PSAC 2020-2021

Grade 5
Modular Assessment
History& Geography

Subject code: **P142/1**

Examiners' Report

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

Subject Code No. P142/1

Key Messages

Candidates must be encouraged to:

- pay careful attention to what each question is asking them to do;

- always indicate units of measurement;

- write names of places and vocabulary words correctly;

- work with tables and graphs particularly 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 question paper for the Grade 5 modular assessment is a one-hour paper. It carries a total of 50 marks. In 2021, the paper consisted of 7 questions. The overall performance of candidates was quite good. The mean mark was 27 out of 50 marks with girls performing slightly better than boys. A large number of candidates scored high marks on the whole paper.

Candidates did well on questions and items assessing knowledge such as multiple-choice and matching type questions/items as well as very short answer questions which require one-word answers (Questions 1, 2 (b), 4 (b) and 5 (b). In general, questions assessing concepts in History were well answered (Questions 4 and 5 and 6) whereas it was observed that candidates struggled when it came to basic geographical concepts and skills such as map reading and interpretation, calculating straight line distances, reading direction and shading as well as using information from maps (Questions 3 and 7). Structured short answer questions on historical facts and concepts related to early Europeans in the Indian Ocean, the Dutch settlement and French settlement were attempted more successfully than those assessing geographical concepts and map interpretation. However, Question 2 on the topic volcanoes proved to be challenging for candidates though the first part on labelling a volcano in eruption seemed pretty straightforward and simple. Definitions of the key terms such as 'magma' and 'tuffs' were also not well attempted. More practical work and written work are required to label maps and diagrams properly and to understand the requirements of different parts of structured questions.

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Specific Comments

Question 1

Item 1	It was well answered by candidates. Candidates had to recall the name of the line of longitude 0°
Item 2	It assessed the ability to identify the continent which borders the Indian Ocean. Most candidates chose the correct answer, Asia.
Item 3	This item was answered correctly by most candidates. They were required to choose the correct term which describes a large area of flat and high land.
Item 4	It was well answered by most candidates. They had to define the term isotherm. Most of them identified the correct answer 'a line joining places having the same **temperature**'.
Item 5	Candidates answered this question correctly, except for a few wrong answers. They had to identify the island named by the Portuguese from the options provided. The correct answer is Diego Garcia.
Item 6	Many candidates did not choose the correct answer, Wolphart Harmensen, for the name of the first **Dutch** sailor to land in Rodrigues. Instead, they chose option A, Diogo Rodriguez, the Portuguese sailor after whom the island of Rodrigues was named. It is important for candidates to read the questions properly and to pay particular attention to the key words written in bold
Item 7	This item was about the country from which manioc was introduced in Ile de France. It was answered correctly by a vast majority of candidates. The correct answer is Brazil.
Item 8	Most candidates chose the right answer. The first settlement in Rodrigues was built by François Leguat.

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Question 2

This question assessed knowledge and understanding as well labelling skills on the topic 'volcanoes'. It carried a total of 9 marks and comprised four parts. Candidates did quite well on the labelling part question though they had some difficulties in writing correctly the key terms for the features identified in the diagram. However, they did not perform as expected on part (c). Many wrongly described 'magma' as lava inside the volcano instead of hot liquid rock or molten rock. Part (d) about the definition of 'tuffs' proved to be the most challenging part question.

Item (a)

Candidates were expected to label parts of a volcano in eruption. Part A, the crater, was given as an example and candidates had to label Parts B to E. Overall, candidates were able to tackle this item successfully though some notable confusions were found. Some candidates confused between 'lava' (Part E) and 'magma reservoir' (Part B). Another common mistake was the labelling of Part D as 'basalt' instead of 'volcanic bombs' and Part C as 'volcanic bombs' instead of 'ash and dust'. A relatively high percentage of candidates wrongly spelt the terms, more particularly the term 'volcanic bombs.

Item (b)

This item was a fill-in-the-blank item and assessed the ability to name the rocks which are formed when lava cools down. The answer is 'basalt'. It was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Yet, it is important to draw the attention of candidates to frequent spelling mistakes such as 'bazal', ' basal', ' baslat', 'balsat', 'balsalt' among others.

Item (c)

Many candidates could not provide an accurate definition of 'magma'. Many were only given partial marks for this part. Some common mistakes were defining magma as 'hot lava', 'hot liquid' or only the word 'molten'. Many used the term 'lava' to define magma instead of using 'hot molten rocks'. Lava is formed outside the volcano whereas magma is found inside a volcano.

