



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

**MAURITIUS  
EXAMINATIONS  
SYNDICATE**

**NCE 2025**

**GRADE 9**

**ENGLISH**

Subject code: N500

***EXAMINERS' REPORT***

April 2026

## Key Messages

- The progress in performance noted in 2024 was maintained in 2025, with an even greater proportion of candidates getting Grade 1 in English.
- **In Grammar, candidates struggled with the following:**
  - Subject-verb agreement
  - The plural form of the possessive form (*neighbours' cat*)
  - The use of the negative form
  - Using indirect speech
  - Transforming sentences in the active voice
- **In Reading Comprehension**
  - Candidates do well on questions testing literal understanding
  - Candidates have difficulty with inferential questions and with questions testing vocabulary in context
  - It is important to be precise when answering questions
  - Indiscriminate lifting continues to be a problem for weaker candidates
- **In Writing**
  - The functional writing task is within the reach of most candidates
  - Many candidates struggle with the extended writing task
  - Many candidates do not have the necessary vocabulary to express more sophisticated ideas and emotions
  - Only the best candidates can write using a variety of sentence types
  - In descriptive essays, candidates are advised to use sensory language and avoid writing narrations
  - In argumentative essays, candidates are advised to pay particular attention to the organization and relevance of their ideas and to use paragraphing  
In narrative essays, candidates should pay attention to the development of their plot and are encouraged to use narrative techniques (direct speech, characterisation, setting etc...)
  - The attention of candidates and teachers is drawn to the fact that **no credit will be given** to pieces of writing that use material from elsewhere in the question paper.

- **In Literature**

- Poetry continues to be the more popular choice with candidates, with only a small number choosing the prose option
- Candidates performed well on questions requiring identification of figures of speech and their effects
- Analysing extracts (whether poetry or prose) remains the hallmark of stronger candidates

Comments on Specific Questions

**Question 1 – Basic Grammar**

Question 1 assesses knowledge and application of a variety of fundamental grammar rules in English. The grammatical items assessed were prepositions, possessive adjective, adverbs of frequency, comparative adjective, subject – verb agreement, use of past continuous tense involving the conjunction 'while', conditional structure, interrogative adverbs, correct use of capital letters, transform singular possessive into plural possessive, negative sentence formation, linking two sentences using a conjunction, transforming sentences from the direct into the indirect speech and from the passive into the active voice. The most successfully completed items were those testing the application of prepositions, adverbs and comparative adjective. Candidates had more difficulty with items assessing the transformation of singular possessive into plural possessive, transformation from affirmative into negative form, from direct into indirect speech and from passive into active voice.

**Item 1** This item was well done overall. It tested the correct use of preposition of place. The prepositional phrase "**to the beach**" shows movement towards a specific location.

**Item 2** This item tested the use of possessive adjective and most candidates were able to correctly associate the noun '**chair**' with the possessive determiner '**its**'. A few candidates chose the wrong answer 'their', probably associating it with the plural noun that follows, which is 'legs'.

**Item 3** This question on the adverb of frequency "**often**" was mostly well-attempted by the candidates. They understood the context provided, that is, the love for mangoes causes the frequent eating.

**Item 4** This sentence requires a comparative form of the **adjective kind**. Most candidates understood that while comparing two subjects, the adjective **kind** takes the suffix **-er**.

- Item 5** Item 5 tested candidates' ability to select the appropriate frequency adverb. The majority of candidates successfully identified **every** as the correct answer, demonstrating good understanding of how 'every' is used to express routine actions.
- Item 6** This item was problematic to some candidates. The question tested two skills: subject-verb agreement and appropriate use of past tense. Candidates had to match the plural noun **eyes** with the plural form of the verb to be in the past tense, that is **were**. While some candidates lacked understanding of subject-verb agreement with plural nouns, others were not able to recognise the past tense time marker "when he was born". A common wrong answer was 'was'.
- Item 7** This question assessed the use of the past continuous tense involving the conjunction 'while' and the correct answer for this question was option D. Most candidates understood that when two actions occur simultaneously in the past, both verbs must be in the past continuous tense.
- Item 8** This item tested the use of the correct verb tense in conditional sentences (First Conditional). Candidates had to show understanding of the fact that since the first verb was a conditional clause (if + present simple tense), the following verb in the main clause would have to be in the future tense in this context. If + you wake up = you will have. Most candidates attempted this item correctly.
- Item 9** This item tested the use of interrogative adverb used to ask questions about a place. In this context, the interrogative adverb **where** is used to ask a question about the destination of the road. It was generally well done by candidates.
- Item 10** This item tested whether candidates knew when capital letters would be required in the given sentence. The aim was to capitalise the first word of the sentence which also happens to be a proper noun (**john** → **John**) and to capitalise the name of a country (**spain** → **Spain**). Most candidates attempted this item successfully with very few candidates underlining indiscriminately.
- Item 11** This item tested two grammatical skills, namely, transformation of a singular noun into a plural one and formation of plural possessives. This item posed difficulty to a noticeable number of candidates who wrote **neighbours's** instead of **neighbours'**. Candidates should bear in mind that "neighbours" is a regular plural, thus requiring only an apostrophe after the 's'. A few candidates went totally off target by replacing neighbour's with **neighbourhood**.

**Item 12** This item tested candidates' knowledge of negative structures in English. They had to show knowledge both of the syntax of negative structures in English and of the grammatical form of the verb that is required in such structures. Quite a few candidates struggled with this item, with a variety of wrong answers such as \*"Pam did not watered the plants" and \*"Pam watered not the plants".

**Item 13** This task assessed candidates' skills in using subordinating conjunctions to link two sentences. They had to connect two sentences using the conjunction 'unless' appropriately. There were two correct answers:

- (i) Paul will go running unless it rains.
- (ii) Unless it rains, Paul will go running.

This question was successfully attempted on the whole. Some candidates lost marks by making grammatical mistakes, such as, \*"Paul will go running unless it rained". A few candidates were not familiar with the conjunction 'unless' thus making semantic mistakes like \*"Unless Paul will go running, it rains".

**Item 14** This item tested candidates' ability to transform a sentence from direct into indirect speech using correct syntax, punctuation and grammar. The expected answer was: "The shopkeeper told Jim to throw the box away." For this item, common mistakes were wrong punctuation, wrong verb tense, confusing direct - indirect speech with active-passive voice and most importantly, the inability to transform an imperative sentence into indirect speech. Some wrong answers included the following:

- (i) \*"The shopkeeper told Jim" throw the box away.
- (ii) \*The shopkeeper told Jim to threw the box away.
- (iii) \*Jim was told by the shopkeeper to throw the box away.
- (iv) \*The shopkeeper told Jim that to throw the box away.

**Item 15** Item 15 tested the candidates' ability to transform a sentence from the passive to the active voice using correct syntax and grammar. The expected answer was: "Salim bought a new car." Common errors were mostly use of wrong verb tense. For example, quite a few candidates were not able to convert passive verb form 'was bought' into its active equivalent which is 'bought'. Instead, they wrote "Salim had bought a new car" or "Salim has bought a new car". It is important to note that most candidates were able to carry out the syntactic transformation required but the challenging part remained the transformation of passive verb form to active verb form.

