



PSAC 2021- 2022

Grade 6 Modular Assessment History & Geography

Subject code : P142/2

Examiners' Report

Key messages

Candidates should:

- pay particular attention to the command words identify, name, give one reason, describe and explain;
- learn to identify and understand the meaning of key concept words and vocabulary words such as ecotourism, dumping, household waste, harmful, flash floods, historical site and museum and show knowledge of places (e.g. Rodrigues, Port Louis, plantations);
- be encouraged to work with maps, diagrams and pictures and apply such skills in relevant geographical topics such as 'land use', 'agricultural land use', 'natural hazards' and 'our heritage';
- learn to give examples of the types of work slaves did in Port Louis and on plantations and of different occupations they engaged themselves in the various places where they settled after the abolition of slavery;
- be given more opportunities to communicate and share their ideas orally and in writing, using proper vocabulary and grammar as well as correct spelling to enhance the quality of their answers to open-ended questions.

General Comments

The Grade 6 Modular History & Geography question paper 2021-2022 comprised 7 questions:

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

Candidates were given various opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in tackling the different tasks set in this paper. The questions were set in simple and attractive formats, in an accessible English language for Grade 6 candidates, and were graded in such a way as to encourage them to attempt items/part questions in any part of the paper, from Question 1 to Question 7, the last question.

The majority of candidates showed a good acquisition of the basic skills and knowledge which were assessed. Indeed, the overall performance of candidates has significantly improved compared to previous years. The pass rate has reached 81.26%. Undeniably, it is encouraging to note that the performance for 2021-2022 reflects adequate teaching and learning strategies, successful adjustments to achieve learning gains and allocation of sufficient time for revision. Such strategies definitely bear their fruits when they are closely linked to the curriculum objectives and learning outcomes defined in the teaching and learning syllabus and related curriculum materials (textbooks and other resources for Teachers and Pupils).

Candidates tackled quite successfully Multiple-Choice Question 1, Question 2 on agricultural land use in Rodrigues based on a diagram from the curriculum, and Question 7 which assessed facts related to the 'independence' of Mauritius and the 'autonomy' of Rodrigues and knowledge of our common historical heritage. They were able to identify the types of waste materials which can be recycled from the pictures (and a list of words provided to them and from which to choose). This shows that there is a good level of awareness about waste in terms of sorting and recycling which is encouraging for those who wish to take initiatives for separate collection and treatment at recycling facilities.

However, it is felt that despite, their willingness to engage and achieve more success in the subject, many candidates (probably living in disadvantaged social environments) still continue to experience serious obstacles and difficulties in writing in English, using proper vocabulary, grammar and spelling. This prevents these candidates from expressing their ideas coherently and accurately even if they have understood the questions and known the answers. For example, they were not able to write short sentences using relevant vocabulary words to describe two ways in which the dumping of waste is harmful and to explain why some types of plastic bags have been banned in the Republic of Mauritius (Question 3).

Candidates answered well the 'True or False' items in Question 5 set on the 'life of the people in Mauritius in the 19th century. However, it was expected that more candidates would be able to write confidently their answers related to the first part of the question, part question (a) of Question 4, related to aspects of slavery. This could have been due to more emphasis being put on recalling the types of work done by slaves on plantations in general, and not enough on those specific to slave labour in Port Louis, where many of them lived and developed the port and the town.

It is advisable to provide more support to pupils so that they understand that the conditions of work and living of slaves were much harder on plantations and that most of the freed slaves preferred to move to Port Louis and its suburbs to live and work rather than stay and work on plantations after the abolition of slavery.

Another difficulty that candidates had to face was writing clearly and accurately about how freed slaves earned their living when they went to live in the interior parts of the island. It was important to read well the question and the keywords 'interior parts of the island' and to apply good reasoning skills, thereby eliminating fishermen who went to settle on the coasts and dockers/sailors in the port (e.g. sailors, dockers). The expected answers were small cultivators, farmers, market gardeners, hunting/hunters, planters, rearing of animals, etc. However, answers such as building houses, building roads, carpenters, hawkers, domestic servants, vegetable sellers, tailors and artisans were also accepted.

To enhance the quality of learning, candidates should be encouraged to read questions carefully, identify keywords 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 if they do not focus

on key words in questions, expressing relevant ideas orally and 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 one's own learning.