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Item (d)

Candidates were expected to provide a good description of the formation of' tuffs'. This part proved to be the most challenging part of the question. Many candidates provided only a partial description, omitting the key word 'solidified' in the description.

Tuffs are volcanic ash and dust deposits which have solidified.

Question 3

This question comprised 5 items and carried a total of 5 marks. Each item carried 1 mark. The question assessed the application of geographical skills of candidates related to map reading. Candidates had to study **Map 1** carefully and attempt items (a) to (e). Part (c) proved to be the most challenging whereas candidates fared well in parts (a), (b) and (d).

It was noted with concern that candidates displayed a relatively poor acquisition of the geographical skills assessed in this question. Few candidates were able to score the maximum marks in this question. It is recommended that more opportunities be given to practise the basic geographical skills so that they can improve their performance in Geography. Candidates are expected to apply geographical skills such as map reading, interpretation of isolines (contour lines, isotherms, isohyets), reading directions properly and measure distances correctly using the given scale.

Item (a)

Candidates were expected to measure the approximate distance between Pointe Pêcheurs and Pointe Marron on the map using the scale. Most candidates were able to answer correctly. Some candidates did not write the unit of measurement in their answers and wrote only 1/2 instead of 1/2 km.

Item (b)

Most candidates gave the correct answer and thus displayed the skill of interpreting the key to identify the mountain peak. They provided the correct height though in this case also many did not insert the unit of measurement (m) and only wrote 543 instead of 543 m.

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Item (c)

This part of the question proved to be more difficult than expected. Many candidates could not find the direction of Le Morne village from the mountain peak. The correct answer was South East. It was noted that candidates did not use the North Point arrow correctly to read the direction of Le Morne Village from the mountain peak.

Item (d)

This item was well answered by a vast majority of candidates. Candidates had to circle the answer after making the deduction that Trou Chenille was found 'below 50 metres.

Item (e)

In this item, candidates were expected to shade the area between the contours 100m and 200m. Most candidates identified the area correctly but shaded only part of it. There were candidates who did not identify the area between 100m and 200m on the mountain slopes. This also showed poor skills in reading and interpreting contour lines.

Question 4

This question carried 7 marks and was about the Europeans in the Indian Ocean and why they used Mauritius as a stop-over. Candidates fared well in general on this question though it was noted that writing in proper English to express their ideas was a major shortcoming.

Item (a)

The modern name for the East Indies is Indonesia. Most candidates gave the right answer but with quite a large number of spelling mistakes (e.g. 'Indonyseea' and 'Indonnaisa'). Wrong answers included India, Burma and Malaysia.

Item (b)

Candidates were expected to provide the names of two spices in which the Europeans traded. Relevant answers included nutmeg, cloves and pepper. Once again there were many candidates who misspelt the spice names for e.g. 'colve', 'gloves', 'natmug', 'peper'.

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There were a few cases of candidates who tended to write their answers in French and Creole for e.g. *canelle, poivre and elaiti.* This practice must be discouraged.

Item (c)

Candidates were expected to give one reason why spices were important long ago. This item was well answered as they were able to give relevant answers such as 'to preserve meat' and 'to add flavour/taste to their food'. However, partial marks were given to answers which were very brief and vague such as 'to cook' and 'to eat'. A significant number of candidates confused the words 'preserve' with 'prevent' and 'store' with 'reserve'.

Item (d)

Candidates were required to give two reasons why Portuguese sailors used Mauritius as a stopover. Candidates scored very well on this part. Most candidates were able to provide correct answers such as 'to replenish food and water, 'to rest' and 'to repair their ships'. A few candidates confused the Portuguese explorers with the Dutch sailors and lost marks for irrelevant answers such as 'to build forts', 'to defend themselves' and 'to hide from enemies.

Question 5

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of the Dutch settlement and activities of Dutch settlers in Mauritius. It carried 7 marks and comprised three part questions. It was fairly well attempted by candidates with a large number of candidates scoring at least 4 marks.

Item (a)

Candidates were required to give the name of the fort built by the Dutch at Vieux Grand Port. Many candidates were able to recall the name of the fort but unfortunately many of them could not write the full name 'Fort Frederik Hendrik' properly.

Item (b)

This item was about the natural advantages at Vieux Grand Port. Candidates had to match the natural features FLAT LAND, THE BAY and ANIMALS in Column A to their corresponding advantages in Column B which were TO GET FRESH MEAT, TO BUILD HOUSES, TO GET BUILDING MATERIALS and TO KEEP THE SHIPS SAFE. One extra option was provided in

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Column B to prevent candidates from getting two answers wrong and losing two marks. This item was generally well answered and candidates were able to get three marks. However, a few candidates wrongly matched 'flat land' with 'to get building materials'.

