



PSAC 2018

Grade 5

Modular Assessment
History & Geography

Subject code: **P142/1**

Examiners' Report

Mauritius Examinations Syndicate
April 2019

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

Subject Code No.P142/1

Key Messages

Candidates must be encouraged to

- read items and questions carefully, paying more attention to key words to understand the meaning of questions;
- use the school atlas to locate and name main physical features on a World Map;
- develop observation skills and use the enquiry approach (asking questions) to develop the ability to read and interpret maps, pictures/ photographs, diagrams, maps and tables;
- work with timelines to understand sequence and chronology of main historical events;
- practise answering questions which assess drawing, labelling and describing a diagram to show understanding of different types of rainfall;
- discuss answers to open-ended questions orally with their peers and practise writing them under guidance.
- check the spelling of vocabulary words and revise their answers well.

General Comments

The PSAC 2018 Grade 5 modular assessment paper for History & Geography was appropriate for the Grade 5 Level. It catered for candidates across the whole ability range. Candidates who were generally well prepared performed well across the paper and many scripts with excellent answers were seen. However, a large proportion of candidates encountered difficulties in interpreting questions and producing relevant answers. The quality of answers from candidates varied though they were legible most of the time.

It was noted that candidates had a propensity to rely on rote learning. This prevented them to answer the questions properly. Such a practice should be discouraged. It prevents them from answering questions properly. It was also noted that some candidates had much difficulty to express their ideas using the English language properly and tended to use French and Kreol words in their answers. Quite a large number of candidates quite often used one-word or two-word answers to answer specific parts of structured questions whilst they were expected to write sentences. Such practices prevent candidates to demonstrate their potential. They would have been able to score higher marks, had they been encouraged to develop their answers using their own words.

Most candidates performed well on the items/questions assessing knowledge. These were mainly in the form of fixed answer type/closed responses. However, all candidates could not tackle, with the same success, the items/questions which were assessing skills, both specific subject-skills and higher order skills such as reasoning and interpreting information presented in different formats.

The main weaknesses concerned the following skills: picture/photograph interpretation (Question 2 (b)), recognising and labeling a time line (Question 3), apply drawing and labelling skills to produce a diagram on the formation of relief rain (Question 5), working with maps of isohyets and isotherms (Question 6).

Specific Comments

Question 1

Question 1 comprised 8 multiple-choice items which assessed knowledge of Geography and History. It carried 8 marks. The first three items were set on Geography topics. Items 4 to 8 assessed History topics.

- Item 1** It was not generally well answered. Many candidates chose option **B**, the Nile, probably because they did not learn about the location of major rivers on the main continents. Some candidates could have confused North America with North Africa.
- Item 2** As expected, it proved to be an easy item to answer. Option **D**, 'road' was the correct answer.
- Item 3** This item was considered to be easy. Candidates could easily identify the crater in **Diagram 1**.
- Item 4** It was well attempted mostly by the high achievers. Weaker candidates were attracted by option **B**, the Dutch. The correct answer was 'The Portuguese'.
- Item 5** It was generally well attempted though some candidates chose 'Arabia' instead of 'Iran' as the modern name for 'Persia'.
- Item 6** Candidates were required to recall in which century Rodrigues was discovered. It proved to be quite difficult. It seemed that even if they knew the date of the discovery of Rodrigues by the Portuguese, they were quite uncertain that they had to match it to the 16th century. The European sailors who discovered the island of Rodrigues were the Portuguese in the early 16th century.

Item 7 This item was well answered by candidates. Most of them knew that Brazil was the country from which manioc was brought to Mauritius.

Item 8 It was mostly well answered by the high achievers. Weaker candidates tended to choose indiscriminately warehouses, hospitals or forts instead of barracks, the place or building used to house soldiers.

Question 2

It contained two sub-questions. Sub-question (a) was a Fill-in-the-Blanks question based on **Map 1**, a world map showing important geographical features. It carried 4 marks. Sub-question 2 was based on **Picture 1** which showed a beach affected by erosion. It carried 3 marks.