Specific Comments

Question 1

This question comprised seven multiple-choice items which assessed knowledge of facts and understanding of terms/concepts in Geography (items a, b and c) and knowledge of facts in History (items d, e, f and g). It carried a total of 7 marks. It was generally well answered by candidates

- Item (a) It was well answered. Candidates were required to recall the type of land use for land used to build houses.
- Item (b) It was well attempted by candidates. A few candidates chose option **A**, a factory, as the answer. They did not pay heed to the word 'converted into'.
- Item (c) This item assessed the ability to identify one site of ecotourism. It was correctly answered mostly by the high achievers. Other candidates could have confused the term 'ecotourism' with 'heritage tourism' and chose indiscriminately the Blue Penny Museum or the Slave Route monument.
- Item (d) This item was well answered. Candidates could easily recall that soldiers were responsible for the protection of Ile de France.
- Item (e) Many candidates did not choose the correct answer, option **A**, India. This could have been due to the general tendency to learn to recall Pondicherry and Bengal as places, rather than India as the country, from which free skilled workers were brought by Labourdonnais to develop Ile de France.
- Item (f) The vast majority of candidates identified 'yellow' as the colour which represents the 'golden sunshine' in the national flag. It is noteworthy that the learning outcome 'Explain the significance of the four colours of the national flag' in the syllabus is thoroughly covered. It aims to inculcate a sense of belonging and to instill a sense of pride through learning about national symbols.

Item (g) Candidates were asked to choose the name of the music composer of the national anthem. The correct answer was option **C**, Philippe Gentil. This item was well answered only by those candidates who were able to make the difference between the music composer and the author of the national anthem. Many candidates confused Philippe Gentil who composed the music with Jean George Prosper who wrote the national anthem. Collection of short biographical notes and pictures will definitely promote better understanding of the respective roles of these two Mauritians.

Question 2

This question carried 7 marks and comprised three-part questions based on a diagram showing different types of farming in Rodrigues. Three learning outcomes were assessed in this question, namely 'define terms associated with agriculture/farming', 'describe the types of farming by interpreting pictures and diagrams' and 'describe some factors affecting farming'.

It was generally well answered. It was essential for candidates to (i) observe carefully the different landforms and their natural features; (ii) read the relevant information provided on how land is used for agriculture in **Diagram 1**; and (iii) show the ability to identify and explain the types of farming shown.

Part question (a)

Part (a) Candidates were required to name the type of farming carried out in area **X**. It was generally well answered. However, the word 'pastoral' was sometimes not written correctly. Examples were: pastrol, pateral, pasetorel and patoral. Two examples of wrong answers were 'mixed farming' and 'grazing land'. The latter was copied by weaker candidates from the diagram.

Part question (b)

Candidates were told that market gardening is carried out in area **Z**.

Item (i): They were asked to give the definition of market gardening. Full marks were awarded for the two key ideas 'growing of vegetables/crops (and flowers and fruits)' and 'for selling/sale'. Answers such as 'the growing/plantation of crops/food crops or selling' and 'growing of vegetables (sometimes with examples like tomatoes, cabbage, onions, carrots etc.) for sale' were also awarded full marks. Some candidates were able to give

only a partial definition such as ‘growing of crops/vegetables’(a limited interpretation of the information in area **Z**), ‘growing vegetables in the same place’, ‘selling of fruits, flowers and vegetables’ or ‘vegetables are sold/for selling’.

Some candidates showed a real understanding of the term ‘market gardening’ using their own words: ‘growing and selling of crops’, ‘a farmer who plants crops and then sells it’, ‘we grow crops then we carry them to the market’ and ‘fruits and vegetables are planted which are sold in markets, supermarkets, and tourist hotels’. This shows good pedagogical practice which should be encouraged.

Wrong answers such as ‘grow crop on large scale’ and ‘grow crops on large scale for sale’ clearly show that no clear distinction was made between ‘plantation agriculture’ (which is practised in Mauritius) and ‘market gardening’, the main type of commercial farming in Rodrigues.

Item (ii): Candidates were required to name two crops grown in area **Z**. This proved to be very easy. It was based on a good observation of the plots of land in this area on the map and copying correctly the names of crops/vegetables.

Item (iii): Candidates were asked to give one reason why the crops named in area **Z** are grown there. Most of them answered this question successfully by giving a correct interpretation of the diagram about the natural conditions favourable for market gardening in area **Z**. As expected, they focused their answers on the presence of flat alluvial land or alluvial deposits, fertile land/soil and the stream/river offering water facilities/ for irrigation. Flat land only was also awarded one mark. Unfortunately, the idea that area **Z** is in a lowland or is a lowland could not be accepted as a correct answer. The accurate geographical characteristic is that of a flood plain (flat land) inside a river valley.

