THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

BAHAMAS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

REVISED SYLLABUS 2012
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FIRST SITTING 2015

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

EXAMINATION & ASSESSMENT DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) English Language Examination is to provide for 80-85% of the students, an assessment of their language skills in the context of specific writing and speaking situations.

The BJC in English Language seeks to provide relevant skills and knowledge for students. It also proposes to challenge teachers to strengthen their instructional programme so that the maximum potential of each student may be developed.

RATIONALE

The study of English Language is the key to effective learning. English is an important medium of national and global communication. As our official language, English not only enables us to transmit our heritage from one generation to another, but also helps us to shape and reflect our culture. Additionally, learning Standard English enhances personal development and social communication.

Therefore, the BJC English Language programme should be designed to provide students with the skills needed to achieve their goals and also challenge them to find the world in which they live aesthetically pleasing. The course of study should enable students to participate fully in society, share experiences, gain understanding and respond sensitively to the views and needs of others. It should produce individuals who are functionally literate and able to think logically, critically and creatively. Exposure to English Language teaching must lead students to develop competence in clear and appropriate expression, to become accurate observers and to listen and read effectively and intelligently.

AIMS

Language is an essential element in an individual's personal growth and development. Consequently, the English Language course offered at the BJC level should:

1. provide opportunities for students to use a wide range of language skills required in everyday situations (vocational, social, recreational, educational);

2. enable students to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using grammatically correct English;

3. enable students to respond with understanding, discrimination and appreciation to what they hear, read and experience.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The BJC Examination in English Language will focus on the following four main areas:

A. Usage

B. Reading Skills

C. Writing Skills

D. Listening Skills

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the ability to:

1. **communicate information garnered from a variety of sources, such as personal experiences, observations, research and reading material;**

2. **organize and present facts, ideas and opinions clearly, concisely and adequately;**

3. **communicate effectively and appropriately what is felt and imagined;**

4. **understand and use a range of apt vocabulary;**

5. **understand meaning, stated or implied, from information read or heard;**

6. **evaluate and present given information according to specific directions;**

7. **use a range of grammatical and mechanical structures accurately, ensuring that the conventions of spelling and punctuation are obeyed.**

SYLLABUS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The same scheme of assessment will be used for candidates across the ability range. Grades expected to be gained will range from A to G.

The BJC English Language Examination will consist of two (2) papers:

PAPER	WEIGHTING	DURATION
1. Writing Skills Essay and Letter Writing	40%	1 ½ hours
2. Listening and Reading Skills; Usage	60%	2 hours & twenty minutes(plus 10 minutes reading time)

SKILLS TO BE EXAMINED

Following is a list of the major skills to be examined across the two papers. Please note that this list does not preclude the possibility of other skills being examined in any of the two papers.

A. Usage

All students should be able to:

1. use correct punctuation, capitalization and spelling;
2. use appropriate paragraphing;
3. use appropriate vocabulary;
4. use correct agreement (subject/verb; pronoun/antecedent; modifiers);
5. use correct tenses (past/ present/ future, etc.);
6. use a variety of sentence structures;
7. re-express portions of a selected passage using specific words in different forms (verbs as nouns; adjectives as adverbs, etc.).

B. Reading Skills

All students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the author's ideas by:

1. selecting correct responses to questions testing knowledge of:
   a) *main and supporting ideas;*
   b) *significant and insignificant details;*
   c) *drawing conclusions and making inferences.*
2. distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion;
3. sequencing ideas according to time, importance or interest;
4. replacing or matching the author's words or phrases with others that have the same or opposite meaning.

C. Writing Skills

All students should be able to:

1. prepare an outline of ideas to be included in a selected essay or letter;

2. write a coherent and logically developed essay or informal letter of at least three paragraphs (approximately 300 words) on a chosen topic (the use of relevant ideas, proper paragraphing, suitable transitional words and phrases and appropriate stylistic devices will be considered when marks are allocated);

3. use appropriate levels of English and correct grammar (emphasis will be placed on the following: spelling, tenses, subject-verb agreement, modifiers, vocabulary, pronouns);

4. use a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences; vary the beginnings of sentences);

5. appropriately use a wide range of vocabulary;

4. write a formal letter using the appropriate tone, style and format; and address an envelope to correspond with the letter.

