

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**

**SEC**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**May 2012**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

## SEC Examiners' Report – May 2012

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#### 1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

A complement of 5326 candidates registered for the May 2012 SEC English examination. Out of these, there were 2874 candidates who opted for Paper Syllabus A and 2452 candidates who sat for Paper Syllabus B.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	% PAPER A	% PAPER B
2012	5326	54.0	46.0
2011	5371	53.2	46.8
2010	5692	50.9	49.1

TABLE 1 – Percentage of candidates sitting for Paper Syllabus A and Paper Syllabus B

#### 1.1 Absences

Out of the 5326 registered candidates, there was a total of 137 candidates who were absent for all the components of the examination. Out of these, 11 were Syllabus A applicants and 126 applicants, by far a larger number, were absent from the Syllabus B Paper.

YEAR	PAPER A		PAPER B		TOTAL	
2012	11	0.4%	126	2.4%	137	2.6%
2011	22	0.4%	123	2.3%	145	2.7%
2010	27	0.5%	148	2.6%	175	3.1%

TABLE 2 – Number and percentage of absentees in Paper Syllabus A and Paper Syllabus B

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### 1.2 Grade Distribution

The overall performance of the cohort sitting for SEC English May 2012 is indicated below:

PAPER	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE U	ABS	TOTAL
<b>II A</b>	170	531	694	616	568	---	---	284	11	<b>2874</b>
<b>%</b>	5.9	18.5	24.1	21.4	19.8	---	---	9.9	0.4	<b>100</b>
<b>II B</b>	---	---	---	147	442	610	510	617	126	<b>2452</b>
<b>%</b>	---	---	---	6.0	18.0	24.9	20.8	25.2	5.1	<b>100</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>5326</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 3 – Grade Distribution for SEC English Language May 2012**

### 1.3 SEC English Language

The English SEC examination is designed to test the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in two papers, Paper 1 and Paper 2. Each paper carries a total of 100 marks.

Paper 1 is made up of Part 1a, featuring the aural component of listening comprehension (30 marks), Part 1b or the oral component of picture interpretation (10 marks), Part 1c or role play (10 marks) and Part 2 which is made up of the language use component (50 marks). Paper 2 consists of Part 1 which is the writing component (40 marks) and Part 2, the reading comprehension and brief writing component (60 marks).

Paper 1 is the same for all candidates sitting for SEC English but Paper 2 sets different papers for candidates of Paper Syllabus A and Paper Syllabus B, as per SEC syllabus for English Language (2012).

		Percentage Weighting of Papers (100%)
<b>Paper 1</b>	<b>Part 1a</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Part 1b</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Part 1c</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Part 2</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Paper 2</b>	<b>Part 1</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Part 2</b>	<b>30</b>

**TABLE 4 – Scheme of Assessment**

## 2.1 Paper 1 Part 1a - Listening Comprehension

This component of the paper entails listening to two texts and completing brief tasks on both of them. The two texts presented are always similar in word length and level of difficulty, and the set of texts is uniform in terms of themes and tasks across each sitting. Writing is kept to the bare minimum in order not to detract from the receptive skill of listening.

This year, the first set of texts, Passage A, consisted of a radio news bulletin and carried 14 marks whilst the second set of texts, Passage B, consisted of a transcript of a radio programme on stories of pets coming to their owners' assistance and carried 16 marks. In all sittings, the tasks on the first listening text included: ticking the categories of the news items heard, grid filling and multiple choice while those on the second text included underlining the main idea, sequencing of ideas and marking a series of statements as True or False, confirmed by a reason. In this manner, information processing at whole text level, paragraph level and lexical level was tested. Thus, these tasks, testing comprehension of the general to the more specific items of information, were varied but consistent across all sittings.

### Performance

Satisfactory performance was noted in the listening comprehension. The majority of candidates, both in Paper A and Paper B, achieved more marks in the second passage. In general, candidates fared best in the first task of each passage (ticking the categories of news items / underlining what the pet story is about) designed to test the general comprehension of the texts. Response in these two initial tasks was very good overall showing that candidates were able to grasp what the text was all about. The candidates also scored highly in the task (task 2) requiring them to place ideas in the correct order in Passage B. This year good performance was noted in the task (task 3) testing comprehension of vocabulary items in Passage A.

