WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

JUNE 2023

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THEORY PAPER

Answer three questions in all: one question from Section A and all the questions in Sections B and C.

SECTION A – ESSAY

Answer one question only from this section. All questions carry equal marks. Your answer should not be less than 450 words. You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

1. Write a letter to the Minister of Youth Affairs telling him or her about three foreign practices which have been adopted in your locality and giving him or her reasons why they should be discontinued.

2. As part of your prize for winning an essay competition organized by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), you went on a two-week tour of some interesting places. Write a report for the organizers.

3. Your mother has retired from teaching after 35 years of service. Write a letter congratulating her and suggesting at least three ways in which she could remain active.

4. Many articles have appeared in your school magazine on the need for students to engage in recreational activities. Write your contribution.

5. Write a story to illustrate the saying: **All is well that ends well.**

SECTION B – COMPREHENSION

You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this section. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.

A line in one of the songs by the late reggae musician, Bob Marley is "Where there's a will, there's always a way." The legendary musician may be long dead and gone but every day people continue to demonstrate by their determination that indeed there is always a way out of any problem once the will to tackle it is there. The meaning of this line became even clearer to me when I was teaching in a village school.

The school was in its third year and it had a population of a little more than five hundred students and fifteen teachers. As part of its free education programme, the state government provided furniture, textbooks and notebooks for students. Sport was however not catered for. The principal had to stretch the meagre grant to provide the stationery needs of the school. Students hardly engaged in sports except for occasional running around the field and some aerobic exercises. This near lack of sporting activities resulted in the school performing poorly in inter-school competitions. This gave the principal a lot of worry and he asked the teachers for suggestions on how to solve the problem.

The issue was tabled in one of the staff meetings. Some suggested that the Parent Teacher Association be approached to render some assistance. This did not sail through as it was pointed out that the Association was already taxing its members to build a science laboratory block. Another suggestion that teachers should be levied was also rejected as it was argued that it would not be proper to run the school on teachers' salaries. A third suggestion was that since the school had many acres of virgin land, students could be made to cultivate a few acres and plant corn and cassava. Proceeds from the farm would be enough to procure the necessary sports equipment. This idea was unanimously accepted and an ad hoc committee was set up to work out the details and see to the implementation.

The committee got some migrant palm wine tappers to uproot all the palm trees on the land. They were to sell the wine they got from the trees and keep the money as payment for the service. Students made brooms and baskets from the fronds and generated enough money with which the school bought three footballs and table tennis equipment.

It was the beginning of the rainy season and planting had been done. The crops sprouted and were a beauty to behold. The harvest was bountiful. The huge amount of money realized from the sale of the farm produce was invested in the purchase of all the sports equipment needed by the school. One year later, the school made us proud when it swept the board in the annual inter-school competition.

(a) What two indications are there in the passage that the government funding of the school was insufficient?

(b) Why was the principal not happy with the lack of sporting activities in the school?

(c) State two contributions made by the students to generate funds for the school.

(d) Why was the suggestion to tax teachers rejected?

(e) How was the effort of the committee rewarded?

(f) *... swept the board ...* What does this expression mean?

(g) *Proceeds from the farm ...*

(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, find another word or phrase that means the same and which can replace it as it is used in the passage.

(i) demonstrate; (ii) meagre; (iii) virgin; (iv) procure; (v) migrant; (vi) bountiful.

SECTION C – SUMMARY

You are advised to spend about 40 minutes on this section. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.

I recently attended a programme entitled Healthy Smile. The programme was organized by the Association of Dentists in my region to sensitize the public on the need to develop and maintain good oral hygiene.

The main speaker, who was a dentist, noted that many people came to clinics with various oral diseases that were preventable if only they had taken their oral health seriously. Not brushing the teeth regularly encourages the accumulation of plaque along the gum line, creating a suitable environment for bacteria to thrive, especially between the gum and the teeth. This could lead to gum infection known as gingivitis, and if left untreated can develop into more serious gum infections such as periodontitis and trench mouth.

Unfortunately, oral diseases are not limited to the mouth. Medical research has shown that over five hundred species of bacteria live in the mouth at any given time. These bacteria constantly form a sticky colourless film called dental plaque. If these bacteria get into the bloodstream, coupled with a compromised immune system, an individual may develop an infection in another part of the body. For instance, a person with a weakened immune system may develop endocarditis, a situation where bacteria from the mouth enter the bloodstream and get attached to the lining of the heart valves.

Besides losing one's teeth, more serious health conditions may develop. Recent research has shown that pregnant women with severe gum infections are at increased risk of producing labour-triggering hormones too early. The theory is that oral bacteria release toxins, which travel through the mother's bloodstream to the placenta and interfere with the growth and development of the foetus. This increases the chances of having preterm and low birth weight babies.

After the initial sensitization, the organizers taught the attendees how to care for their mouths and emphasized that people must brush and floss regularly. The facilitator demonstrated that the brush must be moved across the teeth using a small circular motion, cleaning one tooth at a time and reaching the crevices between the teeth. The tip of the bristles must remain against the gum line but must not be pressed too hard. This motion should be repeated to clean the backside of the upper and the lower teeth. The tongue should also be cleaned with a few gentle brush strokes from the back to the front. After brushing for about three minutes, the mouth should be thoroughly rinsed with water or a good mouthwash.

Another facilitator noted that many people's diet needed to be replaced with a more balanced and healthy one. She said that people must avoid snacking on sugary food such as candies and sugary gums. This made people laugh as almost everyone was chewing on a gum or a snack to ward off the fatigue of having been seated for so long. The facilitator further noted that serious health challenges are preventable by regularly visiting a dentist. At least once every six months was recommended. We were also encouraged to enquire from dentists about some kind of materials used to coat the top chewing surfaces of the back teeth. These are called dental sealants and serve to protect the teeth from decay.

The moderator of the programme summarized the issues raised and concluded that healthy teeth are needed for a healthy smile. It was a truly refreshing time as I was thoroughly educated on oral care.

(a) In three sentences, one for each, state three possible consequences of poor oral hygiene.

(b) In three sentences, one for each, state three ways to ensure good oral hygiene.

End of Theory Paper