## Question 2 – Basic Vocabulary

This question assessed candidates' knowledge of basic vocabulary appropriate for this level. Candidates were required to select the correct word from a set of four options to complete short sentences accurately and meaningfully. Overall, performance on this item was satisfactory, suggesting that most candidates possess an acceptable command of everyday vocabulary. However, a few patterns of misunderstanding were observed and should be addressed in future teaching.

**Item 1** John is very **stubborn**. He never changes his mind about anything.

Most candidates were able to identify "stubborn" as the only adjective that fits the idea of someone who never changes their mind. A few candidates chose "intelligent", showing that they weren't paying enough attention to the given context.

**Item 2** The headmaster **rang** the bell for recess.

This item was generally well answered. A few candidates wrongly chose "beat" or "banged".

**Item 3** The **pilot** announced that the plane was about to land.

A high proportion of candidates answered correctly. A small number of candidates chose "passenger".

**Item 4** The students **complained** about the class captain to the class teacher.

This item was handled fairly well. Some weaker candidates chose "told" which showed partial understanding of the sentence but not the specific meaning in the given meaning. 'Reported' was a popular distractor.

**Item 5** All our reservoirs are full because of the **floods**.

Performance on this item was good. A few candidates wrongly selected "winds" or "gusts".

### Question 3 – Basic Reading Comprehension

Question 3 evaluated reading comprehension at an elementary level, precisely, the ability to locate information from a given text. An information sheet on the “key events in the life of Alfred Nobel” was set and overall, candidates fared very well, showing that the basic reading skill of literal understanding had been acquired. Students who resorted to indiscriminate lifting were penalized. In this kind of task, brief and precise answers are necessary. Most items were well answered by candidates.

The following items were less well done:

**Item 1**        *In which year was Alfred Nobel born?*

Expected answer: 1833

A common wrong answer was *21 October 1833*. Candidates are reminded of the importance of answering with precision and avoiding indiscriminate lifting.

**Item 8**        *What is the aim of the Nobel prizes?*

The expected answer was *To reward those who have done their best for humanity*. A common wrong answer was *For those who have done their best for humanity*. For this item, the word “reward” had to be included in the answer to get 1 mark.

### Question 4 – Word Formation

In this question, candidates were assessed on word formation in context. A short text from the novel *Anne of the Green Gables* was set, with the words needing transformation given in brackets. This question was successfully attempted by many candidates, but less able candidates faced difficulty when attempting items 2 and 4.

**Item 1**        It **tells** the story of Anne Shirley, an orphan.

The third person singular present tense form of the verb 'to tell' was required here and this was well attempted by most candidates. Some weaker candidates incorrectly offered \*telling or \*told, suggesting confusion between verb forms.

**Item 2**        Anne is **mischievous** by nature.

For item 2, candidates were required to transform the noun 'mischief' into the adjective 'mischievous'. While this transformation is common in English, many candidates struggled with the spelling of mischievous, offering options like \*mischievius, or \*mischevous. A significant number of candidates also attempted to use the noun form without any transformation, writing \*mischief, which could not be credited.

**Item 3** She also has a lot of imagination.

The noun form of the verb 'imagine' was required here. This item was generally well attempted by candidates, with 'imagination' being correctly provided in most cases. However, some candidates offered the adjective \*imaginative or the adverb \*imaginatively, both of which were incorrect in this context.

**Item 4** When she is eleven, Anne is adopted by Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert.

The past participle form of the verb 'adopt' was needed for item 4 to complete the passive voice construction. This item posed considerable difficulty to many candidates. A significant number of candidates failed to recognise the passive structure and incorrectly gave \*adopting or \*adopts, showing confusion about the grammatical context.

**Item 5** She gradually transforms their lives, making Marilla and Matthew very happy.

Most candidates fared well in this item, which required the verb 'gradual' to be transformed into the adverb 'gradually'. Some candidates however, wrongly spelled the word and were penalised.

### Question 5 – Error Hunt

This exercise assesses whether candidates can correct grammatical mistakes such as plural, prepositions, correct verb tense and usage in a given context. The candidates were required to correct the underlined mistakes.

**Item 1** It is a staple food in many tropical area.

The plural form of the noun [areas] was required here. This was properly done by most candidates.

**Item 2** The breadfruit is rich of Vitamin C.

Candidates had to find the correct preposition for item 2. Here, *in* was the correct answer and this item posed difficulty to an important number of candidates. *With* was a common wrong answer.

**Item 3** Its also an excellent source of fibre.

Candidates were expected to use the contraction *it's* or the full form *it is* here. A significant number of candidates had some difficulty with this item. It was seen that candidates showed hesitation to use the expanded form because the answer consists of two words. It should be noted that for **error hunt**, there is no single-word constraint for answers. So, the expanded form *it is* was accepted.

**Item 4** Since **their** is starch in breadfruit, it replaces rice and potatoes in many cuisines.

This item tested whether candidates would be able to identify the error in spelling. The expected answer was *there*.

**Item 5** Some people fry it while others choose to **boiled** it.

Candidates had to correct the grammatical error in verb form. The infinitive form *to boil* was required here. This item presented no challenge to most candidates.

### Question 6 – Cloze Text

Question 6 is the open Cloze text – a higher-order reading task which evaluates candidates' overall knowledge of language (reading skills, grammar, syntax and vocabulary). It requires candidates to use the given context and draw on their linguistic knowledge to make educated guesses of what word might be suitable in the given gaps. The question was generally well answered. However, it was noted that items 2 and 4 proved to be quite challenging for a significant number of candidates.

**Item 1** There are **many / some/multiple** benefits to including chores in children's daily lives.

Candidates had to offer a suitable quantifier here. This item was very well attempted. Acceptable answers included 'many', 'several', 'numerous' or 'various', provided the sentence remained meaningful.

**Item 2** Chores **teach/ encourage/ help** children to become more responsible.

A verb was required in this gap. This item proved to be quite challenging to many candidates. Several options were accepted provided the sentence was grammatically correct and meaningful, such as 'teach', 'help', 'enable' or 'allow'. However, many candidates struggled to find an appropriate verb that collocated naturally with the infinitive structure 'to become'. Common incorrect answers included \*make (without the correct structure), \*give, or \*show, which did not fit the context appropriately.

**Item 3** Children learn to **manage** their anger and other negative emotions.

A verb was required in this gap. This item was generally well done. Acceptable answers included 'manage', 'control', 'handle' or 'regulate', all of which fitted the context of dealing with emotions.

**Item 4** Doing household chores **also** teaches children discipline.

This item proved to be particularly challenging to many candidates. The choice of word proposed had to maintain the flow and coherence of the paragraph while adding to the argument being developed. The most suitable answer was 'also' or 'additionally', indicating that another benefit was being introduced. However, many candidates struggled with this connective function, offering inappropriate options such as \*very, \*really, or \*even, which did not serve to link ideas effectively in this context. Some candidates also proposed \*too, which, while conveying a similar meaning, was less natural in this position within the sentence.

