

3.0 ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

The English examination consisted of two sections:

Section A – Objective items; **Section B** – Composition writing.

3.1 GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

Table 6 below shows the performance of candidates in English in the 2014 KCPE examination. Similar data for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 is also provided for comparison.

Table 6: General performance in English for the last four years.

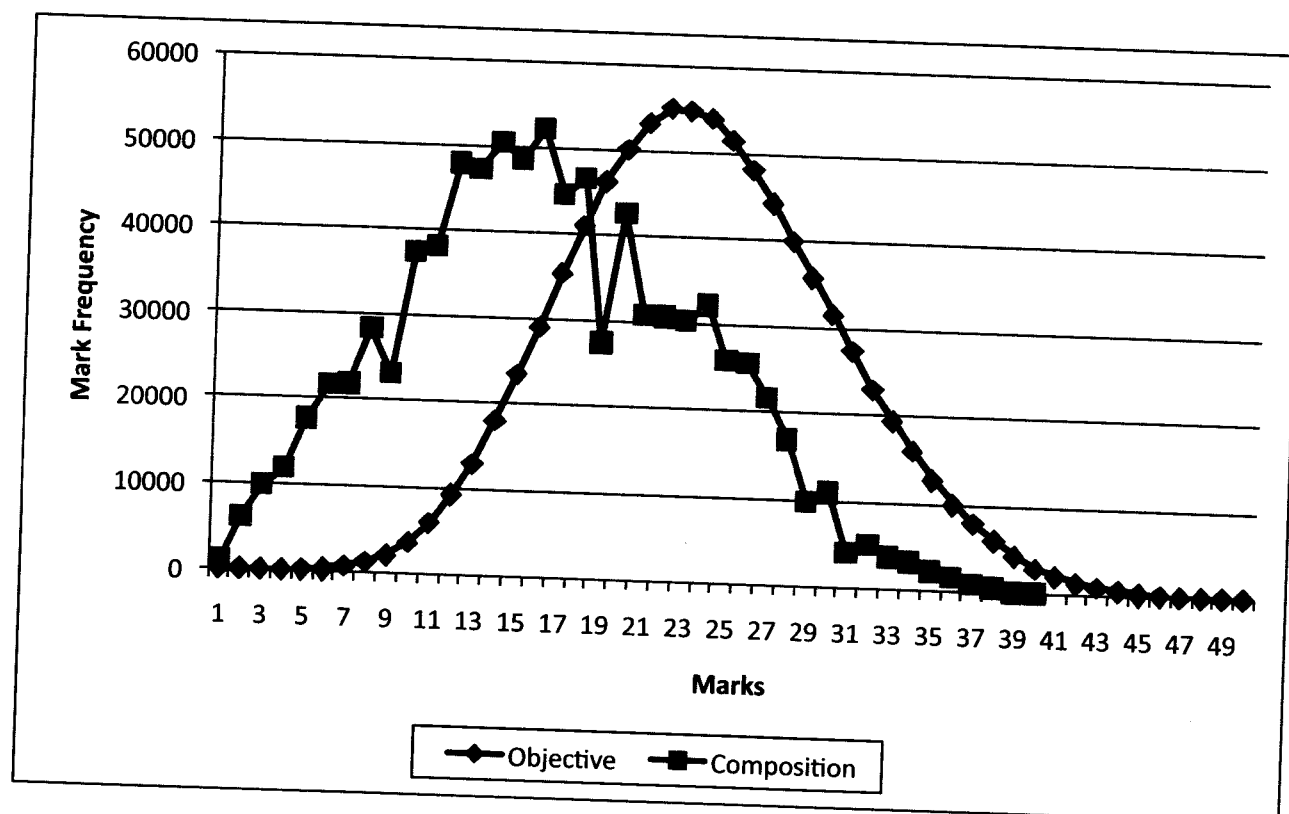
Year	2011		2012		2013		2014	
Paper	Obj	Comp	Obj	Comp	Obj	Comp	Obj	Comp
% Mean	46.24	42.47	49.88	42.43	53.06	41.90	47.64	41.45

From Table 6 above, the following can be deduced:

- That the percentage mean for the objective paper declined by **5.42** points from **53.06** in 2013 to **47.64** in 2014;
- That the percentage mean for the composition paper declined slightly by **0.45** points from **41.90** in the year 2013 to **41.45** in 2014.

Figure 1 below shows the performance pattern in the two papers graphically.