Part question (c)

Candidates who attempted successfully this part question were able to locate area **Y** on **Diagram 1** and to explain what has been done to the land to allow the cultivation of crops such as maize and sweet potatoes: terraces have been built (cut or made) on the sloping land. Candidates made a few spelling mistakes which should have been avoided such as ‘teraces’, ‘terraceres’ and ‘terases’. Some candidates who provided a short answer in their own words based on a good observation such as ‘the land was cut’ were also awarded one mark.

Question 3

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of types of waste, their impacts on the environment and health as well as the banning of some types of plastic bags.

Candidates had no difficulty to choose from the list of words to identify the three types of waste shown in the pictures. Those candidates provided a range of interesting answers on the impacts of household waste dumping and the banning of some types of plastics.

Part question (a)

Candidates were shown pictures of three types of waste that can be separated and sorted for recycling. They could easily identify the three types of recyclable waste using the list of words given. These three types of waste were glass bottles, food waste and metal cans.

Part question (b)

A large number of candidates answered this part question well by providing one or two ways in which the dumping of household waste can be harmful. Examples of correct answers were 'it attracts pests/insects/mosquitoes/harmful animals', 'it is an eyesore', 'it causes bad smells', 'it causes pollution of the environment', 'it affects health' etc.

Some candidates would have done better had they well understood the meaning of 'dumping of household waste' and the key word 'harmful'. They would have avoided answers such as 'to make compost' or 'it gives fertile soil'. In such cases, it was clear that the concept of household waste dumping as being a harmful practice to be discouraged was not well understood.

Examples of other irrelevant answers were 'it causes wasteland', 'by plastic bags', 'by glass bottles', 'burning of waste emits a large amount of CO₂', 'it cleans the land'.

An answer such as 'mosquitoes are being formed' probably shows some understanding of one harmful effect of household waste dumping which was not clearly expressed in writing.

Part question (c)

This part question assessed the ability to explain why some types of plastic bags have been banned in the Republic of Mauritius.

It was well answered by candidates who were aware of the harmful impacts of plastic bags on the environment. Many candidates focused their answers on plastics which are non-biodegradable and therefore a source of pollution of the environment. They showed an effective understanding of the term 'non-biodegradable' often stating that 'they take a long time to decay/ they do not decay'. Some candidates were able to write an outstanding answer such as 'they do not decay easily and contain toxic substances which may cause pollution of the environment'. The answer 'plastic bags block drains and harm the environment' was also an accepted. Some candidates thought about the purpose of the banning of plastic bags which are not recyclable such as 'to reduce pollution' or 'to reduce the amount of waste'.

A partial mark was given to the answers 'plastic bags are dangerous' and 'they do harm to the environment'.

It is worth noting that the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags was banned in 2014 in Rodrigues and, two years later, in 2016 in Mauritius. This concerns their importation, manufacture and sale to consumers.

Question 4

This question comprised six-part questions and carried a total of 7 marks. It aimed at assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding of important aspects of slavery in Mauritius. Each part question, except part question (a) requiring two distinct answers, carried one mark. Candidates fared better on part questions which assessed basic knowledge - how runaway slaves were called, reasons why they ran away, places where they went to hide, and the date on which slavery was abolished. They encountered some difficulties to describe clearly one type of work done by slaves on plantations and another type of work in Port Louis, and to explain how he freed slaves who went to live in the interior parts of the island earned their living after 1835. To answer these two part questions, it was important to realise that the type of work done by slaves was not generally the same on plantations as in the town/port during slavery. The type of work done by freed slaves was also different in Port Louis and its suburbs from those carried out on the coast and in the interior parts of the island.

Part question (a)

There were many possible answers to this part question.

(i) Candidates easily recalled one type of work done by slaves on plantations such as planting/growing of sugar cane', 'harvesting sugar cane/crops', clearing of land/forests' 'tilling the land/soil', and 'removing rocks to grow crops.

(ii) Many candidates were also able to name or describe one type of work done by slaves in Port Louis such as 'building of roads', 'developing/building the town', 'developing/building the harbour', and 'loading and unloading of goods. Some answers were more specific such as 'building houses/warehouses.

However, some candidates who answered well part (i) continued to write about work done by slaves in agriculture in part (ii). This could have been due either to a lack of focus on the keywords 'plantations' and 'Port Louis' or a lack of familiarity and practice in answering such a question. It is advisable that candidates read such questions carefully and revise their answers to make sure that they have avoided providing the same answers to different questions.