**Item 5** These skills can lead to greater success **in** their lives.

Most candidates offered a plausible answer to this item. The preposition 'in' was the expected answer, though 'throughout' was also accepted. This item was generally well attempted.

### Question 7 – Functional Writing

Question 7 is the functional writing task, where candidates are required to write a short transactional note of 50–75 words. They are essentially assessed on their ability to produce a clear and concise text using accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation while demonstrating good awareness of audience and purpose. Given the word limit, candidates are not expected to elaborate on the prompts but should address each point directly, using an appropriate tone and straightforward language. It was encouraging to note that many candidates perform well on this question, showing secure control of basic writing skills.

In this year's task, candidates were asked to write a short note to be placed on a notice board to ask for help with finding their cat. The purpose and situation proved to be very straightforward for most candidates. A successful answer had to address the following prompts:

- What does the cat look like?
- Where was the cat last seen?
- How do you feel about losing your cat?
- What reward will you offer to the person who finds your cat?
- How can you be contacted?

**For bullet point 1**, candidates had to describe what the cat looks like. Most candidates gave a simple physical description, such as the cat's colour, size or eye colour. A few responses were too vague or omitted key details, limiting the usefulness of the note.

**For bullet point 2**, candidates were required to state where the cat was last seen. Many candidates responded appropriately by mentioning a specific place. However, some confused this prompt with *when* the cat was last seen and provided irrelevant time details instead of a location.

**For bullet point 3**, candidates had to express how they feel about losing their cat. This point was generally well answered with most candidates stating feelings such as sadness, worry or distress. A few candidates gave very brief or generic responses, showing limited engagement with the prompt.

**For bullet point 4**, candidates were required to mention the reward offered to the person who finds the cat. Most candidates included a reasonable reward such as a cash amount or a small gift. However, a noticeable number offered **highly unrealistic rewards**, including *spa treatments, luxury cars such as a BMW, three million dollars, five acres of land at Mon Choisy, or one hundred thousand rupees*. While these responses technically addressed the prompt, the exaggerated nature of the rewards sometimes affected the overall tone and credibility of the note. In addition, some forgot to mention a reward altogether which affected task completion.

**Bullet point 5**, candidates had to explain how they can be contacted. This point was well addressed by the majority of candidates, who provided a phone number, an email address or another clear method of contact. A few candidates omitted contact details or provided incomplete information.

Successful candidates addressed all prompts given. Excellent responses showed clear awareness of audience and purpose, with all required points adequately addressed. They used accurate grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax. Vocabulary was appropriate and accurate. The overall task was organised and coherent.

Less successful candidates demonstrated no real sense of audience and purpose. They did not cover most of the prompts or at best only addressed them briefly. They demonstrated poor linguistic abilities resulting in limited understanding. Those candidates also used simple and inaccurate vocabulary leading to disjointed writing.

The following samples illustrate the range of answers obtained this year. They are provided to give educators an idea of standards and of examiners' expectations.

**Example 1**

**Dear friends**

I recently lost my cat. It is brown in colour and has brown eyes. It was last seen at the Longhill park. Please help me find it as I feel upset and lonely without it. The person who will find the cat will be rewarded a cheque of five thousand rupees. You may contact me on 58305127. Thank you for your support.

**With love and hope,**

**Shreeya**

This response scores very highly as it addresses all the bullet points, uses accurate G/S/P and shows clear awareness of audience and purpose. It is noteworthy that such simple, straightforward responses can score very high marks.

**Example 2**

**Dear friends,**

My cat "Smokey" has been missing since the 28th september. It is a light gray coloured cat with a short tail and it was last seen at Beau-Bassin on Hossenaly street. It's been five years since she has been living with me. I got her when my grandfather died and ever since then she has given me comfort. The person who finds it will be rewarded with Rs 2000. If found, please contact [Aleena@gmail.com](mailto:Aleena@gmail.com). Thank you!

**Yours,**

**Aleena**

This response showed clear awareness of audience and purpose. However, the response had some occasional slips, which meant that this script could not be in the top band.

**Example 3**

**Dear friends,**

I am writing a note because I lost my cat. I need you to her finding my cat. My cat his name is Garfile, It is of colour brown and black. The last that I seen it is at home in the garden. Those who will find my cat, I will him offer a check of 10 000 dollar. So please find my my cat. you can me contacted on those number 57857553. Thank you to you generoolly.

**Yours,**

**JP**

This is an average response. Although most key points are addressed, the language is too clumsy for this candidate to score highly. There are grammatical and spelling issues which at times even threaten to make the meaning unclear.

**Example 4**

**Dear friends,**

I has lost my cat, I writting a note that will place on a notice board to ask help with finding my cat. Last seen my cat is at home.

You not look my cats at the roads.

**Yours,**

This is a very poor response. The points given are not properly addressed and the language used is insecure throughout.

### Question 8 – Extended Reading Comprehension

This question assesses learners' ability to read and understand an extended passage of approximately 600 words in English. A range of reading comprehension questions are set, including literal understanding, inferential understanding, knowledge of vocabulary in context, overall understanding of the text and writer's craft.

This year, the passage was a narrative in which the narrator recalls how her friend, Sophie, used to tell her stories about famous places in the world during her childhood.

Overall Candidates performed satisfactorily on questions requiring literal understanding of the passage. However, weaker candidates experienced difficulty with inferential questions, which required a deeper level of understanding and interpretation of the text and the ability to draw conclusions from information implied rather than explicitly stated. Items 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 proved challenging for a significant number of candidates.

Candidates are reminded of the following:

- Lifting is permitted where it is specifically asked for, but they will be penalised for excess information.
- Where candidates have been instructed to use their own words, they will be penalised for lifting from the text.
- Grammatical and spelling mistakes are not penalised if meaning and understanding are made clear.

**Item 1**      *Pick out the word which shows that the green bench had lost some of its colour.*

The expected answer was *faded* and this was generally well identified. Some candidates were penalised for lifting the whole sentence without underlining or highlighting the required word.

**Item 2**      *What did the narrator do before she had her lunch?*

The expected answer was *She played*. The lift from the passage, *After having played on the seesaw* was also accepted. This item was overwhelmingly well answered.

**Item 3**      *The narrator offered an apple to Sophie. What does this show about the narrator's character?*

This item required candidates to identify positive character traits of the narrator when she offered an apple to Sophie. Candidates came up with a variety of adjectives to describe the narrator's personality. Acceptable responses included: *She was generous, kind, caring, friendly, selfless, sweet, good, thoughtful* among others.

**Item 4** *How do we know that Sophie was happy to be answering the narrator's questions? Give two pieces of evidence.*

The expected answers were:

- *Her eyes lit up*
- *She smiled*

Both limbs were required to score the 2 marks on offer for this item. A few candidates lifted complete sentences from the paragraph to answer the question. Lifting was accepted provided no excess information was included.

**Item 5** *Why is the tower of Pisa 'not quite upright'?*

The expected answer was: *'It was built on unstable soil'*. While this question required a literal response, many candidates provided full lifts which were not accepted as they contained excess information.