Figure 1: Frequency of marks in the two English papers



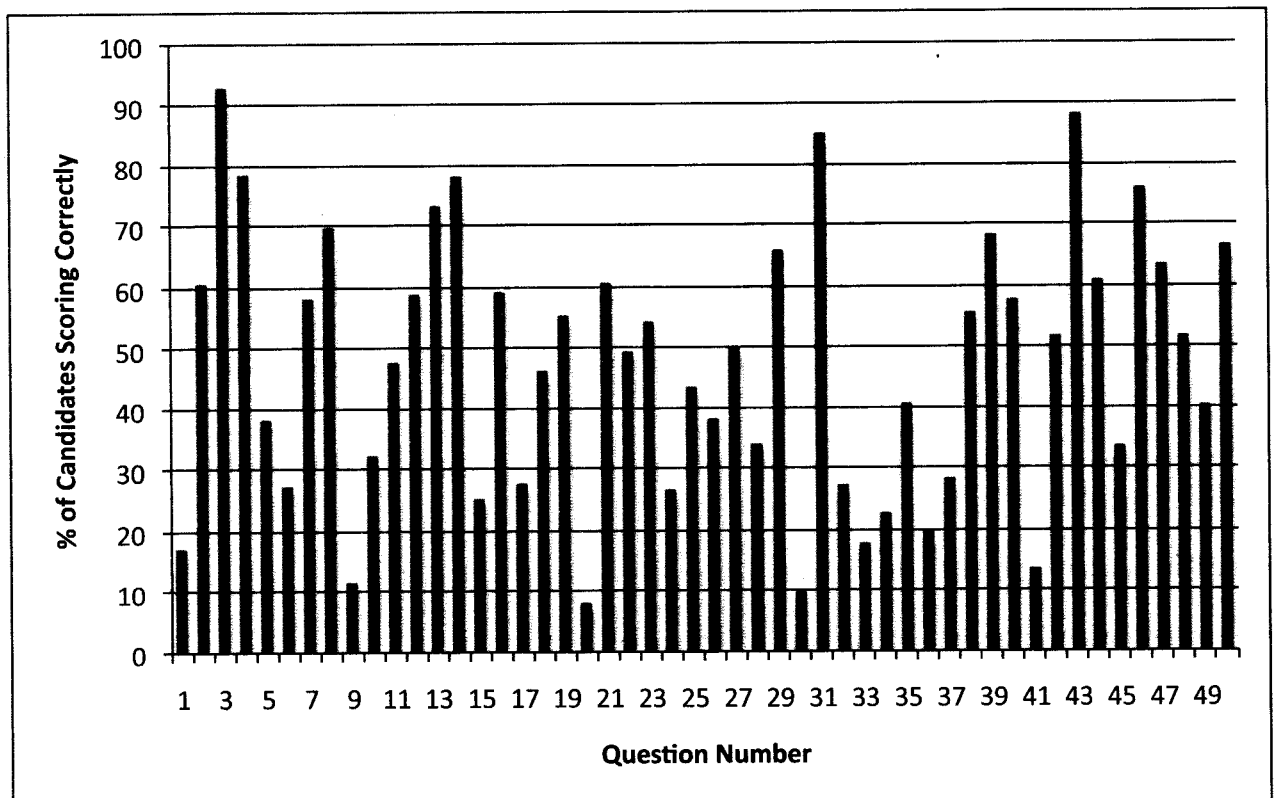
3.2 SECTION A: OBJECTIVE PAPER

The percentage mean for the paper declined to **47.64**, and is comparable to the 2007 level when it was 47.02.

3.2.1 Analysis of Selected Items

Figure 2 below shows the pattern of performance per item in the objective paper for a sample of **879,370** candidates whose average mark was 23.82 out of 50 (a percentage mean of **47.64**), with a standard deviation of 6.29.

Figure 2



From **Figure 2** above, it can be observed that there were fourteen (14) questions in the year 2014 KCPE English Objective paper in which only 30% or less of the candidates scored correctly. These questions, together with the percentage of candidates scoring on them correctly, are shown in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Questions with a facility index of 30% and below.

Question Number	1	6	9	15	17	20	24	30	32	33	34	36	37	41
% Scoring Correctly	16.73	27.05	11.39	25.03	27.19	7.88	26.48	9.58	27.06	17.69	22.41	19.59	28.23	13.38

Questions **1, 6, 9** and **15** were based on the cloze passage below. Four out of fifteen items in the cloze passage gave candidates problems.

Questions 1 to 15

Read the passage below. It contains blank spaces numbered 1 to 15. For each blank space, choose the best alternative from the choices given.

Songs have been and continue to be an important part of our tradition. For thousands of years, songs have been used for a variety of 1. For example, songs have been used by communities to 2 feelings of joy during occasions such as weddings, birthdays 3 graduation parties. In funerals, songs communicate the sadness and sorrow of the family and friends of the one 4 has died.

Another important social use of songs is entertainment. Everybody 5 to listen to good music. We do not need encouragement to start singing 6 or swaying our bodies in tune with the beats of a good song. Sometimes people are heard humming 7 of popular songs 8 when they are working, walking or relaxing. Music is medicine for the soul. It gladdens and comforts a 9 heart. In addition, songs are viewed as the most 10 way of expressing love for a loved one. Romantic songs are so common that small children know and can sing them 11 ease.

Songs also play a part in our religious and political life. For instance, we sing praises to God as part of our worship. 12 songs express our gratitude to God for the gift of life, good health and for meeting our 13 needs. In political rallies songs are used to arouse people's emotions and to persuade them to support a certain party or individual. They can 14 be used to demand change. Which political gathering 15 be complete without some singing and dancing?

Question 1

- A. things B. occasion C. ceremonies D. functions

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*
% Choosing the option	10.70	45.61	25.62	16.73
Mean mark in other questions	23.62	22.92	22.75	28.20

This question required candidates to choose the most suitable noun out of the four nouns given. First, the candidates ought to know that the noun to be used in the phrase 'a variety of ...' must be in its plural form. The fact that majority of the candidates went for the singular noun in **B** indicates that they were not cognisant of this fact. Secondly, the passage is about the use of songs for various purposes; and not only in ceremonies as option **C** would suggest. Finally, option **A** cannot fit in as it would be semantically untenable in that context. Thus, out of the options given, only option **D** is able to complete the phrase and bring out the meaning intended. The fact that only the brighter candidates were able to choose the correct option indicates that pupils need more practice in the use of this phrase.

Question 6

- A. out B. along C. with D. away

Response Pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D
% Choosing the option	42.59	27.05	17.57	11.35
Mean mark in other questions	23.99	26.65	21.95	19.58

This question tested the candidates' ability to select the adverb that would result in the phrasal verb 'sing along' (option **B**) and fit in the context. Teachers need to highlight that the verb in a phrasal verb can also be used in its progressive form as was the case here ('singing along'). None of the other options could result in a fitting phrasal verb.

Question 9

- A. restless B. weak C. heavy D. lonely

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D
% Choosing the option	34.83	12.88	11.39	39.46
Mean mark in other questions	23.04	21.46	23.38	25.48

This question tested the candidates' ability to select the adjective that would complete the sentence and deliver the thought intended in the context. We comfort people who are saddened. A person who feels sad is said to have a 'heavy' heart. As such, only option **C** fits the bill.