Sub-question (a) It was generally well attempted by candidates.

Item (i) It was well answered. It is highly commendable that candidates can recognise and name 'Africa' on a world map.

Item (ii) Some candidates had difficulty in identifying the mountain range as 'The Andes' and gave 'The Alps' as the answer.

Item (iii) This item was attempted successfully. Candidates could easily name the line of longitude 0°: Greenwich or Prime Meridian.

Item (iv) Relatively few candidates could locate and label correctly the Arctic Circle, line of latitude 66 ½ ° N, with letter **C**.

Sub-question (b) Part (i) was fairly well attempted by candidates. Part (b) was generally well answered.

Part (i) Candidates had to mention one consequence of beach erosion shown in **Picture 1**. Many candidates wrote about causes rather than consequences of beach erosion. It was noted that some candidates did not refer to **Picture 1**

and gave irrelevant answers related to the causes of soil erosion (e.g deforestation) and beach pollution (throwing or burning waste).

Part (ii) It was well attempted by candidates across the ability range. Good answers included the following: 'the banning sand removal/ extraction from the lagoon'; 'protection of coral reefs'; 'stop building/removing jetties', 'planting mangroves' or 'trees or grass on the beach'; 'building barrier walls/sea walls' etc. Some examples of Irrelevant answers were given due to a wrong interpretation of the question where candidates thought of 'beach pollution' or 'soil erosion' and then wrongly wrote about the protection of the beach against pollution or the land against soil erosion. Candidates should have paid greater attention to the picture and the key words in the question.

Question 3

This question carried 7 marks. There were two sub-questions. Sub-question (a) was based on a timeline. It carried 4 marks. Sub-question (b) was based on **Picture 2** which showed one spice. It carried 3 marks.

Sub-question (a) Many candidates were not able to say that **Diagram 2** showed a timeline and to complete it with the names of main historical events. Timelines are a useful to locate events and name historical events and to develop understanding of time sequence and chronology.

Item (i) It was well answered mainly by those candidates who scored the high marks overall. Candidates often mentioned 'graphs', 'bar chart' or 'line graph'.

Item (ii) The names of two events were already given as examples on the timeline in **Diagram 2**. Relatively few candidates could write what happened in the years 1598, 1735 and 1810 as important landmarks in the history of Mauritius. Far

too many candidates did not know how to use a timeline to locate and name historical events to match with the years during which they which took place in 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It is advised to encourage more practical work to improve performance on such a question.

Sub-question (b) It was comparatively easier for candidates to identify the spice shown in **Picture 2** and to give two reasons why spices were an important commodity during the times of Pierre Poivre.

Item (i) A majority of candidates answered this item correctly though few had some difficulty in writing the word 'cloves' correctly.

Item (ii) This item was generally well answered. Candidates gave a range of relevant answers such as 'spices were sold at a high price in Europe', 'there was a great demand for spices in Europe', and 'spices were used to add flavour to food', 'spices were used for medical purposes' etc.

When two answers are required, it is advised that candidates avoid writing about the same idea twice. For example, answer (1) 'spices were used to cook food' and answer (2) 'they add taste to food'. One common mistake made by candidates was writing 'to prevent' instead of 'to preserve' food.

Question 4

This question assessed knowledge of history topics and carried 6 marks. Candidates were required to fill in the blanks in parts (a), (b) and (c) by choosing from the list of words. It was generally well attempted. Most candidates were able to score 3 marks or more.

Part (a) proved to be the easiest to tackle. Candidates had some difficulty to answer part (b) correctly. They had to choose two from three important dates to complete the sentences related to the period of the early French settlement (first quarter of the 18th century). Part (c) on dependencies of Mauritius also proved to be quite difficult for some candidates.

Question 5

It comprised five part questions which assessed skills, knowledge and understanding in the Geography Unit 'Weather and Climate' for a total of 10 marks.

