WASSCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2012

PAPER TWO (THEORY)

SECTION A

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

1. Write an article for publication in a national newspaper on the topic: *Tourism can be of great benefit to the country and should be encouraged by the government.*

2. Write a letter to the Minister of Education, suggesting three ways of making public secondary schools in deprived communities more attractive to students.

3. Write a letter to your friend in another school recounting the experiences you went through when you visited the city for the first time.

4. Write a story that ends with the words: *That experience was one of the best things that ever happened to me.*

5. The Social Life Club of your school is organising a symposium on the topic: *The role of the youth in a rapidly changing society.* As a speaker, write your speech.

SECTION B

*Answer **all** the questions in this section.*

6.

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

We, parents and guardians, are in a dilemma as to how best to handle our children and wards. The young men and women of this generation have tremendous opportunities as well as serious challenges before them. However, it is obvious that most of them are finding it rather difficult to make the right choices. They need guidance from us. But will they allow us to guide them?

On the one hand, we feel duty-bound to help our children succeed, out of sheer love for them and the wish to associate with those who are successful. On the other hand, we know that these youngsters belong to a completely new generation which makes some peculiar demands on them. The trend now is to leave them to fend for themselves and to take care of their own destiny, unlike in our days when our parents virtually ordered our lives for us. We then had very little to say and not many arguments to advance in terms of our choices and preferences.

In reality, one or two factors make us rather sceptical about the choices they make. First of all, we believe that the present-day youth tend to look at things superficially and so do not give their choices very serious thought. We would like to tell them that all that glitters is not gold.

The other disturbing factor is that they allow their peers to have too much influence on them. They are therefore inclined to take whatever their peers suggest rather than what we offer them. Their excuse is that they do not want to feel left out or be ridiculed by their peers if they do not conform.

We want to assure our youth that we have nothing against them, neither are we envious of the unique opportunities they now have. We wish them well for the reasons stated above. We only want to appeal to them to accommodate our advice and suggestions, even if they would want to package them as their own. There is no doubt that if they do, they will find that we have given them useful tools to help them to grapple with any challenges they may face.

Questions

a) Why do parents want to guide their children?

b) In what way are the children of this generation different from those of the past?

c) Why did children of the older generation not find it difficult to take decisions?

d) State two factors that make parents uneasy about the decisions their children take.

e) '…for the reasons stated above.' What are these reasons?

f) '…who are successful.'

i) What is the grammatical name given to this expression?

ii) What is its function?

g) 'But will they allow us to guide them?'

What figure of speech is used in this expression?

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

i) handle ii) tremendous iii) sceptical iv) disturbing v) accommodate vi) grapple with

7.

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

There is an urgent need now for the law-enforcement agents to enforce strictly environmental laws and regulations in order to preserve and protect the country's fast-dwindling natural resources from further destruction. Until such laws and regulations are made to bite, that is, fully respected and defended, greedy individuals including chainsaw operators and illegal miners would continue to exploit our resources at the expense of all of us, especially our rural folk.

Incidentally, reports indicate that even some traditional chiefs who are supposed to be the custodians of the land and its natural resources are in league with the perpetrators of these criminal activities. But the law is no respecter of persons and so all such illegal operators as well as their collaborators should be apprehended and prosecuted. This must be done without fear or favour to deter other criminals from flouting environmental laws and regulations.

One wonders for how long we, as a nation, can continue to fold our arms and look on helplessly while a few irresponsible individuals deplete our forests and destroy our rivers, lakes and farmlands with impunity. The country's climate is being adversely affected by wanton deforestation which can lead to drought. Our dismal failure to enforce the laws has resulted in the loss of valuable foreign exchange. One recalls that several other nations are thriving simply by making the best of their natural resources. Such countries have maintained buoyant economies as a result of a careful protection of their resources. It is very obvious that providence has endowed our country with abundant natural resources such as gold, manganese, etc. and other agricultural produce for export and local consumption such as timber and cocoa. Other significant natural resources will soon be added with the discovery of oil and gas in large quantities.

All these resources constitute great national assets which should improve the economy considerably and go a long way to enhance the living standard of the people. That is why it is a pity that our law-enforcement agents have not lived up to their responsibility by way of putting a stop to the incessant exploitation of these resources.

Questions

a) Mention two main groups of people who are destroying the natural resources.

b) Give two reasons why the author wants the stakeholders to act now.

c) Write two adjectives which the author uses in condemnation of the destroyers of natural resources.

d) What penalty does the author recommend for those who destroy the resources?

e) Why is the author disappointed in the nation?

f) '…for export and local consumption'

i) What is the grammatical name given to this expression?

ii) What is its function?

g) '…the law is no respecter of persons'

What figure of speech is used in the expression above?

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

i) to bite ii) collaborators iii) apprehended iv) flouting v) enhance vi) incessant

8.

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

Space exploration started more than half a century ago and has brought many benefits with it. No one can deny that it has taken the world of medicine a big step forward in that substances of medicinal value can now be made under specially controlled conditions prevailing only in space.

Space exploration has laid bare some of the secrets of the universe. By providing accurate knowledge about the heavenly bodies and the laws which govern them, scientists now know that space is limitless and actually stretches to infinity.

Such precise knowledge has enabled scientists to know the movements of the planets and predict eclipses, partial and total, up to the very day, hour or exact moment of occurrence. This precious knowledge has freed people from the superstitious views they held. And this is a great relief because when such beliefs have gripped people they tend to bring the clock of development backwards and actually bring all progress to a standstill.

In the field of communication, space exploration has done marvelously well for all mankind. Sensitive scientific instruments which can measure great distances with accuracy have been developed. Space exploration has helped to pinpoint the exact positions of oilfields and other mineral deposits for some countries. Needless to say, this has brought a lot of improvement to the financial and economic well-being of these nations. More importantly, space exploration has brought clear understanding of the weather. Scientists are able to make useful predictions to save thousands from natural disasters.

While some people urge scientists on for further space exploration, others condemn it in no uncertain terms. They advance sound reasons to discourage the venture. Space exploration, they assert, is one of the most expensive enterprises imaginable, but of little or no real economic value to anyone. One spaceship costs a huge sum of money which can best be used to feed the hungry mouths of the earth's teeming masses. A lot of people do not have access to safe drinking water and some are even plagued by various kinds of diseases. If scientists have not solved worrying earthly problems, why should they spend billions on a venture from which mankind does not reap any concrete benefit?

Apart from the above-stated objections, space exploration is risky beyond measure. On one occasion a crippled spaceship and its human cargo were blown into pieces on re-entry into the earth's atmosphere. There is no denying the fact that space exploration, more than any other pursuit, has worsened atmospheric pollution.

Space is, indeed, a vast, endless expanse with bodies of varying sizes which are either too hot or too cold and totally unfavourable for human habitation. Why then should we embark on a venture that does not benefit anyone?

Questions

a) In three sentences, one for each, state the benefits of space exploration.

b) In three sentences, one for each, state the arguments advanced by critics of space exploration.