Question 15

- A. could B. can C. would D. will

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D
% Choosing the option	17.28	45.37	25.03	10.90
Mean mark in other questions	22.04	24.68	24.49	21.75

This question tested the use of modal verbs to convey meaning. Just as was the case in the 2013 KCPE cohort, the 2014 candidates found it problematic to select the modal expressing the idea intended (i.e. likelihood), and in the correct tense. The sentence here makes a proposition that political gatherings are not likely to be complete without songs. This idea can only be expressed by option **C**. Option **D** is in the wrong tense. Options **A** and **B** express a different linguistic mood (i.e. possibility). We, once again, call upon teachers to give their pupils enough practice on the use of modals to express different ideas (ability, permission, obligation, intention, necessity, possibility, likelihood, certainty etc).

Question 17

In questions 16 to 18, choose the alternative that means the **opposite** of the underlined word.

Everybody knows him as a very courteous person.

- A. unkind
- B. polite
- C. gracious
- D. rude

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*
% Choosing the option	16.19	30.24	24.89	27.19
Mean mark in other questions	23.39	22.93	22.82	26.07

This question tested vocabulary. The candidates were supposed to choose the word which means the opposite (i.e. antonym) of the word underlined in the sentence given. It was expected that the candidates would reason through the meaning of each of the words given before settling on the correct one, which was **D**.

Question 20

You _____ do the work now if you don't feel like it.

- A. musn't
- B. can't
- C. shouldn't
- D. needn't

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*
% Choosing the option	21.70	32.85	36.21	7.88
Mean mark in other questions	22.94	22.45	24.77	27.91

This question tested the use of modal verbs in their negative forms. Obviously, the idea being expressed in the input sentence is one of necessity. Hence, the correct option is **D**. As observed before, it seems that teachers have neglected the area of Modal Auxiliaries and left pupils to just guess. Only a small percentage composed of the brighter candidates got it right.

Question 24

- (i) All that matters in good music is the quality of sound and the rhythm.
- (ii) Indeed, it is true that music is a universal language.
- (iii) Good music can be enjoyed by anybody regardless of the language in which it is played.
- (iv) For this reason, the popularity of many musicians goes beyond their communities and countries.

- A. (iii) (iv) (ii) (i)
- B. (iii) (i) (ii) (iv)
- C. (iii) (i) (iv) (ii)
- D. (iii) (ii) (iv) (i)

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D
% Choosing the option	18.81	33.60	26.48	19.74
Mean mark in other questions	22.34	23.52	25.95	23.02

This question tested the candidates' ability to order given sentences so as to make a coherent paragraph. A candidate is supposed to read and understand each sentence before placing it. The correct arrangement is C. It would seem from the statistics that pupils need to be exposed to more of such exercises.

Read the passage below and then answer questions 26 to 38.

When I was a small boy, my home was always full of babies and children of my relatives. In fact, I hardly recall any occasion as a child when I was alone. In my community, the sons and daughters of one's aunts and uncles are considered brothers and sisters, not cousins. We have no half-brothers and half-sisters. My mother's sister is my mother, my uncle's son is my brother and my brother's child is my son or my daughter.

Of my mother's three huts, one was used for cooking, one for sleeping and one for storage. In the hut in which we slept, there was no furniture. We slept on mats and sat on the bare floor. I did not discover pillows until much later. My mother cooked food in a three-legged iron pot over an open fire at the centre of the hut or outside. We grew all the food we ate at home.

From an early age, I spent most of my free time in the field playing and fighting with the other boys of the village. A boy who remained at home tied to his mother's apron strings was regarded as a weakling. At night, I shared my food and blanket with these same boys. I was no more than five when I became a herdsboy looking after sheep and calves in the fields. I discovered the almost mystical attachment that the Xhosa have for cattle, not only as a source of food and wealth, but as a blessing from God and a source of happiness. It was in the fields that I learnt how to knock birds out of the sky with a slingshot, to gather wild honey and fruits and edible roots, to drink warm, sweet milk straight from the udder of a cow, to swim in the clear streams, and to catch fish with twine and sharpened bits of wire.

As boys, we were mostly left to our own devices. We played with toys we made ourselves. We moulded animals and birds out of clay. Nature was our playground. I learnt to ride by sitting atop weaned calves – after being thrown to the ground several times, one got the hang of it. I still love open spaces, the simple beauties of nature, the clear blue skies.

I don't think my parents intended to take me to school. No one in my family had ever attended school. But a friend of my father's, George Mbekela, visited us one day and told my mother, "Your son is a clever young fellow. He should go to school." My parents discussed it and decided to send me to school.

The school consisted of a simple room. I was seven years old, and on the day before I was to begin, my father took me aside and told me that I must be dressed properly for school. Until that time, I, like all the other boys, had worn only a blanket, which was wrapped round one shoulder and pinned at the waist. My father took a pair of his trousers and cut them at the knee. He then told me to put them on, which I did, and they were roughly the correct length, although the waist was far too large. My father then took a piece of string and drew the trousers in at the waist. **I must have been a comical sight**, but I have never owned a suit I was prouder to wear than my father's cut-off trousers.

(Adapted from *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela)

Question 30

A boy who remained at home was probably

- A. obedient to his mother.
- B. despised by the others.
- C. not ready to be a herdsboy.
- D. weak and fearful.

Response Pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D
% Choosing the option	18.82	9.58	8.15	62.09
Mean mark in other questions	20.20	26.03	20.69	25.03

This question required candidates to make inference based on the information given in the passage. The relevant part was: 'A boy who remained at home *tied to his mother's apron strings* was regarded as a weakling'. Majority of the candidates went for option **D** because of the word 'weak', but the word 'fearful' makes that option wrong. In fact, the answer to this item lies in the attitude of the writer as depicted in the choice of words used. Such a boy was despised (option B).

Question 32

From what he learnt in the fields, we can conclude that the author was

- A. very adventurous.
- B. quite active.
- C. a fast learner.
- D. very curious.