D. Listening Skills

All students should be able to:

1. recognize a speaker's main idea;
2. note details accurately;
3. follow spoken directions;
4. follow a speaker's sequence of ideas;
5. note transitional or signal words and phrases;
6. note a speaker's supporting details and examples;
7. note a speaker's bias;
8. note emotional appeals;
9. recognize a speaker's inferences;
10. predict outcomes of a talk, lecture, interview;
11. draw conclusions from a talk, lecture, interview;
12. relate a speaker's ideas and information to one's own life and interests.

FORMAT

Paper 1 Writing Skills

This paper will consist of TWO (2) parts.

Part I will test candidates' skill in essay and informal letter writing. A selection of six topics, including pictorials (at least two (2) will require the informal letter format) will be provided calling for Narrative, Descriptive, Expository or Persuasive writing style.

Candidates will be required to choose one topic and will be expected to write at least three hundred (300) words. Responses must show relevance to topic, originality and adequate development.

Part II will involve the production of a formal letter. From a selection of three topics requiring formal letter writing responses (i.e. Request, Invitation, Thank You, Complaint, etc.), candidates will choose one topic and write not more than one hundred (100) words in the body of the letter.

Paper 2 Listening Comprehension; Usage and Reading Comprehension

This paper will consist of TWO (2) parts.

Part I

Candidates will be required to listen to a short story or selected excerpts and respond to questions dealing with main and supporting ideas; speaker's bias and emotional appeal; sequences, comparisons, and conclusions to be drawn from the selections.

Part II

There will be two texts of approximately 300 - 400 words in length, one of which will be a passage, and the other a story, report/s, advertisement/s, data, etc. These will be followed by a variety of questions testing candidates' ability to:

1. understand the main points of the extract, vocabulary, relationships, inferences, and sequencing;

2. summarize and produce information in a different form

3. re-express portions of a passage, using specific words in different forms to reflect their knowledge of sentence structures, sentence sense and the functions of various parts of speech.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS TO BE USED WHEN ASSESSING PERFORMANCE IN BJC ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS 1 - 2

Grade G - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding some basic information, read or heard, at a very simple, straightforward level and conveying it in a very simple manner;
- making very simple but flawed comments on information read or heard; understanding very basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them with some degree of coherence;
- describing experience/s in very basic terms, making a very limited attempt to express what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing very straightforward meanings and very explicit attitudes;
- showing a limited awareness that language is used in different ways;
- making a very limited attempt to communicate ideas and thoughts in writing; sometimes writing in simple sentences but there are major weaknesses in spelling, grammar, punctuation and construction, all of which impair communication.

Grade F - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding basic information, read or heard, at a simple, straightforward level and conveying it in a simple manner;
- making very simple but often flawed comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them with some degree of coherence;
- selecting material and commenting on it at a literal level;
- describing experience/s in basic terms, making a limited attempt to express what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes;
- showing some awareness that language is used in different ways;
- making a limited attempt to communicate ideas and thoughts in writing; writing at least in simple sentences, but there are major weaknesses in spelling, grammar, punctuation and construction, all of which impair communication.

Grade E - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding and conveying information, read or heard, at a straightforward level and sometimes exhibiting an awareness of more complicated factual detail;
- making simple but coherent comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and often presenting them coherently;
- selecting material and commenting on it in a fairly detailed way;
- describing experience/s in fair terms, making a fair attempt to express intelligently what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes and occasionally recognizing what is implicit;
- showing an awareness that language is used in a variety of ways;
- communicating ideas and thoughts in often clear sentences with some paragraphing; there are some weaknesses in spelling, grammar, punctuation and construction, but these do not seriously impair communication.

