Let the mind manage the body
Que l'esprit gère le corps

PSAC 2017

Grade 6 History & Geography

Rodrigues

Subject Code **No.P142**

Examiners' Report

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

Subject Code No.P142

Key Messages

- Candidates must be encouraged to
  - ➤ read items and questions carefully, paying more attention to key words to understand the full meaning of questions

  - ➤ make the distinction between physical factors and human factors wherever relevant to a topic

  - ➤ use the school atlas to locate human features such as tourist resorts in different parts of Mauritius and Rodrigues

  - ➤ develop observation and use inquiry skills to develop the ability to read and interpret maps, tables, diagrams, and photographs

  - ➤ work with tables of comparison and examples and non-examples to develop understanding of concepts

  - ➤ practise writing on open ended questions assessing understanding and application of knowledge more regularly

  - ➤ check their spelling well and revise their answers after they have finished writing.

General Comments

The year 2017 is a landmark for the end of primary cycle assessment in the context of the introduction of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE). It was the first year of the introduction of the PSAC Assessment and the year of transition for the implementation of the **modular assessment at Grade 5 and Grade 6**. The modular assessment at Grade 6 covered what was taught and learnt in the curriculum on the last two topics of Grade 5 and the first three topics of Grade 6. The question paper was of a duration of 1 hour 45 minutes and contained 10 questions of different formats. The design in terms of the assessment objectives to be assessed in the question paper are as follows:

- Knowledge - 30%
- Understanding – 40%
- Application and specific subject skills – 30%

The overall pass rate in History & Geography was satisfactory, 79.66%. Quite a large number of candidates achieved Grade 1, the highest grade (75 to 100 marks). The majority achieved Grade 2 to Grade 5 levels, that is they scored between 30 and 74 marks.

The scripts of the high achieving candidates showed well developed and clearly written answers which reflected a good grasp of the content and skills in the subject and high standards of learning.

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 the level of understanding. In fact, some of the MCQ items assessing understanding turned out to be discriminators between the achievement of average candidates and high achieving candidates.

Many candidates faced some difficulties and performed rather badly when they were required to interpret information presented in various formats and apply knowledge in context:

- sketch map of a sugar estate where indentured labourers lived in the late 19th century, (Question 6)

- table showing the occupation of slaves on a sugar estate before the abolition of slavery, (Question 7)

- pie chart showing different types of land use in Mauritius. (Question 8)

- Picture 2 showing Port Louis harbour at the beginning of the 19th century (Question 10)

Candidates should be further encouraged to make use of comparisons to differentiate between the meaning of the terms (e.g.' settler', 'slave', 'corsair' and 'free workers'). The best way is to learn the terms in context and to use examples and non-examples wherever appropriate.

To improve performance in structured short answer questions, it is advised to develop the skills of working with documents and data in History (narratives, pictures, maps, tables and graphs) using the enquiry approach and case studies in the study of Geography topics to reach a deeper understanding of the topics and subtopics.

Specific Comments

Question 1

Question 1 comprised 7 multiple-choice items which assessed knowledge and understanding of Geography topics. It carried a total of 7 marks. The items were generally well answered mainly by the high achieving candidates. Item 1 was the easiest item. Item 3 was quite satisfactorily answered. Items 2, 4 5, 6 and 7 proved to be quite challenging to the average candidates.

Item 1   It was based on Diagram 1 which shows climate zones on the globe. It was easy for candidates to identify the zone which is the hottest throughout the year.

Item 2   Candidates were required to correctly identify the name of the tourist resort area in the **East** of Rodrigues. It posed a problem to many of them who chose Mourouk instead of Saint Francois. They could have retained Mourouk because it is a major tourist resort in Rodrigues. The word **'east'** written in bold was the key word to recall Saint Francois.

Item 3   This question pertained to agriculture in terms of inputs/factors. It was well attempted by the high achieving candidates. Other candidates could not make the distinction between the natural factors and the human factor, labour.