**Item 6** *According to you, why did the narrator look at the bench as soon as she reached the playground?*

Candidates had to infer why the narrator looked at the bench. The key idea was *She was looking for Sophie* or *She expected to see Sophie there*. This item posed difficulty to candidates, who struggled to infer from the given information and simply lifted from the text: *There she was!*

**Item 7** *What is the 'huge triangle' the narrator referred to?*

Acceptable answers included:

- *The Pyramid*
- *Tombs of Pharaohs*

Responses to this item were generally satisfactory.

**Item 8** *Pick out the expression which shows that the narrator was disappointed.*

Candidates had to give the expression which showed that the narrator was disappointed. The expected answer was *'My heart sank'* and this was overall well attempted. However, some candidates were penalised for lifting the full sentence without highlighting the expression.

**Item 9**      *Why was there no book on Sophie's lap that day?*

This item required candidates to say why Sophie had no book on her lap. A wide variety of responses was accepted for this question. There were a few possible inferences made from the information provided in the text, as shown below:

- *It was a rainy day.*
- *The book would get wet.*
- *She had already decided to take the narrator to somewhere dry and warm such as the library.*

**Item 10**      (i) *How did the narrator feel about going in the village library?*

This item required candidates to describe the narrator's feeling and candidates came up with a variety of feelings.

Acceptable responses included: *happy, excited, thrilled, amazed, impressed, mesmerised, fascinated.*

**Item 10**      (ii) *How do you know?*

Candidates were required to justify their answer and it was mostly well tackled. Plausible references included:

- *She beamed*
- *She saw shelves full of books*
- *She saw an extraordinary treasure trove*
- *Her expression tells us*

**Item 11**      *'The look on my face said it all.' (lines 29-30). According to you, what did the look on the narrator's face tell Sophie?*

Candidates had to infer what the look on the narrator's face could tell to Sophie. Candidates were expected to infer that the narrator agreed, approved or was eager to sign up. Many struggled to grasp the implied meaning, particularly the idea of signing up.

**Item 12** *Sophie squeezed the narrator's hand before letting it go. What does this show about Sophie's feelings for the narrator?*

This item assessed inferential understanding, requiring candidates to read paragraph 5 carefully and then make an educated guess about Sophie's feelings and not her actions. Candidates were penalised for such responses: *'She was sad to leave her, she was encouraging her, she comforted the narrator, she was thankful or excited.'* A wide variety of responses was accepted for this question. Accepted responses included:

- *Affection or love*
- *Care, support, attachment, empathy*
- *Consideration towards the narrator.*

**Item 13** *Which word tells us that the narrator took great care before choosing a book?*

The expected answer was *scanned* and this was well attempted on the whole. Some candidates were penalised for lifting the entire sentence without highlighting the required word.

**Item 14** *Explain fully why the narrator describes the bench as the 'time and place travel capsule' (lines 3-4)*

Both limbs were required to score the two marks on offer for this item. Candidates were required to explain both the time and place elements. This item was poorly answered overall, with few candidates scoring full marks.

The following key ideas were accepted.

- *They travelled across different time periods*
- *They travelled across different places.*

**Item 15** Item 15 was the vocabulary question, where candidates had to explain the meaning of specific words as used in the context of the passage. This MCQ item assessed candidates' understanding of words in context.

- (i) The first item was 'favourite' and the correct answer was B (most liked).  
This was correctly attempted by most candidates.
- (ii) The second item was 'corners' and the correct answer was D (parts).  
This item proved to be challenging to many candidates, with a significant number incorrectly opting for Option C(spaces).
- (iii) The last item was 'queried' and the correct answer was C (asked).  
This was correctly attempted by many candidates.

### Question 9 – Extended Writing

Question 9 is the extended writing task. Candidates were required to write a composition of about 200-250 words out of a choice of three titles: a descriptive, an argumentative and a narrative topic.

The following guidelines should be helpful to candidates:

Candidates should pay attention to the key words in the essay titles so as to produce a relevant piece of writing.

- Candidates are advised to respect the word limit and to check their work thoroughly.
- The use of accurate and varied vocabulary is strongly encouraged.
- Candidates should be precise in the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Candidates are recommended to use a variety of sentence structures in their writing
- Candidates are recommended to write in a logical and coherent manner
- Under no account should candidates reproduce material or derive inspiration from material found elsewhere in the question paper while writing their essay.

### Descriptive writing

**Describe the scene at lunchtime in your school.**

**(Remember you must describe what you can see, hear and smell, and what you feel.)**

Although lunchtime is a significant moment of the school day, this descriptive task proved to be the least popular choice and very few candidates who opted for it were able to describe the scene at lunchtime in detail. Descriptive features include the use of the senses, contrast, use of figurative language such as similes and the use of sound devices such as onomatopoeia. It was noted that stronger responses indicated the effective use of such stylistic devices. Similes evoked the canteen staff being as busy as bees or referred to students being as hungry as wolves. For sound effects, students used *ding-dong*, or *drrrrr* to capture the tone of the school bell and bring the description to life.

Strong candidates chose to describe scenes from the moment the school bell rings for lunch time to the moment the break ends, and they head back to class. Strong candidates structured their responses by focusing on how lunchtime is a much-anticipated break where they can forget their tiresome lessons and enjoy themselves with their friends. There was also intentional focus on the following elements from the question – namely what you see, hear and smell, and how you feel – to fully achieve the task set. The effective development of these elements using wide and precise vocabulary and complex, accurately constructed sentences elevated responses to this question. Strong responses depicted the full range of senses to give descriptions of their surroundings and made effective use of detail to bring the scene to life. For example, “during lunch time,

camaraderie is at its peak where students share the delicacies brought from home while indulging in juicy gossip about the latest Instagram posts,” “Prefects walk around, full of self-importance as, eagle-eyed, they survey the premises while showing off their silvery badges,” “noodles with a hint of eggs...,” “girls with fake lashes...,” “the purposeful march towards the school canteen...,” “The aroma of freshly fried doughnuts wafts in the air, invading my nostrils and awakening my appetite...,” “The heat of the tantalizing chicken ignites my mouth, bringing tears to my eyes...,” “Lunchtime screams food!”

Vocabulary was often noteworthy and included words like “parched,” “stench,” “screeching,” “hurtles,” “tumultuous” and “kindles.”

Variety in sentence structure also contributed to consistent descriptions in the essays. One candidate wrote, “Some students rush to the volleyball pitch to watch the match opposing their classmates and teachers, others, with bellies growling for food, head to the canteen, while others still head to the school library to discover the new collection of magazines.” “Students head back to their boring classrooms, unconcerned about the pungent odour of sweat but totally depressed about the math lessons that loom ahead. If only lunch break lasted longer!”

Weaker descriptions contained minimal imagery, relying on somewhat vague language or repetition of common words that did not vividly paint a clear picture for the reader. Candidates who merely listed what they saw and heard did not score high marks. Instead of showing the scene through detailed descriptions, they tended to tell what was happening, missing opportunities to engage the reader’s senses. The following candidate responses illustrate examiners’ expectations in descriptive essays.

