



FIJI PUBLIC SERVICE
EXAMINATION "S & U": PAPER A
ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

5th December 2007

TIME: 2 ½ Hours (9:00am – 11:40am)
(10Mins. Reading Time)

TOTAL MARKS: 100

INSTRUCTION TO CANDIDATES

1. Ensure that your **Index Number is written on** the top right hand corner of every sheet of paper you use. Your name **Must Not** appear anywhere on the answer script.
2. You may use blue or black ink or ballpoint pen. You **Must Not** use a red pen or pencil and answers written in either of this, the answer script will not be marked.
3. Access to reference material during the exam is forbidden.
4. Read each question & instruction very carefully. Note the allocation of marks to each question and distribute your time accordingly.
5. **Ten (10) minutes** is allocated to read the questions. **Do Not** start writing until you are told to do so.
6. Use of Mobile phone in the class/ hall is not permitted. It should be switched off before the commencement of the exam.
7. Please note that a candidate will be disqualified from sitting or to continue with the examination if one does not comply with the above and other instructions announced by the invigilator.

QUESTION 1**COMPREHENSION**

[15 marks]

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow:

Education Reform in Fiji

The present Fijian education system focuses on preparing pupils for examinations in core academic subjects. It is very formal in character, with teachers adhering closely to prescribed syllabus that does not encompass the needs of students from rural areas whose future will be earning an income from the land. As teachers are judged by the performance of their pupils in examinations, they focus on cramming students with examinable information from the curriculum.

Secondary school students described how teachers lecture and write copious notes on the board while the class sits passively, writing down and memorising information, and completing formal textbook exercises. There is so much prescribed material to be conveyed to classes that teachers have no time to teach in depth or discuss material, and no time to teach the key life skills of questioning analysis, evaluation and problem solving. Large class sizes of 40 or more also prevent teachers from encouraging creativity, giving individual attention or forming mentoring relationships with individual students. Students commented that teachers use passive learning as a way of keeping control over their classes. *'Children should be seen but not heard, and teachers see their role as just to give out information and the notes. They do not expect a response and so do not get one.'* School inspections focus on whether the prescribed syllabus is completed rather than the quality of teaching. Established teachers are not updated with refresher course, so do not learn modern creative methods of teaching.

Pupils who perform well in examinations progress through a formal education system geared towards white collar work and tertiary education. Those who perform poorly in secondary school are directed to technical and vocational education (TVET) within their school or in one of the 60 dedicated TVET centres. This has led TVET centres to be labelled as the 'dropout schools' and means that, from the outset, pupils at these centres, or in TVET courses offered by 94 per cent of Fiji's secondary schools (MOE, 2005:11), are regarded as failures. Except in the case of two secondary schools that have recently introduced a choice of streams, students who achieve pass marks in the formal examination system are not admitted to TVET, even if they wish to obtain technical or vocational employment. Moreover TVET schools generally do not teach to industry standards, so TVET students are not regarded by industry as trained and employable.

At the national level the education system is not meeting the needs of the community, since each year more than half of approximately 15,000 school leavers join the ranks of educated unemployment (MOE, 2005:14). At the same time, Fiji is experiencing a critical shortage of skilled tradesmen and has to recruit overseas workers at high cost to meet the demand.

At the community level the current education system fosters elitism rather than egalitarianism, and leads to under-utilisation of human resources.

At the individual level, students who are not academically oriented are likely to feel bored, inadequate or dissatisfied in other ways, and this contributes to negative and self-destructive behaviours. Moreover, if they do find employment, graduates from passive, rote-learning based education systems tend to lack initiative, problem solving ability and other skills for successful performance in the workplace.

Source: The State of Pacific Youth - 2005

- Question 1. How are non-urban Fiji students disadvantaged with the current education system?
(1 mark)
- Question 2. The word encompass means
a. all b. includes c. everybody d. selected few
(1 mark)
- Question 3. Due to what reasons are teachers unable to offer a holistic teaching process?
(1 mark)
- Question 4. How is a disproportionate teacher to student ratio in classrooms a hindrance to better teaching methods?
(1 mark)
- Question 5. The word passively as used in the passage means
a. showing no concern b. responsive
c. non-violent d. not active
(1 mark)
- Question 6. Explain... "TVET schools are for dropouts is not merely a perception but a reality".
(1 mark)
- Question 7. A major setback of TVET schools is
(1 mark)
- Question 8. How is the education system falling short of its responsibilities at the national level?
(1 mark)
- Question 9. The fact that Fiji is facing a critical shortage of tradesmen, what does it tell us about the Fiji's education system?
(1 mark)
- Question 10. In what way do academically disoriented student face a bleak future?
(1 mark)
- Question 11. The acronym TVET stands for
(1 mark)
- Question 12. The term egalitarianism as used in the passage stands for
a. superior class b. belief that all are equal
c. indifferent d. subjective
(1 mark)
- Question 13. How are school inspections a big farce?
(2 marks)
- Question 14. Explain "...under - utilisation of human resources" in the context of the passage.
(1 mark)

Question 15. Summary Writing

Read the following passage and in one paragraph of 80 - 90 words summarise the key ideas given.

