# WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## PAPER 2 — ESSAY / COMPREHENSION

2016

### SECTION A

*Answer **one** question only from this section. Your answer should be about 450 words long.*

**1.** Your friend is surprised that after the Senior School Certificate Examination you decided to learn a trade while waiting for admission to the university. Write a letter to him/her explaining the advantages of acquiring a skill in addition to a university degree.

**2.** Write an article suitable for publication in a national newspaper on why corrupt practices are thriving in your country and what can be done to curb them.

**3.** The performance of candidates in English Language in public examinations has been very poor. Write a letter to the Minister of Education in your country stating the causes of the poor performance and suggesting some measures to improve the situation.

**4.** You have been elected chairman of the local government of your area. Write a speech you would deliver at your inauguration, highlighting at least three problems you would deal with during your term in office.

**5.** Write a story to illustrate the saying: **Don't judge a book by its cover**.

### SECTION B

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

For months, the robbers had ravaged the neighbourhood. One household after another had been visited by the gang, night after night. Soon, their strategy was almost predictable. They would announce their arrival with shots fired into the air and call on their chosen host for the night to behave himself by opening the door. Then, they would cart away their loot just before the break of day. They generally did not harm anyone who cooperated with them. For three months, they paid their regular visits to the neighbourhood. Thus, Jagun knew that sooner or later, he would be an unwilling host. He decided to prepare for their visit though when that would be he could not say. He chose not to take things lying down, but he kept his strategy close to his chest.

The robbers turned up at last. They called him by name and ordered him in his own interest to open the door. He hushed his wife and children and directed them to the toilets upstairs. This hacked down the main door. He had double-plated the metal door. The door resisted them. Well, they had brought machetes and a pickaxe. But their tools bounced off the door. Jagun then heard them deciding to make a hole in the wall. So, he waited with a heavy, razor-sharp axe for that action. The robbers' task with an old pickaxe and the machetes was a tortuous one. At last, they made a hole large enough to let a human head in. Patiently, he waited. The leader of the gang decided to go through, but first, he had to clear the debris of the broken blocks. As soon as his hand came through, Jagun hacked it off at the wrist, with just one stroke. The amputated hand was quickly withdrawn. The man kept mum. He announced that everything was well and that his second in command should follow suit. Jagun waited. And, again, a second hand came through with the same result. The handless arm was quickly withdrawn. A third hand met the same fate. When the fourth robber, a young man, lost his hand, he screamed in anguish. The others tried to hush him up, but he cried the more. It was time to beat a hasty retreat. By then, only the driver who was waiting in the get-away vehicle was spared the gory ordeal. At daybreak, the police arrived at the scene and got enough information to hunt down the robbers.

### Questions

**a)** Why was Jagun able to prepare adequately for the robbers' visit?

**b)** What two steps had Jagun taken to confront the attackers?

**c)** Why did Jagun succeed in chopping off so many hands?

**d)** What saved the driver from the gory ordeal?

**e)** Why did the robbers beat a hasty retreat?

**f)** '… he kept his strategy close to his chest.' What does this expression mean?

**g)** '… who was waiting in the get-away vehicle.'

i. What is the grammatical name given to this expression as it is used in the passage?

ii. What is its function?

**h)** For each of the following words or phrases, find another word or phrase which means the same and which can replace it as it is used in the passage:

i) ravaged;

ii) harm;

iii) barked out;

iv) predictable;

v) hacked;

vi) anguish.

## SECTION C

**7.** Read the following passage carefully and answer, in your own words as far as possible, the questions on it.

Thousands of birds fly in the sky but the eagle stands out. It is different from other birds in many ways. It is amazing that there are more than sixty species of the bird. Apart from the vulture, the eagle is the largest of all birds of prey. It has a powerful build, a very heavy head and beak. Although it is not an attractive bird, probably what has endeared it to man are its distinguishing characteristics. It is a symbol of courage, honour, determination and grace. That is why some great leaders emulate its qualities as a guide for good leadership.

The eagle has unusual eyes which are very large in proportion to its head. Its vision is extremely keen and sharp. This enables it to identify not only potential prey but also its enemies from a very long distance. It has been observed that some eagles can spot even a small rat three kilometres away. No wonder some people are said to be eagle-eyed. Besides its keen eyesight, the eagle is known for its fearlessness. It does not surrender in the pursuit of its prey. It has a remarkable hunting strategy. No matter the size of its prey, the eagle will put up a good fight. The bird has been observed to have captured goats that are larger in size than it is.

A close observation has revealed that the eagle loves storms. Like man, other birds run away from storms. Rather than avoiding storms, the eagle takes advantage of them to soar to great heights. It spreads its mighty wings and uses the current as a springboard. It is interesting to note that no other bird can fly as high as the eagle. Research has shown that the eagle can fly up to an altitude of 10,000 feet. Even at that height, it is so swift that it can land on the ground in no time. Indeed, most human beings desire to soar like the eagle.

The eagle nurtures its young ones to maturity. No other bird of prey pays more attention to its young ones than the eagle. It is true that the eagle is aggressive but it is quite gentle to its eaglets. The eagle always builds its nest in high places where enemies cannot reach, thus shielding its young ones. There is a peculiar way in which the mother eagle teaches the young one to fly. She picks up the eaglet with her beak, spreads her wings and flies high. She suddenly releases the eaglet and allows it to fall. In this way, the young one discovers the use of its wings. Quite unlike the other birds of prey, even though the eagle is carnivorous, it does not eat dead meat. In other words, it does not scavenge. It eats raw and fresh meat got from its prey. The eagle is indeed a unique bird that is greatly admired. It is not surprising that it is an emblem of many countries, organizations and groups.

### Question

In six sentences, one for each, summarize six qualities of the eagle that leaders emulate.