Response Pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D
% Choosing the option	27.06	24.22	28.43	18.83
Mean mark in other questions	25.58	22.90	24.24	21.99

This question required the candidates to select the most appropriate description of the writer of the autobiography as seen in his escapades in the field. Obviously, he is very adventurous (option A). The experience was beyond being merely active or just curious or learning fast.

Question 33

What is meant by “we were left to our own devices”?

- A. We had to think of what to do.
- B. No one was allowed to interfere with us.
- C. We were free to do what we wanted.
- D. No one cared about us.

Response Pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D
% Choosing the option	17.69	8.57	56.39	15.89
Mean mark in other questions	23.45	20.16	24.72	23.20

This question required the candidates to tell the meaning of the expression given as used in the passage. The expression does not imply that the boys were ‘free’ to do whatever they wanted as implied in option C, which majority of the candidates went for. It means they had to use their intelligence to know what to do (option A).

Question 34

Learning to ride calves was not easy because

- A. they were very difficult to control.
- B. one could easily fall off and hurt himself.
- C. calves are not really meant to be ridden.
- D. if caught, one can be punished.

Response Pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D
% Choosing the option	22.41	58.36	14.60	3.17
Mean mark in other questions	23.92	24.83	21.04	18.40

In this question, majority of the candidates hurried to pick option B without realising that the writer says nothing about being hurt! What the writer wanted to put across to the reader is that it was very difficult to control the calves as one rode (option A).

Question 36

What can we conclude about the school?

- A. It catered for young boys.
- B. You had to be clever to go there.
- C. It must have been very small.
- D. You had to wear school uniform.

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D
% Choosing the option	13.75	15.67	19.59	49.54
Mean mark in other questions	23.83	22.09	28.54	22.56

This question tested the candidates' ability to filter information. Majority of the candidates went for option **D** and missed the point. The fact that the writer wore his father's cut trousers (not school uniform) to school makes this option completely untenable. Likewise, nothing tells us that one had to be clever (option **B**) or young (option **A**) to attend school. The only sure thing is that the school must have been very small (option **C**) since it consisted of just *a simple room*.

Question 37

Why do you think the author says, "I must have been a comical sight"?

- A. The trousers were far too big for him.
- B. He was not used to such funny clothes.
- C. Perhaps the other pupils laughed at him.
- D. He used a string instead of a belt.

Response Pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D
% Choosing the option	28.23	24.32	19.03	26.93
Mean mark in other questions	23.88	23.90	25.00	22.96

In this question, the test was on the candidates' ability to use information provided in the passage selectively. In fact, the writer stresses that the trousers were too big for him (last paragraph) and this is the singular factor that would make him look *comical* (option **A**).

Read the following passage and then answer questions 39 to 50.

Patriotism has been a very common word since independence. Recently, the slogan "I am proud to be a Kenyan" was introduced to us in an effort to make us appreciate being Kenyans. However, many of us have never seriously thought about what it means to be proud as Kenyans. A lot of our mannerisms, interests and values, some of which we are ready to defend with our own lives, have nothing to do with Kenya. In fact, it is as if we hate ourselves; and if we do, who will love us?

Some of us have an **obsession** for things from other countries, especially Western countries. We proudly wear attire and shoes, even underwear, from foreign countries. We love **showing them off**. This also applies to utensils and electronics since we look at the label 'MADE IN ' even before we know the price. The slogan 'Buy Kenya, Build Kenya' has been disregarded.

This has led to our supermarkets, main shops and markets being stocked with products and goods from foreign countries. In fact, it is not surprising to find items that are easily available locally having been imported and well displayed in the shops or markets. Such products include toys, spices, fruits, vegetables and even eggs.

We have made our country a dumping ground for things, some of which are no longer useful in their countries of origin. This has denied our local industries a market for their products. As a result, they have been forced to **cut down on** the number of their employees in order to remain in operation. This has worsened the problem of unemployment.

Consider the ridiculous preference seen in sports, especially soccer. It is very surprising that some soccer fans do not know the name of the coach of our national team yet they know all the players in a foreign team. During the last World Cup competition, some people found it hard to support the African teams. One wonders what drives us to support foreign teams when their own countries are solidly behind them. When these teams lose, their countries are disappointed but they do not transfer their loyalty to teams from other countries.

For some of us, the attachment to foreign teams is so much that when the teams lose, we cry, break our television sets, fight and, in extreme cases, commit suicide. Patriotism demands that we see the failure of our teams as our country's failure. Likewise, success is celebrated by all.

We have to love our own and value ourselves in order to be attractive, respectable and valuable to the outside world. We therefore need not use other people's items to feel fashionable, stylish and desirable.

Question 41

The word 'obsession' as used in the passage means

- A. a need to possess something.
- B. to want something very much.
- C. a real desire for something.
- D. uncontrollable longing for something.

Response Pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*
% Choosing the option	19.95	20.87	44.39	13.38
Mean mark in other questions	22.27	22.65	25.05	24.08

This question required the candidates to tell the meaning of the word 'obsession' as used in the passage. The candidates ought to have observed from the context of use that it is a negative feeling. It refers to an unreasonable longing or desire for something (option D). The fact that majority of the candidates went for option C indicates that they were not able to see this. Options A and B also do not show this negativity and, therefore, don't fit the bill.

SECTION B: COMPOSITION

The paper declined in the percentage mean by 0.45 points from 41.90 in the year 2013 to 41.45 in 2014. As always, the paper tested the candidates' ability to compose a personal success story in the world of sports/games. Candidates were expected to write a story that was grammatically accurate, fluent, interesting, original and convincing. Mastery of plot development as well as proficiency in the use of a variety of structures and vocabulary was expected. To do justice to the topic, candidates were required to point out the beginning of their realisation that they were talented in a certain sport/game, then delve into a personal experience culminating in a self-fulfilling achievement or success in that particular area.

