

Examiners' Report on the March 2007 EFL Monitoring Board's English Language Examination

The major weakness pointed out by this exam was Section A, Language Description. While some candidates did extremely well on this section, many others scored below 50%, which effectively ruled out any possibility of their passing the exam. This shows that while people may have a good command of the language, this in itself does not enable one to teach EFL and will not enable one, on its own, to pass this exam. Part One, Language Terminology, while challenging, could easily be prepared for in a relatively short amount of time. Parts Two and Three, Stress Identification and Transcription of Phonemics into Words, were not overly problematic, but Part Four, Phonemic Transcriptions, was, in general, disastrous, with some candidates not even attempting it and others scoring only 2 or 4 points out of 20. Candidates had particular problems with the schwa and other weak forms. With these factors in mind, we would highly recommend candidates to take part in a preparatory course prior to sitting for this exam which would primarily focus on Section A.

Sections B & C, Language Sensitivity & Awareness and Language in Context were not extremely problematic, but the fact that many candidates were lacking in knowledge of collocations and idiomatic language and could not identify and correct problems with spelling, vocabulary, grammar and syntax was cause for alarm. While the format of the exam could be partly responsible for this, we would recommend candidates to read quality literature and newspapers to increase their vocabulary and knowledge of 'educated' English. Again, taking part in a preparatory course could help candidates familiarize themselves with the format of the exam and perform much better on these sections.

Section D, Writing, held few surprises with few candidates doing much better or worse on this section than on the other combined sections. Two main weaknesses, however, were not writing correctly for the genre chosen and going out of point. We would recommend candidates to review writing genres such as reports, essays, formal & informal letters and discursive writing to ensure they write texts suitable to the genre chosen. Candidates also need to read the titles carefully and plan their response to be sure to answer the title.