

**The Commonwealth of The Bahamas**

**BAHAMAS GENERAL CERTIFICATE  
OF  
SECONDARY EDUCATION**

1310

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS**



2005

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**OF**  
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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the English Language Examination is to provide for 80-85% of the students, an assessment of their language skills in the context of particular writing and speaking situations.

The BGCSE in English Language proposes to challenge teachers to re-examine the way English Language is being taught in the classroom. This re-examination should lead to the strengthening of English Language skills and the reinforcing of inherent and learned levels of competence so that the maximum potential of each student may be developed.

**RATIONALE**

The study of English Language is the key to effective learning. Our language not only enables us to transmit our heritage from one generation to another, but also helps us to shape and reflect our culture. In addition, it aids personal development and social communication.

The English Language programme should, then, be designed to provide students with the skills needed to achieve their goals and also challenge them to find aesthetic satisfaction in the world around them. The course of study should enable students to participate fully in society, share experiences, gain understanding and respond sensitively to the views and needs of others. It should produce individuals who are functionally literate and able to think logically, critically and creatively. Exposure to English Language teaching must lead students to develop competence in clear, forceful and appropriate expression, to become accurate observers and to listen and read effectively and intelligently. The English Language programme must foster an environment where people from all walks of life can communicate clearly and precisely, whatever the situation.

## AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are to develop the ability of all students to:

1. communicate ideas and information accurately, appropriately and effectively when speaking and writing;
2. understand and respond critically and relevantly to what is heard, read and experienced;
3. enjoy and appreciate the use of language to communicate experiences, ideas and information to others;
4. recognize how language skills complement other areas of study;
5. appreciate the place and value of dialect in appropriate social and cultural situations;
6. promote their personal growth and development through an understanding of themselves and others.

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

All candidates will be expected to demonstrate their ability to:

1. communicate information gained from personal experiences, observations, research, reading material and other sources;
2. organize and present facts, ideas and opinions clearly, concisely and adequately;
3. communicate effectively and appropriately what is felt and imagined;
4. understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary;
5. understand meaning, stated or implied, from information read or heard;
6. evaluate and present given information according to specific directions;
7. employ an appropriate range of grammatical or mechanical structures used accurately and obeying the conventions of spelling and punctuation.

# SYLLABUS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The relationship between the Assessment Objectives and the components of the Schemes of Assessment and the weighing of the Assessment Objectives, are indicated in the grid printed below.

The objectives are weighted to give an indication of their relative importance, rather than to provide a precise statement of mark allocations to particular objectives.

Objective	Overall weighting	Paper I Continuous writing	Paper II Anral	Paper III Reading/ Directed writing	Paper IV Reading/ Directed writing
1.	X	X	X	X	X
2.	XX	X	X	X	X
3.	XXX	XXX	X	XX	XX
4.	XX	X	X	XX	XX
5.	XX	-	XX	XX	XX
6.	XX	-	XX	XX	XX
7.	XX	XX	X	X	X
	100%	40%	15%	45%	60%

# SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

For the examination to be appropriate to candidates across the ability range, there will be a different scheme of assessment for candidates expected to gain grade C to G (core syllabus candidates) and for candidates expected to obtain Grade A and B (extended syllabus candidates).

The papers in the assessment are as follows:

## CORE SYLLABUS

Paper I (Continuous Writing)	1 hour	40%
Paper II (Aural Comprehension)	1 1/4 hours	15%
Paper III (Written Comprehension and Directed Writing)	2 hours	45%

## EXTENDED SYLLABUS

Paper IV (Written Comprehension and Directed Writing)	2 hours	60%
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Candidates, who in the opinion of the school/college have a realistic chance of achieving the standard required for the award of Grade A and B will be entered for an additional paper.

Differentiation will be achieved as follows:

1. All candidates will take Papers I, II & III. When these have been marked, grade boundaries for Grades C-G will be established and provisional grade awards made.
2. Only candidates who have achieved Grade C or D in the core paper and who have taken Paper 4 (extended) will be considered for the award of A & B grades.
3. Candidates will be awarded Grade A or B on the basis of their performance on Papers 1 and 4.
4. Candidates who fail to achieve Grade A or B after consideration of their performance on Papers 1 and 4 (extended) will be awarded the grade obtained in the three core papers.