GROUP I: (01 – 10 MARKS)

Composition A

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

THE DAY SPORTS
We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

The teacher asked me to participate during school games time. The sport games it is very good day of sports. I never knew that I could excel in sports the day games teacher. We some pupils do go games by the same teacher. Me to participate during game time the sport games can we may never know that we are talented in something until we try. They know that we are sports until the day the games teacher me to participate are try we sport games.

knew that we are try I near knew that I would can excell in until I near at that school games. We show near knew the teacher time school games try they games pate could can excell until near the

something until we try. My teacher asked
do play a something games.

He can are try try participate are try
we sport games excen until that teacher.
play a game I could excel in something
until the day the game participate are
during sport until the day the sport
teacher until sport games.

We can pate my teacher time
sport game. They something game do
pary became a during. Something time
do go to pary game we participate by
you teachers. I could excel in sport until
the day he something participate excel. I
am pate my teacher time games at time
sports games the teacher asked at
everbody is in classroom a palya the sport
game.

My teaches the game participate excel
I am pate time game at the games.

There is no story developed in this script. The candidate reverts to copying the contents of the rubric and hardly communicates anything. Some words from the rubric are copied wrongly, e.g. 'excen' (*excel*), 'pamispate' (*participate*). The candidate, however, is able to write some words correctly ('good', 'can', 'near', 'classroom' etc), has some concept of paragraphing (indenting), and is also able to shape most letters well.

Mark awarded

04

Composition B

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

I was said I am not going to participate sports day one day it was during a lunch time I was I and my friend who in the end and my friend said that to morrow wey going to participate in game in our school. When the teacher come to I who class the teacher was asked me why u are not participate in games during sports day and the teacher said that I must participate in sports. I was said I am not go to play a football and the teacher said you going to play net ball and I was said yes that I am going to participate net ball and my friend was play football. When the sport day.

I was have a happens like the lion who got a net I was a happens and my friend come to me said you have a happens why and I told my friend because to day I going to participate in sports. And my friend said that is so naist to u and I was tell a the key.

When my time was in the field I was going they because and I was in that games when the people of net ball were could to play and my friend going is happy.

When my sport start I was happy like
 the made people in school and I was
 participate and was best in sports and
 the teacher come to me and told I what
 you are said fast day before the sport day and
 talked the teacher I was said that I not going
 to participate in sports and you have a
 talented is net ball and I was tell you to
 be participate and Asat I want to congratulate you.
 Participate and you have a good talented.
 When the teacher was give me pupils who
 was participate good and the teacher was
 give me pupils the "Zawadi" in sport and
 I was almost person who take they interest in
 sport and the going and my class teacher
 was called me and I asked why you are
 said that you dot want to participati in
 game and that is you talented.
 I was verhappy because is my talented
 to be participate in sports day and that
 is my talented.

This candidate attempts to write a story about a sport, but the attempt is hampered by a severe linguistic limitation. There are gross errors of spelling—'fild' (field), 'futbboll' (football), 'becous' (because), 'whay' (why); tense—'I was have happy...', 'I was said...'; sentence construction—'To play net boll and I was said yes...', 'I was in that gimes when the people of net ball was collid', etc. However, the candidate has knowledge of paragraphing, and also manages to write some words correctly ('said', 'class', 'you', 'going', 'my', 'people' etc).

Mark awarded

06

Composition C

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

SPORT DAY

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time... It

was my talent that I could play football. The game teacher was calling me during practise time. I never knew that I could play such game.

It was my first day. When our school was going for a competition, I was taken by our game sport teacher. I didn't know if I could play. I was given sport uniform and shoes. I was taken to the field. I didn't know how to start the game.

But I didn't have any option. I took the ball. I put the ball on my leg. I kick the ball into the goal. Everybody in our school did not know if I could play the sport. I was sure of my self. And I could start playing on the field.

We were taken for the first break for the game to continue. After thirty minutes we got into the field again. Our school was one goal but the other school did not have any goal. We start playing for the second player.

It was my very proudest day that I can play football. Everybody was looking how I was going. I kick the ball into the goal. Every pupil in our school shouted and even enter the field. I was happy because our school was to get a big cup.

The other school notice that the cup was our school to get from there. We came back to

our school. Every pupil shouting and screaming loudly. I was so proud that day. I was gave a prise with my headteacher.

When I got the class every pupil was caring me up and down. My sport teacher called me to his room. And told me that I could play football every better than Dher. I did not belief my self that day. that day I was about to sang every song.

We was knew as a player pupil. I was shawn in the Tv. I could play for Kenya after finishing my Primary and secondary school. I was introduce to play for our country. I was about to went for many country. Everybody need to see me.

When was passing nearby town I was hearing people wispearing about me. When I had that I felt happy as a king. From that day I belief that I could play when than that day.

The candidate's ability to communicate is still limited. Sentence structures are terrible, and tenses are mostly incorrect. The candidate uses such expressions as 'I didn't knew' (*I didn't know*), 'I was gave' (*I was given*), 'I was to went' (*I was to go*), 'I could play football very better' (... *very well*), 'I was gave a prise by my headteacher' (*I was given a present by my headteacher*) etc. Spelling errors and incorrect word presentations are rampant—'obtion' (*option*), 'wispearing' (*whispering*), 'nearbye' (*nearby*), 'caring' (*carrying*), 'continie' (*continue*), 'my self' (*myself*), 'game teacher' (*games teacher*) etc. The full stop is used in wrong places especially in the second paragraph. In spite of these mistakes, the candidate is able to arrange ideas in discernible paragraphs, spell a number of words correctly, and present some correct sentence structures (e.g. 'I never knew that I could...', 'After thirty minutes we got...').

Mark awarded

10

GROUP II: (11 – 20 MARKS)

Composition D

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story making it as interesting as you can.

A SPORT DAY

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

When our game teacher asked us to go to the field I was not yet prepared that I will participate in that game because I thought only the senior class usually play.

When we went to the field we all settled in one place and our game teacher call out the names of the players. One player was missing and game teacher asked for one but no one wanted to play. Here I was busy talking about the players who were participating in world cup.