Grade D - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding and conveying information, read or heard, at a straightforward level and often exhibiting an awareness of fairly complicated factual detail;
- making simple but coherent comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them clearly and with basic accuracy;
- selecting material and commenting on it in a detailed way; exhibiting basic skills of evaluation;
- describing and considering experience/s in fair terms; often effectively and intelligently expressing what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes and sometimes recognizing what is implicit;
- showing some sense of audience and an awareness of a variety of uses of language with some understanding of their appropriateness;
- communicating ideas and thoughts in clear sentences of various kinds, generally with appropriate paragraphing; writing; usually exercising care over spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Grade C - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding and conveying information, read or heard, at a straightforward and a complex level;
- making coherent comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them clearly and accurately;
- evaluating material and selecting what is relevant for specific purposes;
- describing and considering experience in fair terms; effectively and intelligently expressing what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes and often recognizing what is implicit;
- showing a sense of audience and an awareness of a variety of uses of language with some understanding of their appropriateness;
- communicating ideas and thoughts in clear sentences of various kinds; using appropriate paragraphing; exercising care over spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Grade B - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding and conveying information, read or heard, at a straightforward and a more complex level;
- making coherent comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting and ordering them clearly and accurately;
- evaluating material and selecting carefully what is relevant for specific purposes;
- describing and considering experience in good terms; effectively and intelligently expressing what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes; recognizing the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes and in some cases those which are less obvious;
- showing a strong sense of audience and an awareness of a variety of uses of language with some understanding of their appropriateness;
- writing in clear and appropriate paragraphs, using a good variety of appropriate sentence structures and exercising care over accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Grade A - The candidate has demonstrated expertise in:

- understanding and conveying information, read or heard, at both a straightforward and extremely complex level;
- making coherent comments on information read or heard; understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting and ordering them clearly and accurately;
- evaluating material and selecting carefully what is relevant for specific purposes;
- describing and considering experience in very good terms; effectively and intelligently expressing what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and explicit attitudes; recognizing the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes, as well as those which are less obvious;
- showing a strong sense of audience and an awareness of a variety of uses of language with good understanding of their appropriateness;
- writing in well constructed and appropriate paragraphs, using a full range of appropriate sentence structures and showing accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
GUIDE TO CHOICE OF TEXTS

It is important to emphasize that this section of the BJC Revised English Language Syllabus does not represent a prescribed list of texts. Rather, the brief list is designed to serve as a ***guide*** to choice of texts used in the development of school-specific Language Arts courses of study, in order to best serve school-specific needs.

The Revised English Language Syllabus, therefore, aims to present teachers with a variety of texts from which they are able to make reasonably adequate choices in designing their schemes of work and course outlines based on their assessment of their students' strengths and weaknesses, and in preparing their students for the BJC English Language examination. Many of the texts listed below are being used in both government and private schools in The Bahamas. Some are published in *series or levels. ***These texts are not accessible to all teachers and students in all schools; nor do they have to be***. Teaching students to acquire and enhance the ***skills*** focused upon by the various English Language examination papers does not depend on the use of any one set text.

The following is a list of texts from which schools/teachers *may* choose any one or a combination:

Author/Editor	Text	Publisher
Iris Charlton-DePass	COMPREHENSION OUR WAY: A Comprehensive English Course for Junior High School Students	Xlibris Corporation
Neville Grant	*Choices	Longman
Cecil Gray	*English for Life	Nelson Caribbean
Cecil Gray	*Language for Living	Longman
Dave Kemper, Patrick Sebranek, Verne Meyer	*Write Source: A Book for Writing, Thinking and Learning	Great Source Education Group – Houghton Mifflin Company
Clifford Narinesingh	*Developing Language Skills – An English Course for Caribbean Secondary Schools	Royards Educational Books
Uriel Narinesingh & Clifford Narinesingh	*A Comprehensive English Course	Royards Educational Books