

General Certificate of Education  
Ordinary Level

**Syllabus**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1123

For examination in June and November 2009

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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE Ordinary Level

Syllabus 1123

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### Notes

Candidates for *English Language GCE Ordinary Level* **MUST** enter as follows:

- (a) Candidates in the **Caribbean area** *must* enter for **Subject 1115**
- (b) Candidates in **Brunei** *must* enter for **Subject 1120**
- (c) Candidates in **Mauritius** *must* enter for **Subject 1125 or 1126**
- (d) Candidates in **Singapore** *must* enter for **Subject 1127**
- (e) Candidates elsewhere *must* enter for **Subject 1123**.

*No candidate may enter for more than one English Language subject.*

*Syllabus 1123 is available in June and November.*

### Exclusions

This syllabus must not be offered in the same session with any of the following syllabuses:

- 0500 First Language English
- 1115 English Language (Caribbean)
- 1119 English Language (Malaysia)
- 1120 English Language (Brunei)
- 1125 English Language (Mauritius)
- 1126 English Language Syllabus B (Mauritius)
- 1127 English Language (Singapore)



## **AIMS**

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To develop the ability of candidates to:

- communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing;
- understand and respond appropriately and imaginatively to what they read and experience;
- enjoy and appreciate reading texts in the English Language.

These aims form the basis of a course of study; they may not all be translated into assessment objectives for formal examination.

## **ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

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Candidates should be able to:

- (i) recount personal experience, views and feelings;
- (ii) use language to inform and explain;
- (iii) show an awareness of how spoken and written communication varies according to situation, purpose and audience;
- (iv) read a variety of texts accurately and with confidence;
- (v) select, retrieve, evaluate and combine information from written texts;
- (vi) appreciate the ways writers make use of language;
- (vii) employ different forms of writing to suit a range of purposes;
- (viii) plan, organise and paragraph, using appropriate punctuation;
- (ix) choose a vocabulary which is suited to its purpose and audience, and use correct grammar and punctuation;
- (x) write in Standard English;
- (xi) spell accurately the words within the working vocabulary;
- (xii) write legibly, and present finished work clearly and attractively.

## **SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT**

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IMPORTANT. *This subject is available only as stated in Notes above.*

Two compulsory papers will be set as follows:

Paper 1 (composition) (1½ hrs) (60 marks)  
Paper 2 (comprehension) (1½ hrs) (50 marks)

Paper 1 will contain:

- (a) A composition on one of a number of alternative subjects.
- (b) A task based on a situation described in detail, in words or diagrams.

For information on the Grade Descriptions for Continuous Writing (Composition) see next section.

Paper 2 will consist of a passage or passages of prose upon which questions will be set to test the candidates' ability to understand the content and argument of the given text and to infer information and meanings from it. A question will be included to test the ability to summarise and will be assigned 25 marks.

In this summary question the Examiners reward the selection of precise and relevant detail, a mark being given for each relevant point selected. The maximum number of points that is available for selection is greater than the total mark assigned for this section, i.e. a candidate can score full marks for the content selected without mentioning all the points.

About a third of the marks in the summary question are also allocated for the style and presentation of the answer. Candidates are rewarded for the relevance and organisation of their answers, the ability to rephrase the original language in their own words and sentence structures, and the overall accuracy of their written English.

# GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF CONTINUOUS WRITING

- A1/A2 (40-36)** Apart from **very occasional slips**, the language is **highly accurate**. **Sentence structure is varied** and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. **Verb forms** will be **largely correct** and **appropriate tenses consistently used** to sustain a logical progression of events or ideas. **Vocabulary is wide and precise**. **Punctuation is accurate** and helpful to the reader. Apart from very occasional slips, **spelling is accurate** across the full range of vocabulary used. **Paragraphs have unity**, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with **consistent relevance**; the **interest** of the reader is **aroused and sustained**. **The tone and register are entirely appropriate to the topic**.
- B3/B4 (35-31)** The language is **accurate**; **occasional errors** are either slips or arise from attempts to use ambitious structures or vocabulary that may be imperfectly understood. **Vocabulary is wide enough** to convey intended shades of meaning with some precision. **Sentences show some variation** of length and type, including the confident use of complex sentences to create **some natural fluency**. There may be occasional **slips in verb forms or tense formation** but **sequence will be consistent** and **clear** throughout the piece. **Punctuation is accurate** and generally helpful. **Spelling is nearly always accurate**. **Paragraphs show some evidence of planning**, have unity and are usually appropriately linked. The **response is relevant**, and the **interest** of the reader is **aroused and sustained** through most of the composition. There is evidence of a **genuine effort to achieve an appropriate tone and register for the topic**.
- C5/C6 (30-26)** The language is **mostly accurate**; errors that occur will not mar clarity of communication. **Vocabulary and structures are mainly correct** when they are simple; mistakes may occur when more sophistication is attempted. **Sentences may show some variety** of structure and length, although there may be a tendency to repeat sentence types and 'shapes', producing a monotonous effect. There may be **errors in irregular verb forms** but **control of tense sequence** will be sufficient to **sustain a clear progression** of events or ideas. **Spelling of simple vocabulary is accurate**; errors may occur when more ambitious vocabulary is used. **Punctuation is generally accurate**, although errors may occur when more difficult tasks are attempted e.g. the punctuation of direct speech. **Sentence separation is correctly marked by punctuation**. The composition is written in **paragraphs which may show some unity**, although links may be absent or inappropriate. **The composition is relevant** and will **arouse some interest** in the reader. There may be an impression of lack of originality and/or some evidence of lack of planning. The **tone is usually appropriate** to the topic, although there may be **slips of register** with some unsuitable vocabulary or idiom.
- D7 (25-21)** The language is **sufficiently accurate to communicate meaning**. There will be **patches of clear, accurate language**, particularly when simple vocabulary and structures are used. There may be **some variety of sentence length and structure** but the reader may not be convinced that this variety is for a particular purpose. There may be **errors in verb forms and tense consistency** which cause some **uncertainty in the sequence of events** or **disturb the ease of communication**. **Vocabulary is usually adequate to convey intended meaning**, although it may be insufficiently developed to achieve precision. **Idiom may be uncertain** at times. **Punctuation will be used** but may not enhance/clarify meaning. **Some sentence separation errors may occur occasionally**. **Simple words will be spelt accurately**, but more complex vocabulary may show some spelling weaknesses. **Paragraphs will be used** but may lack unity or coherence. **A genuine attempt has been made to address the topic** but there may be digressions or failures of logic. Compositions may lack liveliness and interest value. The **tone may be uneven**. There may be **some irrelevance**.