Our game teacher had me talking about world cup. He asked me whether I will practise. I remembered how our English teacher had told us that practise practise make more perfect. The had not yet, so I rushed to my desk and I took my p.e. cate although I was not prepared that I will play.

I took over the ball and I called the most perfect player in our school. I practised that time before the time was over.

The time was over and the foot ball mutch was to start. I prayed until the game was over. The next day we had to compete with the other school. So I had to practise even after the game.

The next day we and our neighbouring school we all assembled in the field and were given the rules to follow. A few minutes later we saw a smartly man accompanied by our head teacher coming toward us. He was our coach. He told us that the team which will win will won a prize.

We puyer we were asked to get to get to the field and start playing. After playing for two good hour, we were added some fifteen more minute. Within the fifth minute I had scored a goal. That is the time I knew that last minute can save a man. About ten minute later the game edded. That was the day with I noticed that I am a good player.

Although we can see a story line, the candidate still communicates with a lot of difficulty. Spelling mistakes pervade this composition: 'sinear' (*senior*), 'talking' (*talking*), 'tolt' (*told*), 'boll' (*ball*), 'P.E. cate' (*P.E. kit*), 'russed' (*rushed*), 'mutch' (*match*), 'were' (*where*), 'edded' (*ended*) etc. Wrongly presented phrases pervade the composition: 'sport day' (*sports day*), 'game teacher' (*games teacher*), 'a smartly man' (*a smart/smartly-dressed man*), 'ten minute later' (*ten minutes later*) etc. These mistakes make the composition clumsy and unattractive.

Mark awarded 13

Composition E

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

MY NEW TALENT

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

I was very shocked, because everyone used to laugh at me. I used to get away, because when I was asked to participate in something, I was not able. When I was asked to participate I always refused. That day I had to prove my friends wrong. I did not know in which part I was talented in. When I got to where the players were, I was first asked to stay in the bench and learn the instruction.

When I entered the field no one wanted to play with me. Until I loosed hope. I asked the teacher, I could not play. He insisted, until I accepted. It was in the first half but I had not even kicked the ball. I felt bad because it showed me that I am not supposed to be there. One of my best friend told me I should continue playing. The first half was over we were had scored nothing. But we had been scored two goals to zero. It was very dissapointing.

We were back and the spectators were cheering. I told my self it is do or die, I have to struggle so that I could get the ball. When I was able to get

the ball. I did my best until I went to where my opponent's goalkeeper was. I kicked the ball and it went right to the goalpost. It was a goal people cheered me. Even my teacher. The other friends they did not even celebrate. They were not happy with the goal I scored. I did not mind them.

I stopped feeling shy. I got energized. I was able to regain my strength. As I played I did not forget my friends. I passed the ball to them. As we played, I was given again the ball. I went towards the goal post. Where I scored another goal. Everyone was happy. My friends were happy too and they stopped to despise me. We agreed to help each other. When I was about to score another goal, one of my opponent who was jealous. He knocked me down and I was injured my left leg.

He was moved out of the field. I was first given first aid and I was well again. I was told that I would kick a penalty. I kicked the ball. Believe it or not I scored a goal. Everyone in my team came jumping on me with joy. I was as happy as a lark. I was

able to reconcile with my friends. That's when I realized I had a talent. My talent was playing football. My friends asked for forgiveness before we continued with the match.

It was three minutes to time. When my best friend was able to score the last goal. We were very happy. The referee blew the whistle and the match was over. The opponents they were not happy, but they were congratulated us. I thanked God for letting me know my talents.

Everyone whom had despised me asked for forgiveness. Even the ones they were shocked to know my talent. We were now able to go to the semi-finals. I was given a present by my teacher, because of the work that I had done. I was eagerly waiting to go home so that I could tell my parents my new talent.

When I reached home. They were shocked to hear the good news. They even told me to say a prayer to say thank you for the talent. I was glad and that would be my happiest day ever.

This is definitely a better script than the previous one. The story reads relatively well in spite of the errors present. Spelling mistakes are still a big challenge: 'instraction' (*instruction*), 'continiue' (*continue*), 'dissapointing' (*disappointing*), 'oponent' (*opponent*), 'belive' (*believe*) etc. There are also word-form errors; e.g. 'loosed' (*lost*). We also notice a monotonous use of the first person pronoun 'I' throughout the story.

Mark awarded

18

GROUP III: (21 – 30 MARKS)

Composition F

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

at first I felt that I could not make it. But I majestically marched into the field. My allies cheered thus making me feel like a lion in the fight. In my life time I had never participated in marathon competition. This time I knew I had to try my level best.

We lined up and waited the race to start. My heart started to palpitate wildly. "Phew!" a cucumber sweat poured down my chubby face. Just then a gun shot was heard.

Like a lightning we took on our heels. Pupils danced and cheered us. As we finished the first lap I felt extremely exhausted. I felt like giving up but many had hope in me.

The sun was fiercely smiling at us. I was almost the last. Surely as they "a friend in need is a friend in deed," my friend was determined that I will make it and he started to encourage me.

His words made me to increase my pace. I swiftly ran past the runners

ahead of me. "Woow!" I felt proud of myself. Teachers were really pleased with my action. I ran at a super-sonic speed until I was in the fifth position.

We were in the last lap and I still felt as fit as a fiddle. I had not passed any of the five ahead of me. But I hope at least to emerge position three.

I quicken my speed and passed the two ahead of me and I was in third position. Suddenly, before the first person stepped on the finishing line, a downpour started.

It was followed by a deafening concert of clapping thunder which would have caused a dog to whimper and a ladder to scream. Pupils and teacher ran helter skelter. The rain rained cats and dogs.

After a short time everyone assembled in his class. The rain continued and the leaves danced vigorously in the rain.

Although the marathon had gone sour I highly pleased. I had showned my true colours in running. Surely

I knew that running is my talent. That day I felt like a king and hoped to win in the following marathon.