This satisfactory performance was not evident in those tasks entailing more specific listening. Marks were lost in the grid-filling task (task 2) of Passage A since candidates were not always precise in the information they gave e.g. not giving the full name of the organization or giving a percentage not a number/name or vice versa. The task on True/False statements in Passage B proved to be the most challenging of all as candidates were further required to justify their choice by making a careful analysis of what they were listening to. There were instances, however, where candidates either gave the wrong answers or else correctly stated whether the statement was True or False yet provided the wrong reason. There were also a few instances where candidates guessed True or False wrongly but then went on to provide a reason that contradicted their True/False answer.

## 2.2 Paper 1 Part 1b - Role-Play

This component of the speaking examination involves the candidates taking on a role in order to engage in a brief verbal exchange with the examiner and to execute some communicative functions, as dictated by the English Language syllabus (2012). Two situations, Situation A and Situation B, are offered during every session. The contexts and prompts accompanying these situations are uniform across all sittings. These role-plays aim to test the ability of candidates to communicate in as natural a speaking context as possible.

This year, the situation running consistent in all role-plays engaged the candidates in talking about how they intend to spend their leisure time. The contexts presented included joining a hobby club, participating in a fund-raising activity, helping a charity group or doing voluntary work. Each situation gave six prompts which were numbered on purpose to assist the candidates to develop a fluent dialogue. The prompts, similar in all situations, required the candidates to talk about some activities that their hobby club/voluntary work entailed; to describe the person running the club/voluntary organization; to invite a

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friend along; to advise this friend on how best to manage attending a session/meeting and to suggest when to meet up, by way of concluding the dialogue.

### Performance

In general, the responses were fairly satisfactory with candidates engaging successfully in delivering a dialogue as per prompts given. The greater number of candidates, in fact, performed better in this speaking task. Most of the candidates followed the prompts and achieved the task.

However, some carelessness was noted. At times, the candidates' responses to prompts 1 and 2 overlapped, or else were incomplete as in prompt 4, when the candidates neglected the second part of the prompt and failed to *encourage your friend to join*. Prompt 3, requiring a character description of the person running the club/activity, cost some candidates some marks as they gave a physical description instead. Marks were also lost when the responses given remained rather basic, at times even monosyllabic, or when the pronunciation was very weak.

### 2.3 Paper 1 Part 1c - Picture Interpretation

This second component of the speaking examination requires candidates to engage in a brief discussion on a topic of general interest. Visual prompts, together with a set of questions about the topics, are provided to enhance the candidates' speaking turn. All visual prompts presented serve only to ease the candidate into speaking and certainly not for scrutiny of detail in the visuals. The questions are purposely formulated to avoid any ambiguity or bias towards any candidate/s over others.

This year, two visual prompts, Picture A and Picture B, as well as a uniform number of questions were offered in every sitting in order to facilitate the discussion. The topics for discussion were: Food and Eating; Watching Films; Practising Sports; Choosing a Career; Holidays and Having Friends. In all sessions, the two visual prompts presented different aspects of these topics thereby assisting the candidates in developing their ideas. The questions were mostly wh- questions to engage the candidates in expressing an opinion or a preference, to describe, to discuss, to argue, to explore etc, as set by the speaking objectives of the English Language syllabus (2012).

### Performance

Most candidates performed satisfactorily in the task set by this component of the paper. The topics were very familiar, the two pictures allowed for comparison and the questions were varied so that the majority of candidates were able to speak at a reasonable length about the pictures and were able to answer the questions without much difficulty or confusion.

However, instances of poor practice were noted. At times, candidates communicated in limited vocabulary or else related the fairly obvious, lacking the depth and level of detail that the visual prompts suggested. The less able candidates tended to stick to certain details depicted in the pictures and were extremely limited in ideas and vocabulary when the prompts unfolded into the more generic discussion. In such cases, the responses were too brief and a good number of questions had to be posed in order to keep these candidates engaged long enough in conversation.

### 2.4 Paper 1 Part 2 - Language Use

The second component of Paper 1 tests the candidates' knowledge and use of the grammar and structures of the English language as required in different contexts of everyday life. This write-on paper tests both accuracy and appropriateness of the language.

