

**NATIONAL BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL  
EXAMINATIONS BOARD (GENERAL EDUCATION  
EXAMINATION)**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**NBC/NTC EXAMINATION**

The following fundamentals are needed by candidates for a credit pass in English Examinations and candidates are advised to read and note the essentials.

**GENERAL NOTES ON THE MARKING OF COMPOSITION**

**PURPOSE.**

The paper is designed to test a candidate's ability to use English as an effective means of communication in a given situation i.e. the candidate's ability to express themselves with clarity and coherence in manner appropriate to the audience, purpose, topic and situation. The paper aims at presenting topics covering a wide variety of writing skills, such as: argument, narrative, exposition, description and possibly imaginative writing. Topics are carefully selected to fall within the candidate's experience or knowledge acquired either first hand or through reading.

**RELEVANCE**

The nature of each test is clear: argument, narration, exposition or description. Any deliberate distortion of the nature of the test is rejected. However, an unusual or unexpected approach cannot be rejected without careful thought. The extreme cases where the composition appears to be totally irrelevant, the script is referred to the Chief Examiner.

**ASSESSMENT**

The merit of a piece of writing is judged in terms of the candidate's

success in achieving the purpose, be it to entertain, instruct, inform, admonish or persuade. The judgment will be in various degrees on factors such as:

- (i) adequate treatment of subject matter

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- (ii) originality of approach,
- (iii) appropriateness of language,
- (iv) clarity of exposition / narration / argument etc.,
- (v) balance,
- (vi) mechanical accuracy.

The qualities mentioned above have been arranged in a number of well-defined aspects with a set maximum marks for each aspect.

- (a) Content – 10marks
- (b) Organization – 5marks
- (c) Expression Accuracy – 15marks
- (d) Mechanical Accuracy – 10marks

**40marks**

- (a) **Content:** Ideas and their development. Good points should be indicated by a tick in the margin.
- (b) **Organization:** The writing must be judged as whatever it is intended to be (an article, a speech, a letter of apology etc). The examiner gives credit for a suitable opening, general development and shape of the whole, paragraphing and links between paragraphs, balance, unity, coherence, and a suitable conclusion. The arrangement of paragraphs to form the logical sequences of the composition and the internal structure of the paragraph on unity of topic and treatment is very important.
- (c) **Expression:** The positive qualities looked for under expression include:
  - i. Interesting and convincing treatment of material relevant to the central theme.
  - ii. Clarity and general appropriateness of style including, for example, range and aptness of vocabulary.
  - iii. Effective arrangement and variation of sentence structure
  - iv. Judicious and imaginative use of figurative language.

The examiner indicates good examples of these by a barred tick in the margin.

- i. Particularly appropriate words and connotation.
- ii. The use of sentence types which are particularly appropriate to the purpose of the writing, the audience and the situation.
- iii. Particularly skillful and sophisticated use of punctuation.

The following are penalized under Mechanical Accuracy

i. **Undeniable errors in grammatical structures:**

- The omission of an essential sentence element (e.g. subject predictor, complement).
- Wrong tense sequence
- Misuse or omission of articles, including confusion between countable and uncountable nouns.
- Wrong prepositions
- Misuse of relatives, subordinators conjunctions
- Errors of concord
- Misrelated participles
- Wrong tense forms, e.g. intransitive for transitive verb
- Active for passive and vice versa
- Wrong construction following a verb
- Errors in comparative constructions

This list is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to indicate the type of undeniable grammatical error to be penalized under this heading.

ii. **Punctuation Errors:**

- Each full stop, question mark or exclamation omitted or wrongly used.

- The misuse of omission of quotation marks errors at the beginning and end of a quotation are to count as one error only, both single and double quotation marks are accepted.
- Each comma used where a full stop or semi-colon is undeniably required, insertion of comma between subject, verb subject and object, verb and complement in simple structures only, that is, where no long phrases or omission are underlined, and penalized under expression. Insertion of comma between subordinating or coordinating conjunctions and following clause or group, or between adjective and noun, or verb and adverb. Omission of comma used to separate items in a list of words, phrases or clauses.
- Each capital letter undeniably misused, consistency in the use of capitals is required here.

There is only one penalty for a group, e.g. first bank.

iii. **Spelling Errors:**

Each spelling mistake is ringed, repetition of the same spelling error does not attract penalty. American spelling, if consistent is not penalized.

iv. **Abbreviations**

- a. Initial Letters: In conformity with modern practice, forms with or without the full stop are accepted e.g. N.E.P.A. or NEPA, N.A.B.T.E.B. or NABTEB.
- b. First and last letters, both forms should be accepted e.g. Dr. and Dr. Mrs. and Mrs. Ltd and Ltd.

v. **Hyphenation**

Modern usage allows a good deal of liberty; candidates are not penalized for forms which they frequently see in print. Therefore only undeniable errors (e.g. how-ever, some-one).