Item 4   Candidates were asked which type of farming is practised on the alluvial deposits of rivers in Rodrigues. The correct answer was market gardening, option **C**. Many candidates chose 'plantation farming' or 'mixed farming'. It is not only important to recall the definition of the four types of farming but also to distinguish between their characteristics to have a good understanding of the topic 'Agriculture'. A table of comparison with pictures and pictograms and short notes can be devised as a pedagogical tool for this purpose.

Item 5   This item proved to be somewhat confusing to some candidates since it required a good knowledge of the relationship between temperature and height (altitude) and the ability to read with understanding. It showed clearly that language difficulties may hamper learning and reasoning in geographical study. It is important to follow the inquiry approach (asking questions and reasoning) using a table with places, temperature and height above sea level (altitude) to develop understanding and the ability to make deduction and inferences.

Item 6   It was based on one aspect of tourism. It was not well answered by many candidates. It was important for candidates to read the key word 'ecotourism' carefully and not 'tourism' to be able to answer correctly. The place of ecotourism is found at Anse Quitor.

Item 7 It was related to weather conditions in the centre of a tropical cyclone. Many candidates could not answer correctly and focused on weather conditions during a 'tropical cyclone'. They chose option B, 'windy and rainy' instead of option C, 'clear and calm'. It is an essential learning skill to make the difference between weather conditions in different parts/phases of a cyclone.

Question 2

It comprised 4 multiple-choice items which aimed at assessing knowledge of facts and terms (items 1, 2 and 3) and understanding (item 4) in History. It carried 4 marks.

Items 1 and 2 proved to be relatively easy as expected. Items 3 and 4 were found to be quite challenging.

Item 1 It was fairly easy. It is important that candidates know that the first French settlers lived in Grand Port and not Port Louis.

Item 2 It was well attempted by most candidates who easily recalled that Mahe de Labourdonnais brought carpenters to build the town of Port Louis.

Item 3 Option **C,** a settler, is the correct answer. It proved to be a challenging task for candidates to recognise that Philibert Marragon was a 'settler'. The aim of this item was to assess knowledge of the term 'settler' compared to the terms slaves, corsairs and free workers.

Item 4 Candidates were required to recognise the contribution of Jean Lebrun in the education of the children of freed slaves **after 1835**. They had therefore to apply knowledge of the historical period which relate it to freed slaves. This proved to be particularly difficult. It is important to stress on the outstanding work of Reverend Jean Lebrun for the children of the slaves and free workers and children of freed slaves after 1835.

Question 3

It comprised two parts, Part A and part B, for a total of 13 marks.

PART A

It was a matching type question on the contribution of Mahé de Labourdonnais in the development of the port of Port Louis. Candidates had to correctly match each feature built by Labourdonnais in the port to its use. It was fairly well answered.

Some candidates confused the uses of the specific features shipyard and quay, and grain stores with that of a windmill. To improve the performance of students on this learning outcome, it is recommended to use a map of the port at the time of Labourdonnais, to locate the features and to explain the importance of each one of them. It can also provide a good opportunity to stress that they are found in area of historical importance and rich cultural heritage in the vicinity of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

Part B

Candidates were required to complete **Table 1** with the names of countries from a given list for the products bought by Ile de France at the end of the 18th century.

This question posed some problems to candidates who did not pay enough attention to the instructions given to fill in the table correctly. Some did not complete the table. Some candidates also made copying mistakes.

Question 4

It assessed the subtopic 'rainfall' in the unit Weather and Climate and carried 9 marks. Sub-question 1 contained four part questions, graded in terms of difficulty, based on **Map 1**, a map showing isohyets in Rodrigues.

Sub-question 1

4.1 (a)   the high achievers could easily shade the area on the map receiving more than 1600 mm of rainfall. Many average and slow learners did not answer the question probably because they did not understand what they were required to do.

4.1 (b)   It proved to be particularly difficult for candidates to give the amount of rainfall shown by the dotted lines in map 1. It assessed the ability to make an inference from information already provided in the isohyet map. Only the most able candidates could deduce that the isohyet with dotted lines was the isohyet showing 1400 mm of rainfall

4.1 (c)   A comparatively easy item.

