

**Question 4**

This question assessed knowledge and understanding in History related to various specific aspects during the French period. The question carried 10 marks and some part questions proved to be very challenging even to the average achievers.

**Item (a)**

Candidates had to write the name which the French gave to Mauritius. The correct name was “Ile de France or Isle de France”. Some candidates wrote “Ile de French / Français” instead of “Ile de France”.

**Item (b)**

Candidates had to give two reasons why it was important for the French settlers to develop agriculture in the island. Some correct answers which were given full marks were: “because the population was increasing, so more food was needed; to feed the sailors/slaves/ workers; more settlers came to Ile de France; more sailors were visiting the island; to supply food to ships; to encourage more settlers to come to the island”. Partial mark was given to incomplete

answers such as “to get food; to sell; to trade; to get money: to survive; to export; to get arrack/sugar/meat”.

It was noted with concern that candidates did not read the question attentively. Some candidates gave answers which were irrelevant to the question. The candidates gave answers related to other aspects of history for example, “to carry their trade safely in the Indian Ocean; for food and fresh water; the island was used as a stop—over”. These wrong answers were related to why the French wanted to take possession of the island.

It was also noted that many candidates were not able to write down correctly the key words to answer this part question such as ‘increasing, increase, population’.

#### **Item (c) (i)**

The item carried one mark and was a straight forward question. Candidates had to write the name of the garden in which Pierre Poivre cultivated spice plants. This question was well answered by many candidates. The correct answer was the “Botanical garden of Pamplemousses”. “SSR Botanical Garden / SSR Garden / Pamplemousses” were also accepted as correct answers. However, many candidates could not manage to write ‘Pamplemousses’ correctly.

#### **Item (c) (ii)**

This item carried 2 marks and candidates had to give one reason why spices were cultivated in the island during the French occupation. The most abled candidates were able to give plausible reasons, such as “because spices were sold at high prices in Europe; there was a high demand of spices in Europe; spices were grown only in the East Indies”.

Answers related to the uses of spices were also accepted and were given full marks for example “to add taste / flavour to food; to preserve food / meat; to embalm dead bodies; spices were used to make medicines”.

Only one mark was awarded to answers such as “to cook food; for trade; spices were precious/ rare / scarce; to get money / revenue”.

No mark was awarded to 'to develop the island'.

**Item (d)**

Candidates were required to give the main activity of corsairs in the Indian Ocean. This item proved challenging to many candidates. Few candidates could give the correct answer which was "attack/ and capture British ships and seize their valuable goods".

One mark was given to partly correct answers such as "to attack ships / British ships; to steal valuable goods; to capture ships; to destroy ships / enemy ships".

**Question 5**

This question carried 6 marks and was based on the topic "Climate". Candidates were given a table to study carefully. The table showed three places in Rodrigues namely Plaine Corail, Citronelle and Pointe Canon. The altitude of each place was given in metres in the first column. The second column showed average temperature in January and the last column showed the average temperature in July for each place.

**Item (a) (i)**

For this item, candidates were required to write the temperature in Plaine Corail in January. It was a straight forward question. The correct answer was 27°C. Candidates were not penalised for not writing the unit of temperature. Due to inattention, some candidates wrote the temperature for July.

**Item (a) (ii)**

Candidates were required to find out at which place the temperature was **lowest** in both January and July. The correct answer was Citronelle. Some candidates answered for highest temperature instead of for lowest temperature.

**Item (a) (iii)**

Candidates had to give one reason why the place they mentioned in item (a) (ii) has the lowest temperature. Many candidates could not draw the relationship between altitude and temperature. Few candidates scored full marks for this item. Some of the good answers were “Citronelle is found on higher land; Citronelle is found on the central ridge; the altitude of Citronelle is 275 m; because Citronelle is found on higher land than Plaine Corail; higher places have lower temperatures; it is found on high lands, so the higher we go it is cooler”.

One mark was allocated to partially correct answers where there was no comparison and very short answers provided for example “high/higher land/high altitude/highlands; It is high/highest”.