**Example 1**

Lunchtime has always been chaotic at my school. The second the bell rings, a race starts- winners take all the muffins! A swarm of students pushing, fighting and racing hurtles towards the cafeteria. The lunch ladies, armed with their spatulas, hairnets and their gang tattoo – the mole on their chin – wait like soldiers in a battlefield.

Attack! The students crash into the pile of trays, swear words flying left and right as they battle over the cold, crusty pizza and expired mac and cheese. The monsters then settle on the creaking benches around round tables spread over the ridiculously large cafeteria. Much like in 'High-School Musical," our cafeteria tables hold meaning – status that separates our society into the low-lives and the important. A table is taken hostage by the loud obnoxious football players who drag their sweaty odour with them, giving the cafeteria a putrid smell which adds to the mould-like permanent odour of the lunch place. The cheerleaders can be seen snickering like witches over their feast – one carrot each.

The cafeteria is filled with a cacophony of sound with the band members playing their latest ear-splitting tune, the K-Pop aspiring teens breaking out in dances in the far corner, bumping and knocking into each other like inflated balloons and the clattering of dishes as everyone digs into their probably expired meals. Some students get tripped, sending their trays flying like javelin bows – winner Stacy with the glasses skitters away, discombobulated.

All-in-all, lunchtime isn't all bad; some of us get to eat our food peacefully – and some of us end up over the toilet bowl, with food poisoning. May be lunchtime is what will prepare us for the future, food fights and all.

Ready for tomorrow?

This successful answer to the question used sensory and descriptive language. The response is strong, employing evocative adjectives, detailed descriptions and language features such as similes which add to the sensory richness expected in a descriptive task.

The descriptive response creates a vivid piece with carefully chosen details and shows engagement with the task. The use of a rule of three 'spatulas, hairnets and their gang tattoo' right at the start of the essay impresses. The effective use of a variety of punctuation marks is also noted and rewarded. The generous use of adjectives such as 'chaotic,' 'obnoxious,' 'ear-splitting,' 'sweaty' enables the candidate to paint a clear picture of the scene being described. The range and precision of the vocabulary used by the candidate is excellent: this is a Band One essay. The candidate focuses on what (s)he hears, what (s)he smells and what (s)he sees during lunchtime. It is easy for the examiner to picture the scene. The details mentioned in the introductory paragraph triggers the consistent build-up of atmosphere that continues throughout the essay up to the point when the candidate ends while looking forward to the next lunchtime. The sentence structures and the correct tense give the essay a natural fluency which is very convincing. Vocabulary is certainly a strong point ('hurtles,' 'spatulas,' 'snickering', 'clattering,' 'skitters,' 'discombobulated.') The words fit in quite smoothly. The images used are relevant and evocative; ('monsters then settle on the creaking benches'; 'the ridiculously large cafeteria'; 'a table is taken hostage') and these earn the candidate credit. Paragraphing is also very good in the way that it divides the material after a good introduction and finishes with a definite and functional final line. Spelling, especially quite a mature vocabulary, is notable with only a few slips like 'cachophony,' and 'seperates.'

## Example 2

My favourite time of the day at school is the much-awaited lunchtime. At my prestigious school, during lunchtime, the yard is packed with merry children running from left to right. It is a very lively moment which will mark these students' childhood deeply as it is the only moment during the school day when they can relax.

Once the bell rings as loud as thunder, all students race around the huge yard, screaming and yelling with jubilation without the teacher's consent and without packing their stuff. On my right, I see a group of young enthusiastic boys playing games such as football, volleyball, cards and cricket among others. Many girls keep themselves busy with activities such as hair doing, makeup and hopscotch.

I can hear many loud voices which blend to form a pleasant and harmonious symphony to the ears. The joyful atmosphere is filled with laughter and gossip by students who sit in circles under the huge trees bordering the school compound. Others are bargaining at the canteen while others still are cheerily screaming, "Hit the ball! Hit the ball!" The brouhaha of the students makes the old teachers nostalgic as they watch the happy students, enjoying their childhood and teenage years. This lunchtime scene reminds them of their respective childhood and the good times they used to have during break.

The aroma of our splendid Mauritian cuisine and freshly made meals sold by the local hawkers who stop by is mouthwatering and makes us salivate in advance. Their luscious and exquisite dhal-puri as well as the juicy and coconutty cakes and hot roti are famous and draw the hungry students. All these scents fill our lovely yard and attract the attention of the buyers who are buzzing like bees.

As I love my school from the bottom of my heart, everything I see, hear and smell will remain etched in my mind as a moment of pure joy. I feel exultant in this crowd of students. This scenery frees me from all the worries linked to my lessons.

In the above response, there is a clear description of lunchtime. The candidate employs the full range of senses to give an account of the scene with effective use of detail such as 'yard packed with merry children,' 'pleasant and harmonious symphony,' 'juicy and coconutty cakes,' to bring the scene (s)he is describing to life. The response includes detailed appropriate description of the lunchtime activities. Vocabulary is of higher order and includes words like 'prestigious,' 'jubilation,' 'nostalgic,' 'exquisite,' 'etched.' Successful use of descriptive techniques such as the simile is noted and credited: 'as loud as thunder,' 'buzzing like bees.' This is a Band 1 response. Candidates who can use figurative language to describe a scene vividly and create an atmosphere consistently fare better.

**Example 3**

At exactly noon, the rector rang the bell for the recess. All the pupils are excited to move out of their classroom. All the teacher gone to the staff room rapidly for avoid being stuck in the crowd of the student.

In the canteen, it is full of noise listening to the students shouting for their meals. Some of the student often played football in front of the office of the Rector. All the time, they get shouted at by the discipline master as they kicked the ball on the window each time. Some of the pupils go on the bench, with their bread in hand, chatting with each other like they have never seen each other. Some boys go to the toilet to smoke cigarette. Often they are caught by the caretakers who lead them into big problems. When the boys come out the smell of the cigarettes ruins the fresh air with a bad and smelly odour. Also the smaller one play hide and seek in the yard.

Finally, after around one hour the bell rang for the pupils to get to their respective classes. There faces seem bored as if they do not want to go to the classroom. At the end everyone go to their classroom and the school becomes silent.

Even if the candidate attempts to describe what he sees and hears, and the content is relevant, the control of tenses is a weakness in this composition. The candidate uses the present and past tense inconsistently. Descriptions are simple and are only of some interest to the reader. The language is clumsy at various points. There is some weakness in the use of punctuation as well. The inability to use plural forms is also noted. The essay remains at the lower end of band 3.

**Example 4**

It was a rainy Friday day, when I was walking to the cafeteria to have lunch. I usually did not eat at the cafeteria because it was always crowded with students, but I had no choice as my favorite bench where I usually had lunch everyday was wet from the rain, I quickly walked up to one table close to the window and I opened my lunch box filled with delicious foods. As I was about to start eating, I noticed two students named Ryan and Wayne arguing. Apparently, Wayne had thrown orange juice at Ryan to make fun of him and Ryan was not having any of it. Ryan got close to him and started to call him slurs and pushed him. The force of the push made Wayne land at my table. When he got up, he threw more orange juice at him which made Ryan more furious. They pounced on each other and could not be separated by the students. At that point, I could see blood coming from Wayne's nose and all I could smell was orange juice. I was horrified as I was cornered between them and the window behind me. Luckily, it was at that moment when two of the security guards came and separated them nobody knows what punishment they got and they never came to school ever again.