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This year, the language use paper presented nine tasks, ranging from word formation, to punctuation, to cloze exercises, to tenses, to linking ideas and to sentence rewriting. Each of these nine tasks were contextualised in order to render them more meaningful. The responses required in each task were purposely graded to cater for the range of abilities of the cohort in this sitting.

### Performance

There were some candidates who proved to be very familiar with the English language and scored highly. They gave correct responses and accurate spelling as they fulfilled the various tasks.

However, poor performance was noted in the following instances:

**Exercise 1** - word formation in the context of an article on A Healthy Lifestyle.

Candidates lost marks mostly because of spelling mistakes, even of very familiar lexical items like *decisions* (number 1) and *daily* (number 10). The verb *empowered* (number 3) and the noun *expertise* (number 4) were tricky and the negative prefix in *discouraged* (number 7) was overlooked.

**Exercise 2** - punctuation of a brief dialogue between Jim and a travel agent.

Many candidates struggled in this task. At times, there seemed to be no knowledge of punctuation marks at all, especially in the case of the use of the inverted commas/question mark when closing an interlocutor's turn. A number of candidates did not understand that *id* was to be written as *I'd* and wrote *I.D.* instead. Other candidates even misunderstood the rubric and worked the exercise in the reported speech. Others even changed the dialogue and presented it as a narrative paragraph.

**Exercise 3** – verbs in the correct form in an article of a study on musical memories.

Candidates were challenged by this task. Marks were lost for carelessness in not writing *Had* (number 9) with a capital letter. The most common mistakes were the passive verb *was left* (number 3) and the third conditional for number 9 and 10 *Had ... would not have been*.

**Exercise 4** - tag questions in a dialogue between two friends.

This task proved to be the hardest with some candidates not even scoring any marks. Many candidates seem not to have any idea of what question tags are and instead completed the questions their own way. Tag questions in numbers 1, 2 and 4 were more problematic. In number 1, many wrote *can I* or *aren't I*; in number 2, *hadn't we?* was written as *shouldn't we*, and in number 4, the majority wrote *isn't it*. Many other times, the question mark was left out which cost the candidates a precious mark.

**Exercise 5** - cloze exercise in the context of an article on the popular British dish of Porridge.

Many candidates did not score highly in this task, betraying a lack of familiarity with the language. Many left the gaps blank, others filled them irrelevantly while others knew the vocabulary but lost the marks because of inaccurate spelling. The most difficult was number 2 *body*; the spelling of *than* in number 3 is still problematic, and *stirred* (number 9) was difficult to work out and to spell.

**Exercise 6** - linking ideas in the context of an incident.

Candidates found linking ideas to be difficult. *So much so* (number 5) was the hardest and in other cases, it was the spelling of *even though* (number 1) and *in fact* (number 3) that cost the candidates marks because they were written as one word.

**Exercise 7** - forming phrasal verbs in a brief narrative.

Many candidates managed to work this task correctly which is an improvement on previous years. The most common mistake was seen in *called out* (number 2) but others lost marks because they did not put the verb in the correct tense.

**Exercise 8** - sentence rewriting in the plans made by Julie and Alex.

This was quite a challenging task because of the different grammar in each response. Numbers 1 and 3 were generally not achieved, showing that many still do not know how to use both the third and the second conditional correctly. The last response was the most confusing of them all.

**Exercise 9** - idiomatic expressions in two brief narratives.

This task, though testing only common idiomatic language in a context still proved to be the hardest to tackle. Marks were generally very low. There were even cases when the candidates left the gap blank.

## 2.5 General Comments on Paper 1

The average marks in Question 1 and Question 2 for candidates sitting for Paper 1 is indicated below:

Paper Syllabus	Q1a. Listening (30)	Q1b,c. Speaking (20)	Q2. Language Use (50)
A	26.0	14.0	25.6
B	20.9	10.7	13.8

**TABLE 5 – Average marks in SEC English Paper 1**

Although there was some improvement in the overall performance in Paper 1, better results could be achieved in all components. The two skills of listening and speaking together with the examination techniques in the respective tasks need to be practised with the cohort. Candidates need to understand the importance of understanding the rubric so that the tasks set can be achieved and the full complement of marks gained. Attention to detail, most especially in spelling and punctuation, is even more significant in Question 2 which marks candidates precisely in accuracy of language use.

