

WASSCE / WAEC ENGLISH LANGUAGE (ALTERNATIVE A) SYLLABUS (FOR CANDIDATES IN GHANA)

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1. THE SCOPE OF THE SYLLABUS

This examination sets out to test the different basic skills of communication in English using the medium of speech and writing. The examination will test the receptive and productive abilities of candidates. These abilities will be demonstrated in the following forms: Reading Comprehension, Summary, Vocabulary, Lexis and Structure, Listening Comprehension, and recognition of different aspects of spoken English.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

The objective of the syllabus is to measure the extent to which the aims of the teaching syllabuses of member countries have been realized in candidates' secondary school career. The examination sets out to test candidates' ability to:

- (i) use correct English;
- (ii) write about incidents in English that are appropriate to specified audiences and situations;
- (iii) organize materials in paragraphs that are chronologically, spatially and logically coherent;
- (iv) control sentence structures accurately;
- (v) exhibit variety in the choice of sentence pattern;
- (vi) comply with the rules of grammar;
- (vii) comprehend written and spoken English;
- (viii) recognize implied meaning, tones and attitudes;
- (ix) use acceptable pronunciation that can be comprehended by others;
- (x) pick out and summarize relevant information from a set passage.

3. SCHEME OF EXAMINATION

There shall be three papers, Papers 1, 2 and 3; all of which must be taken. Papers 1 and 2 will be composite and will be taken at the same sitting.

- PAPER 1** This will be multiple choice objective questions covering lexis, structure and literature. Candidates will answer all the 80 questions in 1 hour for 40 marks.
- PAPER 2** will be on essay writing, comprehension and summary. Candidates will be required to spend 2 hours on this paper for 100 marks.
- PAPER 3** This will be an oral test. It will comprise 60 multiple-choice objective questions, all of which must be answered within 45 minutes for 30 marks.

4. **DETAILED SYLLABUS**

PAPER 1: Objective Test – 40 marks for 1 hour

(1) LEXIS

In addition to items testing knowledge of the vocabulary of everyday usage (i.e. home, social relationships, common core school subjects) questions will be set to test the candidates' ability in the use of the general vocabulary associated with the following fields of human activity:

- (i) (a) Building;
 - (b) Plumbing;
 - (c) Fishing;
 - (d) Finance – commerce, banking, stock exchange, insurance;
 - (e) Photography;
 - (f) Mineral exploration;
 - (g) Common manufacturing industries;
 - (h) Printing, publishing, the press and libraries;
 - (i) Sea, road, rail and air transport;
 - (j) Government and politics;
 - (k) Sports and entertainment;
 - (l) Religion;
 - (m) Science and Technology;
 - (n) Power production – hydro, thermal, solar;
 - (o) Education;
 - (p) Communication;
 - (q) Military;
 - (r) Journalism and Advertising.

The term 'general vocabulary' refers to those words and usage of words normally associated with the relevant field of human activity in (i) above which are generally known, used and understood by most educated people, who, while not engaged in that field of activity, may have occasion to read, speak or write about it. Thus, for example, in the vocabulary of transportation by sea, one would expect knowledge of terms such as "bridge" and "deck", which most educated people understand but not "halyard", "dodge", "davit" or "thrust block", which are specialized.

- (ii) Idioms, i.e., idiomatic expressions and collocations (e.g. "hook, line and sinker", "every Tom, Dick and Harry" etc) the total meaning of which cannot be arrived at simply by the consideration of the dictionary meanings of words in the structures in which they appear.

(iii) Structural elements of English e.g. sequence of tenses, concord and the use of correct prepositions, matching of pronouns with their antecedents, etc.

(iv) Figurative Usage

All items will be phrased in such a way as to test the use and understanding of the required lexis, rather than dictionary definitions and explanations. In practice, the test of lexis will be designed to explore, not merely the extent of the candidates' vocabulary but more importantly their ability to respond to sense relations in the use of lexical items e.g. synonyms, antonyms and homonyms.

In the test of figurative language, candidates will be expected to recognize when an expression is used figuratively and not only when it is used.

(2) STRUCTURE

Structure here includes:

- (i) The patterns of changes in word-forms which indicate number, tense, degree, etc.
- (ii) The patterns in which different categories of words regularly combine to form groups and these groups in turn combine to form sentences;
- (iii) The use of structural words e.g. conjunctions, determiners, prepositions, etc.

(3) LITERATURE

The objective questions on Literature will be as follows:

10 questions on Drama

10 questions on Prose

10 questions on Poetry

NOTE: For **Prose** and **Drama** the candidate is to study **one** prescribed text each.

PAPER 2: 100 marks for 2hours

This paper will be divided into Sections A, B and C
Candidates will be required to spend 2 hours on this paper.

SECTION A: ESSAY WRITING (50 MARKS)

Candidates will be required to spend 50 minutes on this section. There will be **five** questions in all and candidates will be required to answer only **one** question.

The questions will test candidates' ability to communicate in writing. The topics will demand the following kinds of writing:

- (i) letter;
- (ii) speech;
- (iii) narration;
- (iv) description,
- (v) debate/argumentative;
- (vi) report;
- (vii) article;
- (viii) exposition;
- (ix) creative writing.