Item (c)

The part question was structured in two parts: part (i) and part (ii). It was about the uses of the ebony logs and the reason why they were sold at high prices. Some confusions were noted in the scripts of some candidates who mixed up their answers to Part (i) and Part (ii). This suggests that candidates have some difficulties to distinguish between giving one 'use' of ebony logs in Holland and 'giving one reason' why they were sold at a high price. More practice is required to answer such questions.

Part (i)

The first part of the question was well answered by most candidates whereby they had to give one use of ebony logs in Holland. The majority of candidates gave a correct answer. A few candidates seemed to have paid no attention to Holland and answered 'building of houses' and 'to repair ships.

Part (ii)

In this part of the question candidates had to provide one reason why ebony logs were sold at high prices. Many candidates could not score full marks in this part and many gave incorrect one-word answers such as 'rare', 'endemic', 'unique', 'precious' and 'special' or 'found only in Mauritius'. Other candidates tended to give high price as a reason which was a rephrasing of the question itself and they were penalised.

Question 6

This question carried 8 marks and was divided into four parts (a), (b), (c) and (d) for 2 marks each. The question was about the French possession of Ile de France - items (a) and (b), and the contribution of Sir Robert Farquhar in the development of the island - items (c) and (d). Candidates scored fairly well on all the items.

Item (a)

Candidates had to give one reason why the French decided to take possession of Mauritius in 1715. Most answers were around the safety to carry trade. However, some answers were not credited with marks. For example, some candidates wrote 'to attack/attacking the British ships' as a reason. This was a wrong answer.

Item (b)

Candidates had to give one reason why the French developed agriculture in Ile de France. Many answers were vague or incomplete and were awarded only partial marks; for e.g. 'for food' and 'for sailors/slaves'. It was necessary for candidates to put emphasis on the idea of feeding more people or to meet the needs of an increasing number of settlers, workers/slaves.

Item (c)

Candidates had to provide one reason why sugarcane cultivation was encouraged by Sir Robert Farquhar. This part was well attempted. Candidates had difficulty in writing the word 'resistant' to cyclones properly.

Item (d)

Candidates had to provide one reason why Sir Robert Farquhar built the main road from Port Louis to the south of the island. In this part too, most candidates managed to score only partial marks as they could not develop their answers properly. Candidates should be encouraged to use words like 'easier, faster, and safer' to qualify their answers to get full marks.

Question 7

Question 7 carried 6 marks and was divided into four parts (a) to (d). Candidates were required to display geographical skills by interpreting an isohyet map of Mauritius and to apply knowledge gathered in the topic Weather and Climate to answer parts (c) and (d). In general, it was a question that was well attempted mainly by high achievers. Average candidates experienced some difficulties in answering items (c) and (d).

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Item (a)

Candidates were expected to read and interpret **Map 2** to give the amount of rainfall at Rose Belle, 3000 mm. It proved to be relatively easy for the majority of them got the correct answer. It was noted however that some candidates were careless and wrote 300 mm instead of 3000 mm.

Item (b)

Candidates were required to shade the region receiving less than 800 mm rainfall on the map. It was the part west of the isohyet 800 mm at Médine. It was generally well done by the high achieving candidates. The shading was quite haphazardly done by average candidates. More guidance is required in applying the skill of shading on relief maps with contour lines.

Item (c)

Candidates were expected to give one reason why Curepipe experiences more rainfall than FUEL as shown on the isohyet map. The map does provide a hint to the answer by providing the location of both places. Many candidates got this part correct with answers such as 'Curepipe is found on the Central Plateau', 'Curepipe is found on higher land than FUEL' and 'FUEL is found on lower land/plains whereas Curepipe is found on a plateau'. Some very good answers that explored the idea of cooler air resulting in more condensation at Curepipe were also noted. However, many candidates still confused between height of land and location on leeward and windward sides when comparing rainfall at Curepipe with FUEL. This is a wrong interpretation.

Item (d)

For this item, candidates were expected to explain why more rainfall occurs in summer than in winter in Mauritius and they were expected to elaborate on hotter season/ higher temperatures causing more evaporation. Many good answers were noted for this part.

However, candidates who explained why there was 'less rainfall in winter' rather than explaining why more rainfall occurs in summer could not be awarded marks.