## 3.1 Paper 2 Question 1 - Writing

This part of the paper requires candidates to write fluently and accurately on a title of their own choice from those presented. The candidates opting for Syllabus A are expected to develop their writing to 320-350 words whereas the candidates registered for Syllabus B have to develop their task to 180-200 words. Candidates are specifically instructed to pay attention to aspects of vocabulary, grammar, paragraphing, layout, spelling and punctuation.

This year, three different writing tasks were offered. In both Paper A and Paper B, candidates were given the choice of a short story, an article or an email and thus, candidates were expected to show their ability to narrate, argue and give their views, as set out in the current English Language syllabus, in tasks which are practical and realistic.

### Writing Paper 2A/Paper 2B

In Paper Syllabus A and Paper Syllabus B, all three tasks in each paper were attempted but to varying degrees:

Task Type	Paper 2A %	Paper 2B %
Short story	52.4	19.1
Article	29.5	15.7
Email	18.1	65.2

**TABLE 6 – Percentage Distribution of Writing Tasks in Paper 2**

In general, there were instances in both Paper A and Paper B where candidates presented pieces of writing that were interesting to read, relatively free of inaccuracies and within the word brackets, thereby managing the task very well. A handful of instances in each case showed a very good and, at times, an excellent command of the English language and a range of vocabulary that was well above average.

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More specifically, in Paper 2A, quite a good number of candidates who attempted the narrative (task 1) did very well as they came up with original story lines and had the linguistic competence to achieve the task. The approach and the organisation were, on the whole, satisfactory. There were some very well written articles (task 2) in both papers where the material was clearly structured and the range of thematic vocabulary was satisfactory. There were some good articles in Paper 2A where candidates showed their ability to put forward the various reasons why young people should be encouraged to travel in a convincing manner. Most emails (task 3) in both papers displayed correctly filled email 'grids', and were written well enough to achieve the task set. In Paper 2B, the concept of a *festival* was understood by the vast majority as most mentioned that the festival included music, food and drink, and other activities and was spread over a number of days, as is typical of festivals in Malta.

### Poor performance in Writing Paper 2A/2B

Instances of weak performance in the writing of both Paper Syllabus A and B candidates were noted. In general, candidates lost marks for going out of point or not reading the title well, weak expression and also because of length, as most pieces of writing were longer than that required.

More specifically, however, marks were lost in terms of the following marking criteria:

Task achievement and relevance suffered when the titles were not carefully considered. In Paper 2A, there were some narratives that resulted in a rushed development of the story line, often with very little importance given to the main element of the whole task, and in the narrative writing of Paper 2B, the items *rush hour* and *piercing scream* were problematic for certain candidates resulting in irrelevant writing. Again, in Paper 2A, there were many candidates who did not understand what *express your concern about* meant. Other candidates also ignored the fact that this is a formal email, and used rather informal language. Likewise, in Paper 2B, those candidates who did not give importance to the fact that the cousin was coming from abroad and made no reference to travel and accommodation arrangements lost marks. In the Paper 2A article, those candidates who instead wrote generally about the benefits of travelling abroad or the pros and cons of travelling failed to achieve the task as did those candidates in Paper 2B who wrote about reading as a hobby.

Organisation and Linking of Ideas between and within paragraphs were lacking. Linking devices, including the relative pronoun, were not used as often as they should have been used, hence the use of a comma when a linking word was called for. Most times, ideas were quite weak and not well developed, or else, were just thrown haphazardly into paragraphs, with certain ideas recurring somewhere else within the same piece of writing. There were instances in Paper 2B where candidates just presented ideas as randomly as they occurred without any attempt at organising them. It seems that a paragraph means only a short sentence or two. It was also noted that though some candidates do link one paragraph to the other, there is no linking of ideas within the same paragraph.