Part question(b)

It was generally well answered. The most frequent answers were that slaves were ill-treated or severely punished for small mistakes. The idea that they had to work from sunrise to sunset denotes long hours of hard work and was an acceptable answer. However, the answer 'their life was very bad' (instead of hard) is rather vague and should have been avoided. Examples of wrong answers were: 'they did not want to work' or 'they did not work' or 'they were not allowed to wear shoes'. It should be learned that slaves were denied basic human rights. This should be explained using relevant examples of harsh treatment by the masters to understand why the slaves chose to run away. This reaction is a testimony of a form of resistance to severe conditions of work and living.

Part question(c)

This part question was generally well attempted by candidates who recalled that runaway slaves were called 'maroon slaves. Weaker candidates were not penalised for making slight spelling mistakes such as 'marrone', 'maron', 'marun'. Candidates were also not penalised for writing '*esclaves marrons*'. Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the question. They did not earn mark for giving one of the names of well-known slaves such as Diamamouve, Machabée and Mangalkhan as answer.

Part question (d)

As expected, candidates thought mainly about forests, caves, gorges, and mountains as hiding places of runaway slaves. Some candidates were more knowledgeable about these hiding places and wrote 'deep/dense forests', 'tops of mountains', 'deep caves' or 'deep gorges'. Candidates also earned mark for giving 'Le Morne/Le Morne Brabant/Le Morne Mountain'. Candidates who lacked proper writing practice wrote '*Le Monde*' instead of 'Le Morne' and could not, therefore, be awarded any mark. They should be encouraged to write correctly 'Le Morne' which is the name of a World Heritage Site.

Part question (e)

It proved to be quite challenging for candidates to say how freed slaves who went to live in the interior parts of Mauritius earned their living. Many candidates tended to give occupations which were practiced by freed slaves indiscriminately on the coast, in Port Louis and in the 'interior parts' of Mauritius. It appeared that either they did not understand the geographical term 'interior parts' or they ignored that term completely. One meaningful learning strategy would be to relate the ways they earned their living to the geographical characteristics of places they went to live. For example, many became fishermen in coastal locations, small cultivators/planters/farmers or gardeners/market gardeners in the interior parts, artisans and skilled craftsmen such as masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, stevedores (warehouse workers), harbour workers/dock workers in Port Louis. Some of them went to the dependencies and became small farmers, fishermen, agricultural workers on plantations or collecting guano for export to Mauritius.

Part question (f)

This part question was well answered. Most candidates gave 1st February as the date on which the abolition of slavery is celebrated. Some candidates encountered difficulties to write 'February' with the correct spelling.

QUESTION 5

This question carried 5 marks. It comprised six 'True or False' items which were related to 'life of the people in Mauritius in the 19th century'. It was therefore important for candidates to refer to the statement each time they had to decide to answer. Item (a), was given as an example.

Item (b): This was well answered. It was pleasing to see that candidates were aware of the contribution of Reverend Jean Lebrun towards education of the poor in the 19th century.

Item (c): The high achievers knew that the statement ‘It was compulsory for all children to go to school’ was false. The low achievers did not refer to the historical context of the question, that is the 19th century.

It is worth pointing out that education was made compulsory in 2005. According to the Education (Amendment) Act 2004, and in line with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Mauritius is signatory, education is compulsory for all children up to the age of 16.

Item (d): Most candidates were able to assert that ‘Indian and Chinese immigrants could practise their religion freely’ in the 19th century. The building of places of worship on the island at that time is historical evidence of the freedom to practising one’s religion in the British colony.

Item (e): It proved to be fairly easy for candidates to state that the malaria epidemic killed many people in Mauritius.

Item (f): Many candidates had well understood that the building of railways did not cause more people to settle in Port Louis. In fact, the contrary was true since it encouraged more people to leave Port Louis and to settle in Plaine Wilhems. More practice is needed on alternate questions which develop reasoning skills. This will also encourage reading with understanding and discourage guessing.

QUESTION 6

This question carried 9 marks. It aimed at assessing learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and understanding on the topic ‘Natural Hazards’. The main focus of the question was on the topic ‘flash floods’. Part questions (a) and (b) were based on **Picture 4** which showed flash floods in Mauritius in a recent year. Flash floods are caused by more frequent occurrence of localised and sudden heavy rains of short duration during the summer months which is largely due to climate change resulting from global warming, but aggravated by local conditions of unplanned urbanisation and other factors too.