The focus of this task should be on description, rather than narration. Here the candidate veers into narrative structures and is unable to use a descriptive approach. Candidates should also be encouraged to practise presenting their ideas into clear, coherent sections. An attempt at organizing the piece of writing helps. This was a Band 5 essay as the candidate overlooked the instruction given, that is to “describe “what you see, hear and smell and what you feel,” during lunchtime. The beginning of the essay clearly drives it away from a descriptive approach as the candidate starts with a narrative framework. The work generates no interest for the reader.

### Argumentative writing

**"When there is no school because of a heavy rain warning, classes should be held online. Do you agree?"**

The essay on whether classes should be held online during heavy rain warnings was moderately popular with candidates. There were several well-argued essays which clearly explored both the advantages and disadvantages of online learning during weather disruptions while providing relevant examples to support their arguments. The better responses conveyed a balanced view on the practicality of online classes and the various challenges that different families might face. Most candidates managed to stay relevant to the topic.

Stronger candidates produced well-structured arguments that examined multiple perspectives. Essays that scored highly were well organised and written with clarity. They provided well-supported arguments highlighting benefits such as continuity of learning, safety of students staying at home, avoiding disruption to the curriculum, and the convenience for working parents. Equally, they acknowledged challenges such as lack of internet access for poorer families, electricity cuts during storms, difficulty in concentrating at home, and the reduced effectiveness of online learning compared to face-to-face instruction.

It is worth noting that candidates who took a strong position on one side of the debate also scored well, provided their arguments were thoroughly developed and supported with concrete examples

However, some candidates struggled with the argumentative essay. It was clear that these candidates had not prepared any plan before beginning to write and later realised that they did not have enough material to produce a sustained response. These essays resulted in very limited ideas and hence scored poorly. Weaker responses tended to list a few ideas rather than elaborate on them. Such responses had repetitive ideas, usually rephrasing a single point about "online classes are good" or "students can learn from home" without deeper exploration. Such essays would have benefited from presenting only a few arguments but in much greater depth, with specific examples from the Mauritian context.

The sample of essays below illustrates the standards expected by examiners for the argumentative writing task.

**Example 1.**

*It is a fact that education is important for all students and as we all know, most students go to public schools or private schools. Yet in summer, due to heavy rain warning, students are told to stay at home which not only cause them to miss important classes but they are also held back on their syllabus which is bad when they will take their end of year exams. But what if classes were held online?*

*Firstly, holding the classes online during heavy rain warning will help teachers catch up on their syllabus and students get to learn in the comfort of their homes. Also, online classes tend to finish faster than regular classes because teachers are more precise and straightforward in their explanations.*

*However, there are also many disadvantages related to online classes. Students tend to slack off rather than follow the class using the "pop up view" they will look like they are following the class when actually they are doing something else entirely. During online class, teachers do not really have any control over or clue about their students. When doing exercises, instead of making an effort, students will use AI companions such as Chat GPT to write their answers.*

*To summarise, online classes have both their pros and cons. Despite that i will prefer that classes are held online during heavy rain warnings, as we are continuing our work and completing our syllabus. It is mostly the responsibility of the student to be more disciplined about their studies.*

This is a strong **Band 1** essay that demonstrates sophisticated critical thinking, effective argumentative structure, and mature awareness of contemporary educational challenges.

The candidate demonstrates excellent understanding of the issue by contextualising the problem in the opening paragraph – students miss "important classes" and are "held back on their syllabus which is bad when they will take their end of year exams." The content is highly relevant and includes specific, concrete examples drawn from real experience. The reference to students using "the 'pop up view'" to appear present while doing other things shows intimate familiarity with online learning platforms.

The introduction effectively sets the context and poses a rhetorical question ("But what if classes were held online?") that engages the reader. The second paragraph, introduced with "Firstly," presents advantages systematically. The third paragraph, beginning with "However," provides a well-developed counterargument with multiple specific examples.

The vocabulary is notably sophisticated and demonstrates a wide-ranging lexical resource. Impressive expressions include "held back on their syllabus," "in the comfort of their homes," "precise and straightforward," "tend to slack off," "pop up view," "do not really have any control over or clue about," "AI companions," and "be more disciplined about their studies"

**Example 2**

*Yes. There should be online classes. This is so because we will lose time and not be able to complete our syllabus in our books. There should be online classes because instead of watching mobile phones or TV, we are learning. There is some disadvantage and some advantages also when doing online class.*

*The advantage are that we will be work the same without missing our syllabus. We will not miss any classes. The classes will be the same. The disadvantages are that many students won't follow the classes as it is going only to be voice call. Some students don't have mobile phones, so they won't be able to follow the classes. And in online classes it is different from school classes because there maybe network problems.*

*Online classes will help us to learn and follow classes when there is a torrential rains, flood or cyclones. By doing the online classes, at least we are learning somethings. Instead of doing something useless like playing games , watching movie etc.*

*Online classes will do a big impact on our studies. Online classes is started when school start and end when school end. It may help us for our exams. This is why we should have online classes. There is some advantages and disadvantages but those who really want to study and pass the exams will follow but those who are not interested will not.*

This response attempts to address the topic and presents some relevant ideas about online classes. The candidate recognises both advantages (**We will not miss any classes**) and disadvantages (**Some students don't have mobile phones**). However, the essay suffers from numerous language errors that affect clarity. There are frequent grammatical mistakes , incorrect verb forms (when there is torrential rains), and awkward phrasing throughout. The vocabulary is basic and repetitive. The ideas, while present, are not developed in depth – they are stated but not elaborated with examples or detailed explanation. The structure shows some attempt at organisation with separate points being made, but transitions between ideas are abrupt. Subject-verb agreement is problematic (our online classes is started), and the use of articles is inconsistent. While meaning can generally be understood, the frequent errors and limited development place this response in **Band 3** (towards the lower end).

### Example 3

*Online classes happens when there is no school due to different few reasons such as heavy, rainfall or even normal cancellations. Those natural calamities are unpredictable and is very dangerous. So, for students safety schools must be canceled.*

*But on our island such kinds of calamities are common.*

This response shows very limited development and contains serious language errors throughout. The candidate attempts to address the topic by mentioning natural calamities and safety concerns, but the ideas are barely developed beyond simple statements.

Sentence structures are extremely simple where they exist, and grammatical control is very poor ('is very dangerous' with plural subject). The vocabulary is basic and includes errors even with simple words. There is minimal coherent content that addresses the question. The essay lacks sufficient development for the required word count and demonstrates serious difficulties with sentence formation and idea organisation. The numerous serious errors and lack of meaningful content limit this response to **Band 5**.