Marks will be awarded for:

- (i) Content: relevance of ideas to the topic;
- (ii) Organization: formal features (where applicable), good paragraphing, appropriate emphasis and arrangement of ideas;
- (iii) Expression : effective control of sentence structure and vocabulary;
- (iv) Mechanical Accuracy: grammar, punctuation, spelling etc.

The minimum length expected is 450 words.

SECTION B: COMPREHENSION (20 MARKS)

Candidates will be required to spend 30 minutes on this section. The section will consist of one passage of least 350. Candidates will be required to answer all the questions.

The questions will test the candidates' ability to:

- (i) Understand the factual content;
- (ii) Make inference from the content of the passage;

- (iii) Understand the use of English expressions to reveal/reflect sentiments/emotions/attitudes;
- (iv) Identify and label basic grammatical structures, words, phrases or clauses and explain their functions as they appear in the context;
- (v) Identify and explain basic literary terms and expressions;
- (vi) Provide appropriate equivalents for selected words and phrases.
- (vii) Recast phrases or sentences into grammatical alternatives.

The passage will be chosen from a wide variety of sources, all of which should be suitable for this level of examination in terms of theme and interest. The passage will be written in modern English that should be within the experience of candidates. The comprehension test will include questions based on (i) - (vi) above in any one paper.

SECTION C: SUMMARY (30 MARKS)

Candidates will be required to spend 40 minutes on this section. The section will consist of one prose passage of about five hundred (500) words and will test the candidate's ability to

- (i) extract relevant information, avoiding repetition and redundancy;
- (ii) summarize the points demanded in clear, concise English;
- (iii) present a summary of specific aspects or portions of the passage.

The passage will be selected from a wide variety of suitable sources, including excerpts from narratives, dialogues and expositions on social, cultural, economic and political issues in any part of the world.

PAPER 3: Oral English - 30 marks for 45 minutes (for School and Private candidates in Ghana)

This paper will test candidates' knowledge of Oral English.

The paper will be a Listening Comprehension Test. It will be made up of 60 multiple-choice objective questions on consonants, consonant clusters, vowels, diphthongs, stress and intonation, patterns, dialogues and narratives:

- Section 1: Test of vowel quality in isolated words;
- Section 2: Test of word final voiced-voiceless consonants in isolated words mainly, but other features such as consonant clusters may also be tested;
- Section 3: Test of vowel quality and consonant contrast in isolated words;

- Section 4: One of the three alternatives below will be used in different years:
 - (i) test of vowel and/or consonant contrasts in sentence contexts;
 - (ii) test of vowel and consonant contrast in isolated words to be

- selected from a list of at least four-word contrasts;
- (iii) test of vowel and consonant contrasts through rhymes;

Section 5: Test of rhyme;

Section 6: Test of comprehension of emphatic stress;

Section 7: Test of understanding of intonation through short dialogues;

Section 8: Test of understanding of the content of longer dialogues and narratives;

NOTE: Tape recorders or any other suitable electronic device will be used for the administration of the Listening Comprehension Test.

FEATURES TO BE TESTED:

(i) CONSONANTS

- (a) Single Consonants – Candidates should be able to recognize and produce all the significant sound contrasts in the consonant system. For the guidance of candidates, a few examples of such contrasts are given below.

Initial	Medial	Final
thigh - tie	buzzes – buses	boat – both
ship – chip	parcel – partial	breathe – breed
fan – van	sopping – sobbing	wash – watch
pit – fit	written – ridden	leaf – leave
pit – bit	anger – anchor	cup – cub
tuck – duck	faces – phases	cart - card
card – guard	prices – prizes	
gear – jeer		

- (b) Consonant Clusters – Candidates should be able to recognize and produce consonant clusters which may occur both initially and finally in a syllable. They should also be able to recognize and produce the consonant sounds in a consonant cluster in the right order. For the guidance of candidates, a few examples are given below.

Initial	Final
play – pray	rains – range
sting – string	felt – felled

scheme – scream
crime – climb
flee – free
three – tree
true – drew
blight – bright
tread – thread
drift – thrift
glade – grade

sent – send
nest – next
ask – axe
lift – lived
missed – mixed
seats – seeds
hens – hence
lisp – lips
coast – coats
marks – masks

(ii) VOWELS

- (a) Pure Vowels
- (b) Diphthongs

Candidates should be able to recognize and produce all the significant sound contrasts in the vowel system. For the guidance of candidates, a few examples of such contrasts are given below:

Pure Vowels

seat	-	sit
sit	-	set
peck	-	pack
pack	-	park
cart	-	cat
led	-	lord
pair	-	purr
park	-	pork
hard	-	heard
word	-	ward
let	-	lit
cat	-	cut
pet	-	pat
hat	-	heart
part	-	port
caught	-	cot
pool	-	pull
bird	-	bed
but	-	bat

Diphthongs

cheer	-	chair
diet	-	date
bout	-	boat
height	-	hate
toy	-	tie
pole	-	pale
beard	-	bared
pot	-	pat

(iii) STRESS

- (a) **Word Stress**

Candidates should be able to contrast stressed and unstressed syllables in words which are not otherwise distinguished. In addition, they should be aware of the possibility of shifting stress from one syllable to another in different derivations of the same word with consequent change in vowel quality. For the guidance of candidates, a few examples are given below.