Vocabulary was not always advanced, accurate or appropriate. There were many instances of repetitive language, mostly very basic e.g. *nice, very, many, a lot, good* and unidiomatic language with candidates resorting to a direct translation from Maltese to make do e.g. *I listened to a mass, people will come more, we were walking one after one; come and make a week with us.*

Spelling is still problematic. Basic spelling mistakes were, as in past years, frequent with *where/were, their/there, because* just to name a few.

Grammar and Punctuation are weak points still. There were too many instances of incorrect subject-verb agreement and confusion in the case of narrative tenses. Basic errors in punctuation abounded, with candidates using capital letters indiscriminately and often showing an inability to distinguish between the comma and the full stop. This applies too to the use of apostrophes.

Length in the writing task is not being taken into consideration. There is a tendency to not heed the word brackets in the writing of both papers 2A and 2B even though this is set as a writing instruction. In the

narrative writing task especially, candidates got carried away with their story telling and exceeded the limit by a good number of words. On the other hand, the emails and especially the articles tended to be short as a result of the candidates not having enough ideas or not developing their ideas well enough.

### 3.2 Paper 2 Question 2 - Reading and Writing

In this component of the paper, a reading comprehension including a summary task and a brief writing task are set, in both Paper Syllabus A and Paper Syllabus B. The texts in each sitting purposely vary in topic and in type in order to ensure a more accurate representation of the candidates' reading abilities. The reading skills tested range from reading for gist, reading for detail, inference, working out the meaning of vocabulary from context, summarising part of the information and working out the author's intention. The questions, meant to test the candidates' ability to read, understand, evaluate and interpret the reading material, may range from multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, inference questions, locating information, True and False questions and giving a reason and explaining the meaning of a word or phrase. Writing skills are tested at the end of the paper by means of a brief read-and-respond task .

#### Reading Paper Syllabus A

This year, the Paper 2A comprehension task featured two reading passages: an informative text on life in underground Paris and a personal account of a young storyteller, Sita Brand. The questions tested candidates on a variety of comprehension skills, including understanding the general gist of the information given, understanding at paragraph level and understanding more specific lexical items like expressions and vocabulary, confirming statements and giving a reason. Following the questions on the first passage, candidates had to write a summary of between 90 and 100 words on the main events in the history of underground Paris. The brief writing task at the end required candidates to write a letter, using only between 70-80 words, inviting a cousin to attend a book fair.

#### Performance

##### Passage A

The majority of the candidates gained full marks or almost full marks for questions 1 and 6 which tested general understanding of the reading passage. Those questions geared at processing more specific items of information, such as questions 8 and 9, both wh-questions proved to be the most challenging, as were those questions requiring an explanation of phrases (question 2 *cabs glide* and question 7 *got a fresh jolt from punk culture*). Performance in other questions targeting vocabulary items (question 4) was, on the whole, satisfactory though marks were forfeited for incorrect spelling. When confirming statements in question 5, candidates often failed to provide the correct reason. Reference question 7 was within most candidates' competence, though items (a) and (f), where candidates had to provide reference to the possessive, cost the majority of candidates marks.

Adequate performance was noted in the summary task. Though, on the whole, the main events in the history of underground Paris were identified, difficulties included clarity and accuracy in expression and appropriate linking of sentences. Another problem for a substantial number of candidates was respecting the word count. It was a pity to note that some candidates did not attempt the task at all.

##### Passage B

Candidates provided the most correct responses in questions 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9 which required them to identify facts or straightforward information from the text. On the contrary, candidates struggled the most when answering questions 10 and 11 as candidates had to interpret and explain language expressions or phrases that were being used in a non-literal way. Questions targeting comprehension of phrases were: question 1 *storytelling came to be in her blood* which the candidates managed but question 5 *I meandered a bit really* , question 10 *a story is honed and shaped in different directions* and question 11 *safety net* proved to be challenging. Question 4, directed at vocabulary comprehension was completed

correctly most times. Likewise, in question 8 candidates often provided the correct phrasal verbs but lost the marks when they did not write the phrasal verb in full (e.g. *branched* instead of *branched out*).

## Writing

Most candidates scored highly in terms of appropriate format and tone for the informal letter. The main errors noted in the letter were mainly due to inaccuracy in language use, hence spelling mistakes, very simple or basic vocabulary, lack of idiomatic expressions, syntactic errors, and wrong salutation. Once again, the word count was problematic, with candidates going beyond the stipulated length.