### Narrative writing

**Write a story that includes the following line: "We had a feeling that we were now lost..."**

The narrative task was as usual the most popular option with candidates. This year, candidates were asked to write a story that included the following line: "We had a feeling that we were now lost..." Candidates were able to produce complex, elaborate, imaginative and interesting stories and the best responses contained varied sentence structures to sustain the reader's interest throughout. The precise use of a wide range of vocabulary and accurate G/S/P also lifted responses. The Weaker candidates struggled to develop a plot around the topic and narratives were very simple. Wrong spelling and tenses and sentence separation problems were noticeable in these scripts. The following candidate responses illustrate examiners' expectations in narrative essays.

It was a balmy Saturday. I had just started working in a company and my team decided to organise a trip to the Bellamount forest. I reluctantly agreed to go with them as this forest was ill – reputed for its scary and eerie atmosphere and some people even said that it was haunted.

On arriving there, we were mesmerised by the vast green canopy of trees sitting above our heads. As we walked on the moist ground, we explored the forest. We were so engrossed looking at the exotic fauna and flora around us. For a moment, I thought that the superstitions were not true. However, as my team and I went deep in the forest, I started feeling anxious and I feared that this trip may not end up well. I tried to brush my thought off, thinking that I was simply overreacting.

As time passed, suddenly we felt something unusual; we had a feeling that we were now lost. The night approached and we were left alone in this forest which metamorphosed into an eerie place. I was flabbergasted and my instincts were true. Out of the blue, we saw a strange shadow under the moonlight. I turned my flashlight to see what it was clearly and I was gobsmacked on seeing a giant slimy creature with sharp teeth and a mysterious weapon. My heart was pounding with terror and without losing a nanosecond, we all ran for our dear lives. Luckily, we saw a dim light and we were able to find the exit.

My team and I were traumatised by this experience and we took an oath that we would never go into the Bellamount forest again. My life had never been eventful until now.

This response has a complex and sophisticated narrative the language is essentially very accurate throughout. The candidate has made use of a variety of sentence structures consistently and the coherence in the ideas is noteworthy. The use of vocabulary is wide and precise (*balmy Saturday, mesmerised by the green canopy, engrossed, eerie atmosphere, flabbergasted, metamorphosed, gobsmacked, my heart was pounding with terror, without using a nanosecond etc*). Also, the expressions of feelings have been effectively used for particular effects. This is undoubtedly a Band 1 essay.

It was a rainy night at around 11 p.m. The winds were echoing in the trees and the crows hurled loudly. I was returning home from a prom night with some of my friends. Sarah, one of them was driving cautiously on the slippery road. After a few minutes, she told us that she knew a shortcut and by taking it, we will save about 30 minutes. We agreed after some arguments as she convinced us that she knew it like it was on the back of her hand.

After 30 minutes, we had a feeling that we were now lost. We stopped immediately. I was very scared and my heart beated very fast. I started overthinking; "What if something had happened? What will I answer my parents?" I wanted to cry so miserably. It was now heavily raining with thunder and lighting. Jane, my other friend was hoping to get help but no one was walking at this hour.

Suddenly, a fight occurred between Jane and Sarah. After ten minutes, I checked map to find our way. Fortunately, the correct road was not very far and we took a u-turn and continued our path. I consoled both of my friends and stated that instead of taking the road to the right, Sarah had mistakenly taken that of the left.

After about an hour, we safely reached home and we realised that during bad times, we should not lose hope and that there is always a solution.

Here, the narrative is detailed but lacks complexity and sophistication. The reader's interest is generally sustained and the language has some accurate vocabulary (*echoing in the trees, crows hurled loudly...*) but there are some occasional slips (*beated, miserably and u-turn ...*). This candidate has made use of direct speech and there are some variations in sentence structures. It is a strong piece of writing but cannot be awarded the best marks. (Band 2)

My mother and I went to Tribeca Mall which was found in Ebene. As we arrived in Ebene we saw the mall beside. As we were passing by we found no entry or exit.

It was very confusing so we kept searching more and still could not find an entry. It was like a maze made of roads. We somehow got lost in Ebene. Though we could see where to go we didn't know which route to take.

We end up next to Ebene SSS Girls. It was a very long drive to get out and there was also a lot of traffic jam. My mother decided to then use Google Maps to drive our way to Tribeca Mall.

It was again a long drive and sometimes we did not know which route to go as the GPS was give instruction wrongly. We found that you had to go over the fly-over and then enter a small road which was the entrance to Tribeca Mall.

We were very happy even though we gave a bad review of the GPS. We decided to always use Google Map to always find our destination even if we know the road as a precaution not to get lost in any way possible.

This narrative essay is mostly relevant but the narrative tends to be mostly a series of events. The essay generates some interest for the reader but we observe that errors occur when complexity is attempted. There are instances of sentence variety but language in the essay is quite simple and the vocabulary is far from ambitious.

This essay is in Band 3.

One Saturday ; in the school holidays. My parent and I decided to make a plan to go to the hotel. On that we all wake up early. We took our breakfast. My mother prepared the bag and also me,

After a while, my father loaded the car with the bag. Before going we almost having fun. We leave our house at 9 o'clock. On the way everything was good. We were using the google map to track the location. After one hour of driving the location bring us to a closing road. We were panicked we entered different road but there was no way out. Then we saw a person was walking. My father ask the man, where should we passed to go to the main road.

After 15 minutes of driving we finally found the main road. Thankfully the man save us. We were lost in a dark road their was many trees. We were terrify. After that we were looking at the road location.

After a long driving we finally entered our destination.

Although there is a relevant storyline in this answer, the content is elementary. The narrative is very simple, the sentences are mostly simple and the vocabulary is not always accurate. Mistakes are frequent– from punctuation, sentence separation to spelling mistakes but meaning is not in doubt. Consequently, this response is a Band 4 essay.

## Question No. 10 – Literature

### Option A – Poetry

In this component, candidates were assessed on their ability to **appreciate a poem and demonstrate analytical skills**. They were required to show awareness of the poem's **message**, make links between the text and **life experiences**, and analyse **character, themes** and the **use and effect of stylistic devices**.

Overall, candidates performed well on tasks requiring them to **identify the narrative voice, literary devices and rhyming words**. Questions that required candidates to **explain selected lines from the poem** were generally well attempted. The final question, which asked for a **personal interpretation of the poem's message supported by close reference to the text**, was also well attempted by a large number of candidates.

**Item 1(a):** This item was generally well answered by most candidates who had little difficulty identifying the narrative voice, which was the first-person narrative voice. Some candidates, however, were misled by 'you' in the opening line and wrongly gave second-person narrative voice as answer.

**Item 1(b):** Most candidates correctly identified appropriate evidence for the first-person narrative by selecting quotations containing "I" or "me". For example: "*But still like dust I'll rise*" / "*You may write me down in history*"

**Item 2:** This item also was generally well attempted. Candidates easily identified the rhyming words "eyes and cries".

**Item 3(a):** This item required candidates to recognise an example of a simile. A good number of candidates correctly identified "*But still like air, I'll rise*" was the appropriate response.