It is encouraging to note that considerable efforts are being made to impart the scientific and geographical knowledge and understanding of natural hazards linked to extreme climatic events and weather conditions. This momentum should be maintained and extended through innovative teaching and learning strategies using a life-skills approach. It will lay the foundation for a better understanding of how natural global events caused by past and present human action can affect local communities on an unprecedented scale.

Part question (a)

It carried three marks. The two sentences with fill-in-the-blanks items provided good opportunities to assess candidates' knowledge of the basic characteristics of flash floods. Candidates generally chose the correct word between the two words given in brackets.

(i) Candidates chose correctly 'summer' as the month during which flash floods occur. It should be stressed that seasonality is an important factor in the study of climate and weather events.

(ii) Most candidates chose correctly the words 'heavy' and 'suddenly' to characterise the rain falling over a place and causing flash floods.

Part question (b)

Candidates were required to give two reasons why flash floods are more frequent in Mauritius nowadays. Two marks were awarded for each valid reason. A range of valid answers was given. The most frequent answer was 'climate change' but candidates were equally aware of other factors such as urbanisation, unplanned urban/residential/infrastructural developments, and poor maintenance of existing drains and canals, or lack of drains. The idea that flash floods are caused by rising temperatures due to global warming was also an acceptable answer though it can be argued that rising global temperatures are the direct cause of climate change and are not directly responsible for extreme climatic and meteorological events such as short episodes of heavy rains and flash floods. However, it was deemed appropriate and fair to accept global warming when no mention was made of climate change. Had a candidate provided both ideas as answers, then only two marks instead of four marks were awarded.

Other relevant two-mark answers were the conversion of agricultural land use or forestry to urban buildings/housing, bad/poor drainage systems, deforestation/ loss of forests changes in the composition of air/ causing more CO₂ to be released in the atmosphere.

Examples of irrelevant answers were those related to rise in sea level and the effects of flash floods on people and environment.

Weaker candidates had the tendency to give only one answer which was correct, repeating the same idea twice or providing another vague answer such as pollution/ more pollution or no drainage for which only a partial mark could be given.

Part question (c)

This part question assessed the ability of candidates to name two natural hazards other than flash floods. One mark was awarded for naming each natural hazard. The question was well understood and most candidates were able to name at least one natural hazard such as volcanic eruption/volcanoes, tropical cyclone/cyclone, earthquakes, tsunamis, and torrential rain. Some candidates also gave droughts and landslides. A few candidates were somehow distracted and gave 'flash floods' thus losing one mark.

QUESTION 7

This question carried 8 marks. Overall, it was well attempted by candidates. Part question (a) was a fill-in-the-blanks question with three sentences, two on the independence of Mauritius and one on the new status of Rodrigues in 2002. Three marks were awarded to this part question. Part question (b) carried 5 marks. It was based on a map of Port Louis showing the location of one well-known historical site and one museum of national importance along with pictures. It consisted of four items which aimed to assess knowledge and understanding of the historical heritage in a geographical context, the city of Port Louis.

Part question (a)

- (i) Candidates were required to fill in the blank with the words 'Prime Minister'. This was well answered by the average and high achievers.
- (ii) Candidates were required to fill in the blank with the words 'Champ de Mars'. This was well answered mainly by the high achievers.
- (iii) Candidates were expected to write the word autonomy. This proved to be rather a difficult concept word to recall. Some candidates wrote Regional Assembly.

Part question (b)

- (i) Candidates were asked to name historical site **1** on Map **1**. The picture of the historical site was provided to help them to answer. It was mostly the high achievers who were able to give the name 'Aapravasi Ghat'. Some candidates gave 'Immigration depot'. This was also a correct answer.
- (ii) It was well attempted by the high and average candidates. They remembered that the historical event which is commemorated at the Aapravasi Ghat is the landing of the first indentured labourers in Mauritius. Candidates who wrote that it commemorates the arrival of Indian Immigrants were also credited with marks. The terms 'Indian immigrants' and 'indentured labourers' were both acceptable. The former term is because most of the indentured labourers came from the Indian sub-continent and the latter term is because it is the more appropriate term for the type of labour required to develop the sugar industry.
- (iii) Most candidates chose correctly the Natural History Museum for museum **A** shown on the map of Port Louis.
- (iv) Candidates were required to explain why some old buildings should be preserved in Port Louis. This was quite well attempted but inadequately explained by some candidates who obtained only a partial mark. An interesting variety of relevant answers was given: 'for future generations to learn about the past', 'old buildings are important for heritage tourism' and 'to know about life in the past and how buildings were built'. Only one mark could be awarded to weaker answers such as 'to attract more tourists' and 'for future generations'.