The candidate presents a story about a marathon race in a school setting. This is a candidate who is relatively at ease with language; one who is able to use a variety of expressions correctly. We notice a considerable improvement in the use of English idiom and vocabulary. We, however, still see errors of spelling— 'partipate' (*participate*), 'lighting' (*lightning*), 'untill' (*until*), 'shownd' (*shown*), 'super-sonic' (*supersonic*), 'realy' (*really*), 'swifly' (*swiftly*) etc. the use of a small letter at the beginning ('at first...') is also a glaring demerit. The introduction of the issue of rain in the middle of the story looks like an unnecessary interruption to the flow as it adds no value.

Mark awarded

22

Composition G

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

NEVER SAY NEVER.
We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

during second term. I was happy like a chicken freed from the shed it had been confined only to find worms wiggling through the mud. I would watch other pupils playing football while full of zeal. Although I liked it, I did not have confidence in myself.

"My son, don't let this chance slip away," my mother told me. I finally agreed to what the teacher had told me. I only had to practice for one day and the next day would be the finals. Many district schools were going to take part in the sports.

All and sundry in my team were speculating that I would bring failure to the team. The didvans did not swallow a fish bone when they gave credence to the adage which says that practice makes perfect. I didn't think I could do it.

I went home feeling tired because of all the practice. I was a bit nervous because the match was going to be held the next day. I did not know whether I could make it to the finals. My mother encouraged me to have confidence in myself.

I woke up very early. I sprang out of my bed leaving my beddings in a sympathetic heap. Without dilly-dallying, I took a lukewarm shower and wore my attires. After grabbing down the morning energizer, I went to the sports ground.

Pupils of different schools were all there. Our coach encouraged us and in a flutter of an eyelid, the field was packed to capacity. The teams went in pairs and only our team and Milimani school team were on the ground.

I remembered my late dad. He was a friend to all and an enemy to none. I kicked the ball and scored a goal for my team. They could not believe their eyes. The fans cheered wildly as my team mates carried me high.

That amazing goal scared the other team. I was determined to score more. After sometime, Mlazo scored a goal. "Mlazo! Mlazo! Laza!" The fans cheered. We now had two goals to nil. One best player from Milimani team scored two goals. That was when my fellow players started having butterflies in their stomachs. We were at a loose end.

After the second half, each player was pulling up his socks. The trophy we were determined to win was the first one ever to be competed for. We were now at the eleventh hour. Maybe I was good for nothing after all.

All my efforts of scoring were to no avail. My team seemed to be giving up. It was now five minutes to time. I kicked the ball and guess what! I scored a goal. The time was now over. My team mates cast a glancing look at me.

My team mates were very proud of me. They carried me high up in the sky. I had scored a goal that assured them conquerors. From that day on, I had confidence that I can play football. I learnt never to say never. I now became the talk of the school. My hidden talent turned out to be a success.

This is a readable script. The candidate has developed a story about a football competition involving a number of schools. His effort makes his team win, and this motivates him to like football. We are able to follow the narration without straining. Some notable expressions used include: '...full of zeal', 'all and sundry', 'to no avail' etc. However, we still see errors of spelling- 'beleive' (*believe*), 'couch' (*coach*), 'practice' (*practise*), 'competed' (*competed*); and word separation, e.g. 'team mates' (*teammates*).

Mark awarded

26

Composition H

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

athletics. It was at break time when he told me this. I was shaking like a chameleon on a feeble tree in the mercy of a whirlwind.

People ran here and there, to and fro so as to finish any necessary preparations. Time flew by and it was games time. My heart was pounding threatening to break my rib-cage. Our race was one of the first events so we were told to take our places early so as not to waste even a single moment.

"On your marks... get ready... go!" the games teacher, Mr Hasira, protested.

I ran as fast as my long, lanky legs could carry me. I not being a professional athlete began by leading the race. My competitors followed me closely behind. We were supposed to go two times round our perfectly circular-shaped field. The tropical ageless sun was baking us with its intense heat but giving up was not a priority in my vocabulary.

The bell was rang for the final round and my competitors began catching up to me. As tiredness began crawling through

my body, I remembered a saying that my grandfather once told me, to a warrior comes happiness but to a coward is sorrow. I knew that this was a battle I had to win in order to make my dear grandmother, who was closely watching me under an acacia that had carefully silhouetted itself against the sun rays, happy.

We were now a throw stone towards the finish-line. I gathered all my stamina in order to make my team-mates proud who were cheering vigorously. Alas! I immersed the winner. Beads of perspiration were cascading down my visage to my back. Mr Hasira who was a domeneering man who made everyone inferior and terrified, ran towards me and hugged me snugly.

From a distance I spotted my old frail grandmother with a meagre smile on her visage threatening to tear it into two. This sent me brimming with tears of joy. I had never seen her smile since my parents passed on two years ago. Everything came to a halt for everyone had to have the opportunity to congratulate me. I was rather embarrassed by the pent-up emotions

for everyone in the school knew me as a cold-hearted boy.

Out of the blues we heard music being played from a distance. Everyone started dancing including Mr. Hasira who could not resist the fine opportunity to dance with the younger girls. Oh! You should have seen him dance the 'Twisty'. I fell into a thunderous laughter. Later on, we were rewarded for participating during the games time. The few parents who came rewarded me with some money while others offered to pay my school fees obviously after hearing about my parents.

The atmosphere was a hue of carnival activities as the sun was setting in a red haze colouring the vast plains orange. I swaggered home with my grandmother talking of how the money could improve our standards of living.

For sure, if it were not for Mr. Ukali I would have never discovered the talent that was hidden in me.

In this script, we notice a considerable improvement in plot development and in the use of the English idiom and vocabulary. The candidate is relatively at ease with language and is able to use a variety of expressions naturally and correctly. Use of such expressions as 'The topical ageless sun was baking us with...', 'I was rather embarrassed by the ...' '... beads of perspiration...' etc confirm the candidate's linguistic competence. However, we still see errors: 'The bell was rang' (...rung), 'my competitors began catching up to me' (...with me), 'tiresness' (tiredness), 'immerged' (emerged), 'we were now a throw stone...' (...stone's throw...) etc. The word 'athletics' at the beginning of the composition is misplaced and should have been left out.