**Item 3(b):** Although many candidates were able to identify the simile, many experienced difficulty explaining its effect. Accepted responses included the following key ideas:

- To draw a comparison (Between the speaker and air)
- To beautify the language.

**Items 4(a) and 4(b):**

These items required candidates to explain or direct paraphrase selected lines from the poem.

**4(a)** “*You may write me down in history*

*With your bitter, twisted lies’*

Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of these lines by addressing the key idea that the speaker may be **defamed, humiliated or discredited** through the spreading of **false accusations or deceptive words**. However, some candidates explained only one part of the quotation.

**4(b)** “*You may shoot me with your words”*

Candidates generally performed satisfactorily on this question demonstrating understanding of the given line. Credit was awarded to those who explained that the speaker may be hurt, attacked, offended, insulted or harmed through words.

**Item 5:** This item required candidates to express their understanding of the **main message of the poem** and offer a **personal interpretation**, supported by close reference to the text. Responses that demonstrated clear understanding, analytical insight and effective textual support were awarded **3 marks**.

Possible interpretations of the poem included themes such as:

- *Courage*
- *Determination*
- *resistance to bullying or oppression*
- *self-confidence*
- *staying strong*
- *perseverance and resilience*

A few samples illustrating the range of responses obtained this year are presented below.

### Example 1

The poem is about resilience and inner strength in the face of oppression and discrimination. The speaker describes being mistreated through "*bitter, twisted lies*" and being "*trod... in the very dirt,*" which suggests injustice and humiliation. Despite this, the repeated line "*Still I'll rise*" emphasises determination and refusal to be defeated. Natural imagery such as "*moons and... suns*" and "*the certainty of tides*" shows that her rising is inevitable and unstoppable. Even when attacked verbally and emotionally — "*You may shoot me with your words*" — the speaker remains confident and strong, showing perseverance and self-belief.

This piece of work scores 3 marks as the candidate shows a clear understanding of the poem. There is evidence of analysis that allows the candidate to give an insightful response, and the answer is well supported with close reference to the poem.

### Example 2

The poem is about confidence and refusing to be broken by others. The speaker questions whether people expect her to be "*broken*" with "*bowed head and lowered eyes,*" which shows how others want to see her weak. However, she challenges this idea by repeatedly saying "*Still I'll rise*" showing that she will not accept defeat.

This sample shows some evidence of understanding and provides some support from the poem. The candidate recognises the key ideas of the poem related to hope but there is not enough analysis for this to get full marks.

### Example 3

The poem is about a person who is rising up and not staying down. The poet says "*I'll rise*" many times. It shows that she will rise again.

In this response, the candidate offers only a literal understanding of the poem. There is no attempt at going beyond a literal meaning of the poem and this response was awarded 1 mark.

### Example 4

I am not sure what the poem is about. It talks about the sun, the moon and rising. The poem has many lines and questions.

This response shows no understanding of the poem and is insufficient to meet the criteria for 1 mark.

### Option B – Prose

The prose extract was adapted from the short story *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck. Candidates were assessed on their ability to

- Identify the narrative voice and support with an evidence from the extract
- Identify a simile and explain the effect of using the simile in this particular context
- Demonstrate understanding of some parts of the extract
- Describe the doctor's character

Generally, candidates were successful in identifying the narrative voice and the simile. Most candidates were able to explain the effect of the simile. Questions requiring explanation of parts of the extract were generally well answered with the exception of few candidates who gave superficial answers. The last question, asking for a description of the doctor's character with close reference to the extract, was well attempted by a vast majority of candidates.

#### Items 1 (i) and 1 (ii):

**1(i)** Candidates were asked to recognize the narrative voice used in the extract and most of them gave the correct answer.

Answer: Third person narrative voice

**1(ii)** This question requiring candidates to provide one piece of evidence from the extract was well answered by many. They rightly identified third person pronouns like 'he', 'she' and 'they'. Some candidates made reference to characters' names (Kino, Juana) and others referred to the doctor, the beggars, and the villagers.

#### Items 2 (i) and 2 (ii):

This item assessed knowledge of the literary device- simile- and the effect of using it.

**2(i)** Generally well answered by candidates.

Answer: Her eyes were as cold as the eyes of a lioness.

**2(ii)** Most candidates were able to explain the effect of the simile which is to establish a comparison between the eyes of Juana and those of a lioness.

**Item 3**

This item assessed understanding of the following lines:

- (i) “This was her first baby – nearly everything in her world.”

Weaker candidates merely paraphrased/ copied the sentence while abler ones correctly explained the key idea conveyed, that is, the baby was the most precious, the most important of all. The baby was her topmost priority. Candidates who did not lay emphasis on the intensity and degree of love for the baby did not score the mark.

- (ii) “The thing had become a neighbourhood affair.”

This question needed candidates to contextualise the sentence in order to grasp the key idea which is the neighbours showed concern for the baby. Many candidates merely focused on the literal words, giving answers such as: “The neighbours knew about it / the neighbours were talking about it” and they were therefore not awarded the mark.

- (iii) “The whole procession melted away.”

This question proved to be quite challenging as most candidates were unsuccessful in laying emphasis on the key idea which is the crowd disappeared gradually/ little by little/ slowly.

#### **Item 4**

This item required candidates to elaborate on their understanding of the extract, provide an informed personal opinion with close reference/ quotes from the extract to support their answer. The focus should be on the character traits of the doctor.

Key ideas include (but are not limited to) these aspects of the doctor's character portrayal.

- the doctor is money-minded
- the doctor is avaricious
- the doctor is contemptuous
- he is callous
- he is snobbish and arrogant
- he is heartless
- he is inhumane

All these should be supported by analysis, quotes or close references to the extract.

The best answers showed full understanding of the extract, with evidence of analysis that shows the candidate's ability to give an insightful response, with answers well supported by close reference to the extract.

Here are a few samples that will illustrate the range of answers.

#### **Example 1**

“Have I got nothing better than to cure insect bites for those people?” The doctor speaks with disdain and he thinks he is above everyone else. He refers to the people living in the huts as “those people”, showing that he separates himself from them and also holds a feeling of disgust towards them. He also treats the people like animals and does not want to waste his time on them. “Has he got any money?” The doctor only cares about his monetary gain and not about the well-being of a child which makes him insensitive.

The above answer gives an insightful response to the question, with quotes and close reference that support the opinion being made. There is a clear understanding and analysis of the doctor's character and an informed opinion is clearly expressed. This analysis obtained maximum marks.

**Example 2**

“The doctor is very narcissistic. He only focuses on money and on his own benefits. He does not care for people who are in financial distress.

The above response shows understanding of the extract and some evidence of analysis. The reference however is too general and does not support the arguments adequately. This is an example of a weaker response.

**Example 3**

The doctor is not kind and does not like to help others.

This answer scored 1 mark since response shows only a literal understanding of the extract and there is no evidence of analysis.

**Example 4**

doctor was kind. He says that this man was not of his people.

This answer shows a wrong understanding of the extract, hence insufficient to even meet the 1 mark criteria.