4.1(d)   It proved to be easier than the skills-based items (a) and (b). Candidates had to identify the location of Citronelle which is found on the Central Ridge and that of Plaine Corail on the coastal plain.

Sub-question 2
It was a completion type item on convectional rain. It was fairly successfully attempted.

Question 5

It was set on the topic 'natural hazards' and carried a total of 12 marks. The high ability candidates attempted this question well. Some average learners and many slow learners encountered some difficulties in both sub-questions. Most candidates could easily identify the season when we get torrential rain.

Sub-question 1
It was based on **Table 2**. Candidates were required to classify four natural hazards into two different types: those caused by weather and climate and those caused by movements within the earth.

One example was given for torrential rains caused by weather and climate. It was expected that candidates across the whole ability range would have been able to fill in the table correctly. But, it was mostly well answered by the high achieving and average achieving candidates. Those who were in the lowest ability groups could not differentiate between the two types of causes for the other three natural hazards.

Item 2 (a) (i) was generally well attempted by a great majority of candidates.

Item 2(a) (ii) proved to be difficult for most candidates who could not exactly recall 100 mm of rain in less than 12 hours. Some candidates incorrectly gave1000mm instead of 100mm.

Item 2 (b) (i)

Candidates were required to name one natural hazard caused by torrential rains. The expected answer was floods. Soil erosion and mud flows were also acceptable answers.

Item 2 (b) (ii)

Candidates had difficulties in expressing their answers correctly. Many gave vague and weaker answers such as ' it is dangerous' or 'you can die', one word answers such as 'flooding' or 'dangerous' which could not earn full marks.

Question 6

This question was based on **Diagram 2 – a sketch map of a sugar estate in the north of Mauritius at the end of the 19th century.** It carried a total of 9 marks. The sketch map also showed the sugar estate camps occupied by the Indian labourers and marshy areas amidst the sugar cane plantations. Candidates had to apply their knowledge that poor health conditions were due to the spread of diseases during that period, the risks for the labourers and the reason why a canal had to be built by the owner.

Part (a) was easily answered. Candidates could correctly identify place **X where** the labourers were living on the sugar estate.

Part (b) (i)

Many candidates could name 'malaria' as the main disease affecting the health of workers on the sugar estate. However, spelling mistakes were quite common. Some of them mentioned the 'Chikungunya' disease which was not relevant to the period.

Part (b) (ii)   It turned out to be demanding to ask candidates to think of one reason why there was a high risk for the labourers to be affected by that disease. The answer was the presence of the marshy areas/marshes/marshy land or swamps/swampy or waterlogged areas. This could have been due to the fact that candidates did not understand the term 'high risk'.

Part (c)   Candidates were asked to give one reason why a canal had to be built by the owner. A good interpretation of the sketch map was needed to be able to give the answer. Unfortunately, only a few candidates related this part question with the previous one. The digging of a canal was linked to the disease and the marshy areas. Good observation of information in the sketch map and the application of inquiry skills were required to tackle this part question successfully.

Part (d)   it turned out to be a difficult question. Many candidates did not pay heed to location, that is the north of Mauritius and thought that it was on why railways were built in Mauritius. Many candidates could not make the difference between the transportation of sugar by trains and of sugar cane by trams. They should be encouraged to study sketch maps, diagrams and pictures thoroughly before answering questions.

Question 7

It carried 12 marks. Sub-question 1 assessed the ability to interpret information **Table 3** which shows the occupation and number of slaves on one sugar estate in Mauritius in 1832. Sub-question 2 assessed important aspects of Indian and Chinese immigration in the 19th century.