## Reading Paper Syllabus B

The Paper 2B comprehension task also featured two reading passages: a personal account of a trip to Bangkok and an informative text on the benefits of teenagers taking up boxing. Again, the questions tested candidates on a variety of comprehension skills, including understanding the general gist of the information given, understanding at paragraph level and understanding more specific features like expressions and lexical items, confirming statements and giving a reason. The writing task was a letter between 50-60 words, encouraging a friend to join a boxing class in summer.

## Performance

### Passage A

Candidates demonstrated satisfactory understanding of the gist of the passage as question 1 was correctly answered. On the whole, candidates did well in questions 2 and 7 which tested the comprehension of lexical items but then found question 11 (*cocoon*) difficult. Candidates also did well in those questions where they had to identify specific items of information from the passage, such as in questions 5 and 13, as well as question 8 where the task entailed listing information. Reference question 12 was achieved by a good number of candidates, except for items (b) and (e), where the majority of candidates did not indicate the possessive of *its* and *their* referred to in the passage. However, performance was generally poor in those tasks requiring candidates to explain items of information in their own words, such as in questions 4 and 6. Also challenging were question 3 (*a little human comedy*) entailing the comprehension of a phrase. Questions 9 and 10, both wh- questions, cost the candidates some marks.

### Passage B

Likewise, in the second passage, candidates appeared to have understood the general gist of the text. On the whole, candidates found questions which involved lifting specific items of information from the text, as in questions 2, 3 and 8 quite manageable, as were questions which required listing, such as question 5. Also within the cohort's competence was question 6, based on the comprehension of individual lexical items. On the other hand, it was evidently more challenging to successfully complete questions which required a response in the candidates' own words, such as question 9, or to tackle questions which involved reading between the lines, such as question 4 requiring an explanation of the phrase *surf through life*, and question 7 asking for the meaning of *exploitation*, which was particularly challenging for the great majority of candidates, since many did not seem to understand the meaning of this word. In question 10, where the candidates were asked to decide if a statement was True or False and to give a reason for their choice, there were mixed results. It was sometimes apparent that candidates simply tried their luck with the True/False part of the task.

## Writing

The better responses were those that came straight to the point and drew on the passage for information, without copying directly from the text. Although almost all the candidates achieved the aim of the task, that of encouragement, many scored low marks nonetheless because of accuracy. A number of candidates had problems with spelling, tense usage, sentence structure and syntax. There was also some carelessness in the layout of the letter as a good number of candidates did not include the date,

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others used a too formal salutation, such as *Yours sincerely*, and yet others left out the salutation. Quite a number of candidates ignored the word limit, often going over the 60-word limit.

### 3.3 General Comments on Paper 2

The average marks in Question 1 and Question 2 for candidates sitting for Paper 2 is indicated below:

Paper Syllabus	Q1. Writing (40)	Q2. Reading and Writing (60)
A	22.9	35.0
B	16.5	29.7

**TABLE 7 – Average marks in SEC English Paper 2**

Paper 2, primarily concerned with testing the skills of reading and writing, merits more rigorous preparation on behalf of the candidates, not least in examination technique. Candidates need to work on reading and understanding the different rubrics, and to carefully plan their work so that they may be able to achieve the tasks set and acquire the maximum marks possible. In Question 1, better use needs to be made of the blank space in the examination paper for planning so that the writing is better organized and more coherent and in Question 2, more attention has to be given to what the questions are actually asking so that the answers given are more pertinent. This also includes consideration of the length of writing required as this features in tasks of both questions 1 and 2 in both papers.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The best scripts in this year's sitting showed candidates who are able to write fluently and accurately and are confident in the use of the English language whereas the performance of other candidates leaves much to be desired. So many marks were forfeited because of lack of attention to detail.

Time needs to be spent on reinforcing basic skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling; all four skills tested need to be practised and time needs to be devoted to examination practice. Rigorous preparation and total commitment to the tasks at hand are both essential for an improved overall language performance.

Chairperson  
Board of Examiners

July 2012