Failure to hyphenate a divided word at the end of a line should be penalized Faulty amalgamations, e.g. inspite, infact, afterall, a lot are penalized.

## PART II

### LENGTH OF COMPOSITION

The required length expected is 400/450 words. The examiner usually, before beginning to mark the composition, estimates the „required“ length and indicates the point with lines ruled across the page. No errors are counted for reduction under Mechanical Accuracy after this point, but such errors are underlined, and may be taken into account in the impression mark for Expression.

#### a. **Short Composition**

When the composition falls appreciably short of the “required” length, the maximum mark of Mechanical Accuracy is proportionally reduced. Where the maximum for M.A. has been reduced, it is indicated by the Examiner e.g. 17/10 before the mark of M.A.

#### b. **Very Long Composition**

There is no penalty for a very long composition. But the whole is taken into account for reward or penalty under:

- i. Content
- ii. Organisation
- iii. Expression

#### c. **Passage Assessment (400 words)**

10 words per line	=	40 lines) or 1½ pages
9 words per line	=	45 lines) or 1½ pages
8 words per line	=	50 lines) or 2pages
7 words per line	=	58 lines) or 2⅓ pages
6 words per line	=	67 lines) or 2¼ pages
5 words per line	=	80 lines) or 3½ pages
4 words per line	=	100 lines) or 4 pages

## PASSAGE A

5. **Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.**

Every living in the world depends its existence on food. And nature has provided abundance in this area. Except in the event of severe drought or famine, hardly any being can die because of lack of food if the laws of nature are respected. In the world of animals and plants, this delicate balance is upheld. Food storage occurs only in the world of man and in the world of plants and animals when man decides to be wanton and selfish.

It has been estimated that in Europe alone there is enough food being produced to feed the whole world forever. How then come the tales of hunger and starvation? Usually this is because of selfishness in distribution. There have been many instances when farmers have burnt their crops, or killed farm animals in order to create shortage. All this just to get better prices for their produce.

Almost any food can be farmed. Crops can be grown to make sure the aspects of food are always available. Animal and fish farms can be set up almost anywhere. If man were to think that it is his duty to feed all other men in the world, then he will not worry so much about how much he will be paid for his produce. Crop burners reason that creating a shortage is their way to bigger profits. Actually, they could have gained as much by selling all their produce but for less. In fact, they could have actually saved the cost of destroying the crops.

It will take some time for the world to accept joint responsibility for every action. It will be some time before men realize that the success of the entire species depends on the decisions taken by all of us. In the name of earning more money, man in all parts of the world is destroying the environment. The jungle is being burnt to get land for farming, but there is no real shortage of land. In other parts of the world, techniques of farming have

been discovered which allows farming to be done on very little land. Such techniques can be shared by all and then there won't be any food shortage.

- (a) For each of the following words, find another word or phrase that can replace it as used in the passage.
- (i) abundance
  - (ii) wanton
  - (iii) tales
  - (iv) instances
  - (v) aspects
- (b) What, according to the writer, causes food shortage?
- (c) Why according to the writer, do farmers burn their crops or kill their animals?
- (d) What is the author's suggestion to crop burners?  
"... in order to create food shortages"
- i. What is the grammatical name given to the above expression?
  - ii. What is its functions?
- (f) Suggest a befitting title for this passage

### **PENALITIES FOR QUESTIONS 5 & 6**

Candidates are advised to give one correct answer to a question

- Where two answers are given to a question and one of them is wrong, the candidates scores Zero. If however, both answers are correct, full mark is awarded.
- Where words/expressions are expected to be given to replace words/expression in the passage, they must fit in perfectly. Otherwise Zero will be awarded.
- Answer need not be written in sentences unless otherwise stipulated.
- ½ mark is deducted for errors of grammar at every scoring point.

**MODEL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PASSAGE A**

**QUESTION 5**

**PASSAGE A**

- (a)i Plentifully / bountifully / bounteously / in plenty / lavishly / generously / greatly 1 marks
- ii. cruel / evil / senseless / wicked / devilish 1 mark
- iii. stories / reports / talks 1 mark
- iv. times / cases / situations / occasions 1 mark
- v. areas 1 mark
- (b) the wanton and selfish behaviours of man / wantonness and selfishness of man 2 marks
- (c) because they want to create shortages / artificial scarcity in order to make bigger profits / more profit 3 marks
- (d) they should sell their produce for less to make the expected profit and also save the cost of destroying their crops. 2 marks
- (e) i. Adverbial clause (of reason) 1 mark
- ii. Modifies / qualifies “have burnt and killed” 2 marks
- (f) food security / preventing world food shortage 2 marks
- TOTAL: 25 marks

**PASSAGE B**

**6. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.**

Learning to engage in physical activities early, especially at childhood, is perhaps, the best way to cultivate the habit. Starting as early as possible enables the individual to grow with it and blends with other pastime. For the general well being, exercising regularly is important. Also, the body adapts easily and is not “over-tasked” when the need to exercise arises later.