Sub-question 1
Part (a)

Table 3 was used as an original historical source to provide a relevant context to assess historical skills. It showed that most of the slaves worked as labourers. It was important to describe the kind of work slave labourers did. Slaves obviously undertook different kinds of work but the slave labourers did specific agricultural tasks. Candidates had some difficulty to express their answer to this part question where the word 'describe' was used. Simple answers such as growing or cutting sugar cane, removing rocks and harvesting sugar cane, loading and unloading sugar cane etc. were required. The focus was clearly on the kind of work in the sugar cane fields.

Part (c)
It was generally well answered by the high achieving candidates.

They were able to refer to the table and write carpenters or think of any other relevant job done by slaves in the port such as dock workers, sailors, mason, loading and unloading of goods etc.

Sub-question 2

Map 2 was given as a stimulus to help candidates to focus their answers on the contribution of Indian and Chinese immigrants in the development of Mauritius during the 19th century.

Part (a)

Though it was an easy question, many candidates could not write the name of port X properly. There were frequent spelling mistakes in the words 'Calcutta' or 'Kolkata'. It should be stressed that it is important to develop good spelling of geographical vocabulary such as name of places to promote good geographical literacy.

Part (b)

Many candidates were not able to give the reason why the British brought workers from India in the 19th century. They confused the period with other periods – French period or present day. For example, many candidates wrote on the activities of Indian workers during the time of Labourdonnais.

Part (c)

Candidates were told that there were 1500 Chinese immigrants in Mauritius in 1860. They were then required to write about one contribution of the Chinese immigrants at that time. This was generally well attempted by the high achieving groups who knew that their main contribution was in trade or as shopkeepers in many parts of the island. Some wrote that 'they built China Town' and referred therefore once again on the settlement of the first group of Chinese settlers during the French period.

Question 8

This question was based on Diagram 3 showing land use in Mauritius. It carried 10 marks. Candidates had to study the pie-chart. It required good interpretation skills and application of knowledge in order to be able to answer the question.

This was well done mainly by the high achievers.

Part (a)

Some candidates mentioned the percentage (43%) instead of giving the required answer, "Agricultural Land/ Land Use" or "Agriculture".

Part (b)

Many candidates did not understand the term "built-up areas". Consequently they did not give the expected answers on tourism development, hotels, construction, provision of infrastructure such as roads, etc.

Part (c)

It appeared that candidates had mastered the concept of forest conservation well and most of them attempted this particular question successfully.

Part (d) (i)

Candidates were not able to recall the definition of "wasteland". They confused it with a dumping ground or a landfill site and wetlands.

Some could not write the words "abandoned and neglected" correctly.

The scripts contained quite frequent incorrect words and spelling mistakes.

Part (d) (ii)

Most candidates misunderstood this question. As a result, they used key words from the question to answer. E.g. it may be harmful.

Only the most able candidates could explain well why a wasteland is harmful to the environment.

Question 9

This question carried 12 marks.

Sub-question 1

It was based on two pictures showing changes in types of land use. It was about the conversion of land use which took place over time (2000 - 2015).

Part (a) (i) and (ii)

Candidates could more easily identify agricultural land-use than infrastructural land use

Part (b)

Many candidates could not express their answers about the change in land use clearly. The building of roads to improve transport between various parts of the island was the central idea to be developed.

Sub-question 2

It was related to the use of sugarcane products given in table 4.

Answers related to the use of molasses were well attempted by candidates.

Concerning the use of bagasse, many candidates had difficulty in writing the word "electricity" correctly.

Sub-question 3

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of the concept of 'sustainable agriculture'.

The high flyers showed good understanding of the concept method and described one method of sustainable agriculture.

Other candidates defined sustainable agriculture instead of naming one method.

Question 10

Sub-questions 1 and 2 assessed knowledge of importance of Port Louis at the beginning of the 19th century during the British period. It required candidate to demonstrate a good observation of Picture 2 to be able to interpret it well. The obvious answer was the presence/number of ships.

Some candidates did not give answers related to the importance of the port but they wrote about the existing facilities in the harbour instead.

Sub-question 3

Candidates generally lacked the skills necessary to read and interpret a map showing the historical development of Port Mathurin from beginning to present day (Map 3).