

# Examiners' Report

## GCE O Level Swahili (7642)

June 2006

delivered locally, recognised globally

Examiners' Report

June 2006

All the material in this publication is copyright  
© Edexcel Limited 2006

## 7642 SWAHILI, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

---

The examination paper as a whole was the same in its demands as those of previous years. However, some candidates experienced difficulties with vocabulary and grammatical constructions, particularly in Questions 1 and 2. As in previous years, candidates reflected better skills at translating passages into English than into Swahili. The essay question was well attempted; more comments on it are in the relevant section below.

### Question 1

The passage was partly descriptive and partly analytic in style. It dealt with the importance of preserving the environment, and, in particular, the importance of water to human beings. The vocabulary reflected words of daily usage such as 'lungs' and 'brain'. Most candidates did well on this passage, but the following words were occasionally mistranslated:

kuhifadhi	to guard, to protect
ovyo	carelessly, haphazardly
kikomo	limit
tembo	elephant
ziwa	lake
mapafu	lungs
ubongo	brain
rasilmali	capital, resource
unaokinga	which prevents, limits

### Question 2

In this section the candidate was asked to translate a passage regarding the development of rural areas of Africa into Swahili. The passage dealt with the development of rural areas of Africa; its vocabulary contained words which one normally hear in news reports on the radio, or reads in newspapers.

The following words proved to be challenging to some candidates (Alternative translations to the ones given here were also accepted where the meaning was retained):

ministers	mawaziri or waziri (mistranslated as 'wabunge').
rural	za shamba; si za mjini
major	kuu
population	idadi ya watu
group	kikundi
recommendations	mapendekezo

**It is recommended that:**

- (a) teachers should revise vocabulary dealing with development in general
- (b) teachers should practise translation exercises in class from English sentences in newspapers and textbooks

**Question 3**

The sentences test knowledge of the candidates over a wide range of grammar and syntax. **It is recommended** that teachers should get their students to be familiar with at least the categories of grammar reflected in the questions (as given below). The numbers (1) to (5) refer to the sentences in Question 3 of the examination paper.

- (1) The use of the main and auxiliary verbs.  
'We hope that you will get better soon'.  
Some candidates have found it difficult to translate 'We hope that...' Tunatumai kwamba/kama.. Some were not familiar with the word 'hope' as 'kutumai'. Instead, they translated it as 'tunafikiri', 'We think'. This happened last year as well.
- (2) The use of the negative, with personal object.  
'I am very annoyed with John; he has not telephoned me'.  
Nimekasirika sana na John, or, Nimemkasirikia sana John; hakunipigia simu.
- (3) The use of the habitual tense: *hu-*, denoting action done as a habit:  
'Samantha is a good student; she always does her homework'  
Samantha ni mwanafunzi mzuri; hufanya kazi yake ya nyumbani kila mara.  
The construction did not prove difficult for candidates. Although some candidates have not used the *hu-* tense, variations denoting the habitual sense were accepted through the use of phrases such 'kila mara', wakati wote', etc. Please note that 'saa hii' [sometimes written erroneously as 'saaii'] was not accepted as a translation for 'always'; 'daima' was accepted.
- (4) The use of the interrogative, negative:  
'Why did you not read the report which Juma gave you yesterday?'  
Kwa nini hukusoma taarifa/ripoti uliyopewa jana na Juma?/ ambayo Juma alikupa jana?  
The slight ambiguity inherent in the sentence – 'you' as singular/plural – was accepted. The problem for some candidates was in the construction of the relative ('which Juma gave you').  
  
It is **recommended** that teachers should practice the relative construction in class.
- (5) The use of the conditional; both clauses are in the negative:  
'If you do not think that I should write the letter, I won't.'  
A similar construction was given in last year's paper. It is interesting to note that candidates have repeated the same errors. A better way of translating the

first negative is through the use of *hu...* in – ‘kama hufikiri’ , ‘if you do not think that’.

Some candidates have translated, ‘I won’t’ by ‘sita’ as a word on its own. This is not acceptable, as the full word, ‘sitaandika’ should be written.

#### **Question 4**

Candidates were required in this question to write an 250 words essay on one of the four given topics. All candidates followed the instructions and have written the essay in Swahili.

The four topics this year were:

- (a) Describe a match in which your school played against another school. Your school won. State the reasons why you think the other school lost the game.
- (c) Imagine that you and your friend were lost. Tell us how you found your way back home.
- (d) Statistics show that car accidents are increasing. How, in your opinion, could such accidents be reduced?
- (d) Your friend is worried that he or she is unfit. Write a letter advising your friend about how to keep fit.

Some essays were extremely good, reflecting a well thought out structure and a body that was imaginative. Although all four topics have been attempted, the majority of the candidates opted for topics (a), (b) and (d). While some candidates, as indicated, have written well, some others have tended to get distracted and to ramble. As the essay is not meant to be lengthy, candidates should be advised to be precise and the point.

#### General recommendations on the paper as a whole:

It is recommended that teachers should

- (a) revise the previous year’s examination paper periodically during the year
- (b) advise candidates to pay attention to the way a word is divided in Swahili. A number of candidates tended to divide a Swahili word when it should have remained a unit. Examples are:  

haja nipigia (simu)	He has not phoned me
Hu fikiri	You do not think
- (c) advise candidates to plan their essays and develop a structure for its body.
- (d) revise relative clauses in class, especially the amba- construction
- (e) translate, periodically, passages from newspapers