Part (a)

It carried 4 marks. Candidates were required to draw a diagram to show how relief rainfall is formed. A list of words was given for labelling the diagram: leeward side, windward side, rising air and descending air. It was fairly well attempted. Most candidates scored 2 marks or more. The quality of the drawings and labelling of some candidates were really remarkable. Some candidates did not label their drawings correctly. For example, they labelled the side facing the prevailing wind correctly with the words 'rising air' but labelled that side with the words 'leeward side' instead of 'windward side'. Practical work through drawing and labelling, in pairs or in groups, would help them to avoid such confusion. Enrichment activities such as viewing animated pictures and videos available on the internet will sharpen their observation skills and help them to communicate better their understanding of the formation of different types of rain.

Part (b)

Two marks were awarded for the correct shading of the two areas which receive more than 4000 mm of rainfall in **Map 2** (a map showing isohyets in Mauritius). One mark was awarded for the shading of one of the two areas where rainfall was over 4 000 mm. Most of the candidates shaded only one area and this resulted in a partial mark. Some candidates did not tackle this question at all. It is important to develop the skill of

shading areas in maps and diagrams in the study of Geography topics. This helps to visualise geographical knowledge and to show understanding of spatial distribution.

Part (c)

It was encouraging to see that most candidates could give one example of a human activity that causes pollution in relation to climate change. The use/burning of fossil fuels by industry and transport was obviously the most common idea given by candidates. Agriculture, cattle rearing and production of CFCs were other acceptable answers since the gases produced by these human activities also contribute to global warming and climate change.

Part (d)

Most candidates were able to identify the renewable source of energy shown in **Picture 3**. Unfortunately, some of them misinterpreted 'source of energy' for 'type of energy'.

Part (e)

There were many good answers which showed a good level of awareness about ways to combat climate change. Examples of relevant ideas included: 'to reduce the use of fossil fuels/coal/petrol', 'to stop polluting the air' and 'to walk or cycle rather than use the car', 'carpooling' etc. However, in some scripts, the responses were not relevant because candidates did not refer to the word 'combat' and tended to give reasons for climate change instead of providing solutions.

Question 6

It carried 7 marks and assessed the topic 'weather and climate'.

Part (a), (i) (ii) and (iii)

It was based on **Diagram 3** which showed the instrument used to measure temperature. It was generally well answered. For item (iii), many candidates found it difficult to recall that mercury or alcohol was the liquid used in the thermometer.

Part (b) (i)

It assessed the ability of candidates to shade the region on **Map 3**, the isotherm map of Mauritius, where **Town X** could be found given that the temperature at that place is 22°C. The higher achieving candidates answered this part successfully. In general, candidates encountered problems in map reading and application of shading skills. A few candidates did not attempt this item at all.

Part (b) (ii)

Candidates who were well prepared on the skills of working with isotherm maps inferred correctly that Tamarin should have a temperature above 26° C and chose option C, 27°C.

Part (b) (iii)

This question discriminated among candidates. Some of them produced excellent answers. However, many candidates were confused between 'highland' and 'lowland' and did not demonstrate good comparison skills producing an answer such as 'Belle Rive is on lowland while Bambous is on highland'. Some candidates also tried to explain the difference giving rainfall as one reason which was irrelevant.

Question 7

It assessed the knowledge and understanding of two topics on the French rule and French settlement in Ile de France. It carried 5 marks.

Part (a), (i) (ii)

Candidates were required to complete two sentences about trade with India and China during the 18th century. Both items were generally well answered. A range of answers were given for the names of trade items that India produced apart from cotton cloth. Fewer candidates could name one commodity which China was well known for producing, apart from silk. Some candidates gave the names of modern products that India and China are producing or exporting.

Part (b)

It was based on Table 1 which showed the number of ships visiting Port Louis in 1769 and 1803, carried three marks. Candidates were required to mention three actions of Mahé de Labourdonnais that made Port Louis become an important port for trade.

This question discriminated well among the candidates: those who could give three relevant ideas were definitely at an advantage. Many excellent answers were produced by candidates. Weaker responses tended to list achievements of Mahé de Labourdonnais haphazardly without paying attention to key words in the question that emphasised on “made Port Louis an important **port for trade**”.