Mark awarded

29

GROUP IV: (31 – 40 MARKS)

Composition I

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time..

'Anyango!' she thundered. "You will participate in the eight-hundred metres relay race. Is that clear!" At first I declined to do so but I had no alternative but to agree and be at Mrs. Juma's (our games teacher) beck and call. Although dubious of my decision, I decided to try my luck. I was now sweating and my shirt was drenched in sweat.

I had never before participated in a sports event. I prayed to the High Deity to give me courage to face the 'monster' ahead of me. I then decided to put my best foot forward:

Without splitting hairs, Mrs Juma called out the names of the other competitors. All of them were robust save for me. Some held their arms akimbo to signify that the race was but a mere piece of cake. One of them was Wambui. Wambui was known far and wide for the records she had set in the relay race. She was a swarth girl rather stout. She was not only good in sports but also in academics. All and sundry were envious of her achievements.

Sooner than later, the other events

commenced. The participants were up to the mark. All of them seemed confident and ready for their races. I was now engulfed in fear.

A cold chill ran down my spine. My heart was pounding faster and faster. I was now in a dilemma. Was I really cut out for the task? What if I lost? Would my pals look down on me? Those were some of the questions whirling in my puny mind. My rudy visage was now enveloped in sweat.

The races were slowly but progressively coming to an end. In a fraction of a second, the participants of the relay-race were assembled. Eerie silence enveloped the vicinity. 'Boom!' went the gun; the race had begun. I sprang up and with the agility of a cobra, ran relentlessly towards my counterpart: Omondi. I was now in the lead. Agitation was crystal clear on Wambui's visage. On tagging my partner, he hoisted the flag higher and higher. He took off at lightning velocity and after running for one round, he tugged me back. I was leading, leaving a cloud of dust behind. The spectators were were in profound shock. Some had their mouths wide-agape. None of them had ever imagined that the silent Anyango was talented.

To their utter bewilderment, I emerged victorious. I had won the race. Wambui came in second. Tears were now welling up her eyes. I too did not believe that I could make such an outstanding performance. Truly, the sages were not in their sixes and sevens when they stated the dictum still waters run deep.

This composition is almost error-free. The candidate is in control and is able to communicate fully. Expression is free and without constraint. The script gives evidence of linguistic maturity and good planning. The sentences are well constructed, punctuation well used, vocabulary apt, and language creatively used. In addition, one cannot fail to notice the neat handwriting, which gives the impression of an organized pupil. Nevertheless, some minor errors are still noticeable: 'swarth' (*swarthy*), 'dilema' (*dilemma*), 'When the stated...' (...*they*...).

Mark awarded

35

Composition J

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

The following is the beginning of a story. Complete the story, making it as interesting as you can.

We may never know that we are talented in something until we try. I never knew that I could excel in sports until the day the games teacher asked me to participate during school games time...

Truly, I had avoided that leather-made device called a ball, akin to a lad with leprosy. By all means, books were what I wanted to forever remain, my one and only priority. However, that day I finally decided to try something new. Something for sure I did not rue for eternity...

That very day still remains engraved in my memory like a lover's words on an epitaph. Slowly, I padded the hoof down the path from lunch. The disc of the setting sun looked so big and ominous. Clouds drifted away slowly as hot, piercing rays made my visage laced with a mushroom of sweat. At once, I mopped off the trickling sweat and quickly trotted to class.

⁶⁰ "Cheshire!! Come here!" Luluba, the games teacher, bellowed. No doubt, he was one peppery individual. One determined by all means to render any talented child achieve their dreams in thoughts. I was perplexed, however, why he wanted something to do with a

bookworm like me. Like putty in someone's hands, I hurriedly made my way to where he was.

"Remove your tie and shoes, and without batting an eyelid I would like to see you in the field tossing that football!" he commanded. Without one word to utter, I left for the field. Of course, not by choice, just not to land in hot soup. Knitting my brow, I stood there in matrimony with fear not knowing what fate had in store for me.

A few waifs and strays, together with some boys laughed at me, sending asphyxiating shudders down my body. Torrents of tears, burst out from my eyes and pelt on my hands with intense ferocity. My countenance was laced with melancholy and I could bear it no longer. No, I could not give up. Furtively, I cast away all my fears and cultivated a heart of stone.

"Boys, we are going to have a friendly match. Cheshire, you are on the opposite team. Move!" With first blush, we did exactly that. The match was ready to kick off. Mr. Luluba made a steeple with

his forefinger and thumb and pressed it on his chin. It was the profound jundui. My heart beat with vigour; a thump that could break a rock into smithereens.

Hells bells! The first kick was sent. I was cock sure I was the next lad to be passed to. The thought of being hit by that leather ball made me think I was yet to cash in my chips. Therefore, I was rendered restless thinking that soccer ball had the key to my destiny. No sooner had I blinked an eye, than it was kicked towards me. I kicked it with zeal and alas! It was in the net!

All and sundry were left confounded if not stupefied. Not only my family ever presumed I would be the reknowned footballer that I am today. That day will never recede into oblivion for eternity and beyond. It was then that I tried football, that my talent was discovered a talent that makes me the eminent one, that I am till this very day.

This candidate is quite at home with language and is able to communicate freely and creatively. There is a definite spark in the composition. The candidate goes out of his way to display skill and ability to sustain the reader's interest. Commendable mastery of the English language is evident in the level of vocabulary, variety of sentence structure, and English idiom used in this composition. The few weak structures seen (e.g. '...achieve their dreams in thoughts' instead of *achieve their dreams*, '...the setting sun looked so big and ominous' instead of *...big and ominous*) do not in any way interfere with the flow and strenth of this script.

Mark awarded

38