- E8 (20-16)** The overall meaning is never in doubt but the errors are sufficiently frequent and serious to hamper precision and may slow down speed of reading. Some simple structures will be accurate but the script is unlikely to sustain accuracy for long. Errors in verb forms and tenses will sometimes confuse the sequence of events. Vocabulary may be limited, either too simple to convey precise meaning or more ambitious but imperfectly understood. Some idiomatic errors are likely. Simple punctuation will usually be accurate but there may be frequent sentence separation errors. Simple words will usually be spelt correctly but there may be inconsistency and frequent mistakes in the spelling of more difficult words. Paragraphs may lack unity or be used haphazardly. The subject matter will show some relevance. The tone may sometimes indicate that the candidate recognises the nature of the topic but only inconsistently. The incidence of linguistic error is likely to distract the reader from merits of content.
- U9(i) (15-11)** There will be many serious errors of various kinds throughout the script but they will be of the 'single-word' type i.e. they could be corrected without re-writing the sentence. Frequent errors in verb forms and haphazard changes of tense will confuse the meaning. Communication is established, although the weight of error may cause 'blurring' from time to time. Sentences will probably be simple and repetitive in structure. Vocabulary will convey meaning but is likely to be simple and imprecise. Errors in idiomatic usage will be a significant feature. Spelling may be inconsistent. Paragraphing may be haphazard or non-existent. There may be evidence of interesting and relevant subject matter and some recognition of appropriate tone for the genre but the weight of linguistic error will tend to obscure or neutralise its effect.
- U9(ii) (10-6)** Sense will usually be decipherable but some of the error will be multiple i.e. requiring the reader to re-read and re-organise before meaning becomes clear. There are unlikely to be more than a few accurate sentences, however simple, in the whole composition. The content is likely to be comprehensible but may be partly hidden by the density of the linguistic error.
- U9(iii) (5-0)** Scripts are almost entirely or entirely impossible to recognise as pieces of English writing. Whole sections will make no sense at all. Where occasional patches of relative clarity are evident some marks will be given. The mark of 0 is reserved for scripts that make no sense at all from beginning to end.

## TEACHERS' RESOURCES

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### A LIST OF AVAILABLE BOOKS WHICH TEACHERS MAY FIND HELPFUL

#### O Level

A.R.B. Etherton, *General Certificate English* (Nelson)

Student's book 0 17 433326 9

Teacher's key 0 17 433327 7

A.R.B. Etherton, *Nelson's Target English* (Nelson)

Student's book 0 17 433071 5

Teacher's key 0 17 433072 3

P.S. Morrel, *Secondary Certificate English* (Nelson) 11 – 16 0 17 433001 4

Edward Redmayne and Joan Redmayne, *Basic English* (Nelson) 11 – 14 0 17 422730 2

Angela Burt, *A Guide to Better Grammar* (Stanley Thornes) 0 7487 0537 6

Angela Burt, *A Guide to Better Spelling* (Stanley Thornes) 0 7487 1234 8

Angela Burt, *A Guide to Better Punctuation* (Stanley Thornes) 0 7487 1122 8

Nigel Kent, ed., *The Student Writer's Guide* (Stanley Thornes) 0 7487 0499 x

Elaine and Peter Robins, *Watch Your English: A Students' Guide to Language* (Oxford)

0 19 553430 1

Robert M. Glover, Gordon Rodway, Patrick Shirley and Helen Toner, *Revision English for O Level* (Cambridge) 0521 644 216