**Item (b)**

Candidates had to explain why Rodrigues receives less rainfall on the leeward side compared to the windward side. This item proved to be very challenging to the candidates. Pupils should have the ability to deduce that all places do not receive the same amount of rainfall. Rainfall distribution varies due to low or high altitude / windward or leeward side.

Full marks were awarded to the following answers “On the leeward side air descends and warms up, hence less clouds are formed and less rain falls; less condensation on the leeward side occurs, so there is less rain; all the water vapour has already condensed on the windward side and the air descending is dry”.

One mark was allocated to candidates whose answers were incomplete, such as “less clouds are formed/less condensation; less condensation on the leeward side; more moisture on the windward side; air descending on the leeward side”.

No mark was allocated to “SETW prevailing on windward side”.

## Question 6

This question carried 7 marks and was based on a stimulus given stating that *“The Earth is becoming warmer and the climate is changing all over the world”*.

### Item (a)

Candidates were required to give one reason why the Earth is getting warmer. Many candidates could associate the reason with “pollution; air pollution; pollution of the environment; pollution of the atmosphere caused by human activities; ‘factories / vehicles releasing more carbon monoxide in the air; release of greenhouse gases”.

No mark was allocated to “global warming; climate change; more vehicles; more factories; pesticides”.

### Item (b)

For this item candidates had to give one effect of climate change on rainfall patterns. This item proved to be very challenging to many candidates. Many candidates did not pay heed to “rainfall patterns” in the question. Few candidates could express answers in a clear and correct language. Candidates scored full marks for answers such as “some regions are getting more and heavier rainfall whereas other regions are getting less rainfall; more torrential rains are occurring; some regions are getting droughts as less rain is falling; flash floods are occurring; tropical cyclones with stronger gusts and heavier rainfall are occurring; getting 100 mm of rainfall in a short time”.

One mark was allocated for answers where there was no comparison such as “causes floods/flash floods; torrential rainfall/convectional rainfall; violent cyclones; drought / lack of rain / no rain”.

No mark was given to “cyclones; rain; acid rain; floods”.

### **Item (c)**

This item carried 4 marks and candidates had to describe two measures that can be taken to combat climate change. Examples of correct answers were “we must reduce the use of fossil fuels such as oils, coal, gas; we must use more renewable sources of energy such as wind, water, sun; we must plant more trees; we must stop deforestation; we must encourage people to use electric / hybrid vehicles; factories should use filters in the chimneys to reduce dark smoke; carpooling instead of using individual cars; save energy at home by using led bulbs”.

One mark was given to two words or very short answers such as “plant trees; reduce pollution; we can reduce, reuse and recycle; do not burn forests; educate the population”.

No mark was allocated to answers such as “not throw waste / garbage; bury waste; composting”.

### **Question 7**

Question 7 was for 4 marks. Candidates were given a picture showing a place in Port Louis in the past.

#### **Item (a)**

Candidates had to identify and write the name of the place shown in Picture 1. Many candidates could identify the place as “Champ de Mars” and write the name correctly. Nevertheless, some candidates encountered difficulties to write Champ de Mars correctly. Some wrote ‘Camp de Marche’; ‘Senmars’.

#### **Item (b)**

Candidates were asked to write the purpose for which Mahé de Labourdonnais used the place shown in Picture 1 during French rule. Only the most abled and average candidates could answer this part question correctly. Some of the answers that were credited were “for training

of soldiers; for parading of soldiers; soldiers used to march there; to train soldiers to protect the island; for social gathering / entertainment; for shooting grounds”.

Some candidates wrote “trading” instead of “training”; “sailors” instead of “soldiers”; “training of settlers”. Partial mark was allocated to such answers.

No mark was awarded to answers such as “used as barracks; to attack the British; to defend themselves against enemies”.

**Item (c)**

Candidates had to name the recreational activity for which this place is well known today. Many candidates wrote “horse racing” as the correct answer. Some candidates could not write “horse racing” correctly, instead they wrote “house racing; hose racing; horse riding; horse running”.

“The holding of the Flag raising ceremony for the Independence/ Republic Day / National Day” was also accepted as a correct answer.

No mark was allocated to answers such as “for tourists to visit; racing / races / horses / run on horseback”.