‘increase (noun)		in’crease (verb)	
‘import “		im’port “	
‘rebel “		re’bel “	
‘convict “		con’vict “	
‘extract “		ex’tract “	
‘record “		re’cord “	
‘subject “		sub’ject “	
‘dispute “		dis’pute “	
‘contrast “		con’trast “	

(b) **Sentence Stress**

Candidates should be aware that sentence stress in English tends to occur at regular intervals in time. English is therefore called a stress-timed language. They should also be aware that in most sentences, unless some sort of emphasis is introduced, only nouns, main verb (not auxiliaries), adjectives and adverbs are stressed. Final pronouns should not be stressed, unless some kind of contrast is intended; relative pronouns should not be stressed, nor should possessive pronouns. Candidates should note that a shift in stress could bring about a change in meaning. The following sentences should be stressed as indicated:

He ‘went to the ‘town and ‘bought some ‘oranges.

I ‘told him to ‘go to the station to ‘ask when the ‘train would ‘leave.

Did you ‘ask him?

I ‘read it but I ‘didn’t understand it.

They arr’ived ‘yesterday.

The ‘man who ‘came.

I ‘fetched his ‘book.

NOTE: There are a few words in English that are pronounced differently depending on whether or not they are stressed in the sentence. These are usually called strong and weak forms.

(c) **Emphatic Stress**

Candidates should be aware of the use of emphatic stress, most commonly to indicate a contrast, which is realized partly as a change in pitch within the

intonation pattern. The falling pitch illustrated below is one of the common ways of indicating this:

He borrowed “my newspaper.	(i.e. not hers)
He “borrowed my newspaper .	(i.e. he did not steal it)
He borrowed my “newspaper .	(i.e. not my book)
“He borrowed my newspaper .	(i.e. not someone else)

(iv) INTONATION

Candidates should be made aware of the different forms English intonation takes in relation to the grammar of the language and the attitudes conveyed by the speaker. There are two basic intonation patterns or tunes: the falling and rising patterns. They should also realize that whereas the normal place for the changing pitch in an intonation pattern is on the last stressed syllable of the utterance (as indicated below), placing the changing pitch elsewhere implies a contrast to the item on which this changing pitch falls. For example:

(a) Falling Pattern

They ar’rived to’ day	-	Statement
‘Where did he ‘go?	-	Wh – question
Come ‘here!	-	Command

(b) Rising Pattern

Did he ‘see the ‘principal?	-	Yes/No question
When the ‘train arrived	-	Incomplete
They arrived to’ day?	-	Question

- NOTE** (i) The two patterns indicated above may be combined in longer sentence, e.g. When the ‘train ar’rived, the passengers were on the platform .
- (ii) Any unstressed syllable following the last stressed syllable of the sentence is said on a low level pitch when the pattern is falling but continues the rise if the pattern is rising. The same rule applies to tags following quoted speech.

THE WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (WASSCE)

LIST OF PRESCRIBED TEXTS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE (CORE) PAPER 2
MAY/JUNE 2013 – NOV/DEC 2016

PROSE

One (1) of the following texts should be studied:

Charles Dickens: *Oliver Twist*
Lawrence Darmani: *Grief Child*

DRAMA

One (1) of the following texts should be studied:

William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*
Efo Kodjo Mawugbe: *In the Chest of a Woman*

POETRY

One (1) of the following sets of poems should be studied:

(1) **NON-AFRICAN POETRY**

- (a)) Robert Frost: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*
- (b) George Herbert: *Death*
- (c)) William Blake: *The Tyger*
- (d) G. G. Lord Byron: *She walks in Beauty*
- (e)) Mohan Singh: *A Village Girl*

(2) **AFRICAN POETRY**

- (a) J. P. Clarke: *Night Rain*
- (b) Kojo Gyinaye Kyei: *I Have Been a Victim*
- (c) Kobena Eyi Acquah: *Gently*
- (d) Richard Nturu: *The Pauper*
- (e) Jared Angira: *No coffin, no grave*

LIST OF SOME ANTHOLOGIES CONTAINING THE POEMS:

Maurice Wollman (ed): *Ten Twentieth-Century Poets*
Harrap's English Classics

David Wright (ed): *The Penguin Book of English Romantic Verse*
Penguin Books

Helen Gardner (ed): *The Metaphysical poets*

B. S. Kwakwa (ed): *An Anthology of Poetry for Secondary Schools*
Ghana Publishing Corporation

S. E. Senanu &
T. Vincent (eds): *A Selection of African Poetry*
Longman

Annemarie Heywood (ed): *Senior Poetry Anthology*
Macmillan

Wole Soyinka (ed): *Poems of Black Africa*
Heinemann

Kobena Eyi Acquah: *The Man Who Died*
Asempa Publishers

M. Afful Boakye (ed): *Anatomy of West African Poetry, 1940 – 2000*
Akonta Publication