Youth Suicide

Youth suicide is a very serious concern, and occurs throughout the Pacific. Research suggests that a major cause is conflict resulting from societal transition (Booth, 1999; Rubinstein, 1992, 1995). Compared with other parts of the world, suicide rates for both young males and females tend to be high in the Pacific, and in the 1990s female youth suicide rates in Samoa and among Fijian Indians were found to be among the highest recorded (Booth, 1999:1). Rates are also alarmingly high in parts of Micronesia, including Chuuk, Marshall Islands and Guam (Hezel, 2001). Also disturbing is that fatality rates from suicide attempts in the Pacific tend to be high by world standards exceeding 50 per cent in Samoa in the 1980 and early 1990s (Booth, 1999:6). This can be attributed to the use of methods with high fatality rates such as ingesting the herbicide Paraquat and stripping electric cables.

Because the reported number of cases is still relatively small and fluctuates from year to year in small island countries, it is difficult to identify trends. Rather, it appears that suicide events tend to occur sporadically, and sometimes precipitate outbreaks because of the 'copy cat' effect. For example, Marshall Islands experienced a peak in suicide in 2003, with 23 completed suicides and 37 attempts, many among youth. Suicide was described by youth interviewed for this report as a final act of desperation, likely to be made following alcohol consumption, when youth issues became too much to handle.

Source: The State of Pacific Youth - 2005

(5 marks)

[I] Grammar and Vocabulary

15 marks

Question 16. Filling in the Gap - [one word per blank space]

Young people comprise a very substantial proportion _____1_____ Pacific populations. It is estimated _____2_____ in the Pacific region as a whole in mid 2005 there were around 1.6 million people aged 15- 24 years. _____3_____ most Pacific countries this age group accounted for around 20 percent of the total population, and at _____4_____ half the population was under age 25. In Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu the latest censuses indicate more _____5_____ half the population is under age 20 years. In the remaining UNICEF and UNFPA focus countries discussed in this report, more than half are aged less than 30 years except in Palau, where the median age is just below 31 years.

Source: The State of Pacific Youth - 2005

(5 marks)

Question 17

(a) Antonyms

Which word is an acceptable antonym for legal in the following sentence?

In some countries it is **legal** to buy and sell gold coins

A. bad B. illegally C. unlawful D. illegal

(1 mark)

(b) Synonym:

Give a word or phrase similar to the word in bold given below:

Then we made **contingency** plans for all the problems we could foresee.

(1 mark)

(c) Homophones

words which are spoken in the same way but which have different meanings - eg. maize - maze

For the following word, write down a homophone then use the homophone in a sentence to show that you know how to use it.

write - _____

(1 mark)

Question 18. Changing Forms

In each of the following sentences, put in a suitable form of the words in brackets.

(a) The (starve) man licked his lips (hunger) when he saw all the food on the table.

(b) (Impatient) and (Care) are two major causes of traffic accidents.

(4 marks)

Question 19 Word Choice

In each case, choose the right words from the brackets.

- (a) The fire started _____ (during, while) we were asleep.
- (b) We must find out the _____ (cause, factors) of the disaster?
- (c) There is no mistake. I _____ (ensure, assure) you that we have checked the invoice carefully.

(3 marks)

Part II Language Appropriateness

Question 20. Punctuation

- (a) Using a comma. Place a comma in the appropriate place.

The price of fuel has affected the economy and the result has been disastrous for many people.

- (b) Using a colon. Place the colon at the appropriate place.

He has many hobbies photography, cycling and underwater swimming.

- (c) Using a semicolon. Place the semicolon at the appropriate place.

I can say this of at least three important currencies: the US dollar, which has risen sharply in recent months, the Japanese yen, which relies on the strength of the Japanese export market, and the German mark, supported by a strong economy and right control expenditure.

- (d) Using an apostrophe. Place an apostrophe at the appropriate place,

Where is Uncle's car? Its next to Mrs Lees.

- (e) Using a hyphen. Place the hyphen at the appropriate place,

Human beings are hard working species.

(5 marks)

QUESTION 21 Read the extract below which is part of a parliamentary debate and then answer the questions that follow.

Mr President, we have before us a paper titled *Opportunities For Growth - Policies and Strategies for Fiji in the Medium Term*. Honourable Members are reminded that this is a policy paper. It sets out the objectives and the policies of government over the next few years, for the economic, social and political development of our nation. It recounts progress over the past few years in achieving the orientation and the basic economic policies that were put in place by the Interim Government. In broad terms, it sets out what is still to be done.

It does not contain any new strategies or policies that have not been explained and debated. In a sense, this Paper is a substitute for the five-year development plans that were customarily put before Parliament over the past 30 years. How effective the policies that are set out in this Paper would be, will depend on what government can do and what actions it can make to achieve this. It is essentially a framework, for it is inconceivable that timings, demands and patterns will not change in the next five years, but it does set out an argued basis for our economic planning. Because it is such a comprehensive statement, I will not attempt to deal with more than a couple of issues which I think are basic to our economic development under any plan.

Source: Parliamentary Debate, 1992

- (a) For whom is this extract intended? (1 mark)
- (b) The tone of the extract is _____. (1 mark)
- (c) Give a reason for your answer in (b) above. (2 marks)
- (d) What feature in the sample suggests this sample is a speech? (2 marks)
- (e) Quote a direct address used in the sample. (2 marks)
- (f) Comment on the use of the phrase **Honourable Members**. (2 mark)