Unfortunately, the one place in the past where this consciousness was planted early in children, the school, is no longer making provision for it.

Today, hardly is the time set aside for physical activities in many schools. In addition, it is no longer mandatory for school children to participate in any form of physical activities. Formerly, it was an important part of the school curriculum and pupils used to look forward to it because it enabled them to interact with others on a different level. At the same time, they were given the opportunity to exercise the body the right way.

Children in those days grew up with the awareness that exercising the body was an essential aspect of living that should not be discouraged.

On the other hand, forming the habit as an adult, in most cases, does not come easy. This is the reason many adults, who start to exercise late in life find it hard to cope and eventually let go.

Parents can help their children take up the act by getting them involved and taking them along when going for exercise sessions. This is made easier if a neighbourhood exercise class is opted for. Also at home children should be made to participate in household chores such as sweeping, general cleaning, mopping, dusting etc.

Not only adults have need to exercise, children need it too. Encouraging them to begin early is a good thing. It enables them to become more conscious of this vital aspect of life later.

## QUESTIONS

Give another word or phrases to replace each of the following as it is used in the passage:

- pastime
- overtasked
- mandatory
- discouraged
- participate

## SECTION II

### PASSAGE B

#### QUESTIONS 6:

- I. hobby / leisure / activity / sport / game / type of recreation / form of relaxation. 1 mark
- II. over-worked / over-stretched / over laboured / over-stressed. 1 mark
- III. compulsory / obligatory / required / a requisite / necessary / imperative 1 mark
- IV. ignored / discarded / done away with / thrown away / discouraged 1 mark
- V. take part/ engage / get involved / share / play a part / partake / assist / lend a hand to be involved 1 mark

#### SUMMARY

7. **Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow**

Bride price is what is paid on a girl before she is legally married to a man. The payment of bride price is one of our marriage customs. It is recognized throughout Nigeria. The amount paid varies from one ethnic group to another. It may even differ greatly within the same ethnic group. For example, among the Ibos, the bride price is more expensive in Awka Division than in Onitsha. It is the man who pays the fixed bride price to the parents or relatives of the girl. In the years gone by, people used goats, cows and yams to pay their bride price. In some parts of North, some men have to help their parents-in-law in farming as a part of the bride price. Nowadays, money constitutes the principal means of the payment of bride price.

There are various cultural values attached to bride price. To many Nigerians it is a symbol of marriage. It is the price that bestows a high regard on girl. There is also a common belief that with a bride price a girl becomes a

treasure of her husband who must treat her well. Some argue that a bride price replaces a part of the sum of money used to train the girl.

Many factors determine the cost of a bride price paid on a girl. For example, it is certain that the parents of a lady graduate will demand a higher price than that demanded by the other parents whose daughter has got a West African School Certificate. There has never been a general fixed bride price in the country. Some pay more than others. Here the parents play a great part. Even in the areas where the bride prices are considerably elevated, the men do not pay all the amount at once, because there is a proverb in Ibo-land which says that one never finishes the payment of bride price on one's wife. However, the payment of bride price presents many problems to young men and girls in Nigeria. For example, where a bride price is considerably high, a young man has to work for many years in order to save enough for his marriage.

This has often led to late marriages. Sometimes a young man has to borrow money in order to pay the bride price demanded by the parents of the girl. This has led many to bankruptcy.

## QUESTIONS

- a. In **THREE** sentences, categorize the methods of paying bride price mentioned in the passage.
- b. In **TWO** sentences, as stated in the passage, mention the prevalent problems in the payment of price.

## PENALITIES

- 1 mark is deducted for the inclusion of irrelevant material in each scoring point.
- For every correct answer that is not written in a complete sentence, three marks are awarded and other penalties are imposed where necessary.

- Where a preamble taken with different answers does not make a sentence, 3 marks are awarded. This is without prejudice to any grammatical/expression error and irrelevant/extraneous material.
- Where a candidate engages in mindless lifting, the examiner awards zero.
- Where two points are made in one sentence, marks are awarded for one and the other is regarded as relevant.
- If the candidate writes more than the required number of sentences examiner marks the 'required' number of sentences only.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  mark is deducted for wrong spelling.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  is deducted for grammatical/expression error in each scoring point.

### **MODEL ANSWERS TO SUMMARY QUESTIONS**

- a. The methods of paying bride price mentioned in the passage include:
- The use of goats, cows and yams as bride price. (These three must be present).
  - Men helping their parents-in-law in farming as part of the bride price.
  - Money as a principal means of the payment of bride price
- b. One of the prevalent problems in the payment of bride price is that where it is considerably high, a young man has to work for many years in order to save enough for his marriage.

Secondly, a young man may have to borrow money in order to pay the bride price demanded by the parents of the girl (he wishes to marry).

6 marks each