## SKILLS TO BE EXAMINED

Following is a list of the major skills to be examined across the four papers. Please note that this list does not preclude the possibility of other skills being examined in any of the four papers.

1. Demonstrating competence in a variety of writing styles (narrative, descriptive, imaginative, expository, persuasive, argumentative)
2. Demonstrating technical accuracy (grammatical structures, spelling, punctuation, word usage)
3. Organizing ideas in a logical, precise, concise manner (sentence / paragraph / essay structure)
4. Understanding main and supporting ideas, vocabulary
5. Classifying, comparing, sequencing
6. Determining author's purpose, attitude, tone, point of view, style
7. Determining mood, character
8. Detecting bias, propaganda techniques, unsupported generalizations, etc.
9. Making inferences and drawing conclusions
10. Summarizing and/or producing information in a different form (letter, report, speech, etc.)

## **FORMAT**

### **PAPER 1 CONTINUOUS WRITING**

All candidates are required to write this paper which will carry 40% of the marks. Time allotted will be one hour. An additional ten minutes of reading time will be allowed.

Students will select and respond to ONE of at least eight topics (pictorials may be included) in a logical and appropriate manner. Candidates will be given a choice of narrative, imaginative, descriptive, expository, informative, persuasive or argumentative responses.

Writing will be judged on quality rather than quantity, but candidates are advised to write between three hundred and fifty and five hundred (350-500) words. Responses must show relevance to topic, originality, adequate development and a sense of audience.

### **PAPER 2**

#### **AURAL**

All candidates are required to write this paper which will carry 15% of the marks. Time allotted will be 1 1/4 hours.

Candidates are required to listen to audio recordings which may include news items, reports, commentaries, interviews, announcements, discussions, etc. Candidates are required to pay special attention to format (method of presentation), language, and interaction of the speakers, as well as content (message).

Skills to be examined include the following:

- classifying, comparing and sequencing
- determining mood, point of view, purpose, character
- detecting bias, propaganda techniques, unsupported generalizations etc.



## CONDUCT OF THE AURAL TEST

1. The Aural Test will be time-tabled shortly before the main examination period.
2. The recording will be supplied on a cassette tape and copies will be issued to centres in the ratio of one to every twenty five candidates or part thereof.
3. The test should normally be given to groups of about twenty-five (25) candidates. A period of about 1 1/4 hours should be allowed for each group. (This includes the time for playing the recording, candidates completion of the test paper, and collecting the scripts). The test must be given to all candidates in a centre at the same time. Where a second sitting is required, it is necessary to ensure that candidates for this sitting are isolated from first sitting candidates for the duration of the examination period.

Cassette tapes must be sound-checked in the rooms to be used for the examination in order to test the acoustics.

4. A brief statement will be read by the invigilators introducing the recording before each presentation. All instructions (except those required to end the examination) will be recorded on the cassette.
5. The instructions on the cassette are reinforced by written rubrics in the test booklet.
6. The recorded material will be presented twice. Candidates may be required to make notes either during or immediately after the final presentation.

Once the tape has been started, no attempt should be made to interrupt the recording or replay sections which may have been missed.

7. The examiner's regulations for the conduct of written examinations must be observed for the Aural Test. Centres must ensure that there is no possibility of the security of the examination being compromised.
8. Transcripts of the tape (invigilator's Copy) will be issued for invigilators' use only.

**PAPER 3**  
**WRITTEN COMPREHENSION AND**  
**DIRECTED WRITING**

All candidates will be required to write this paper. The paper will carry 45% of the marks. Time allotted will be 2 hours plus ten minutes reading time.

Candidates will be given a selection consisting of one passage. The form of the passage may be a story, poem, report, advertisement or data and the style may be narrative, factual or imaginative. Candidates will be expected to respond to a series of questions which will be divided into two sections (A and B).

**SECTION A** will consist of a variety of questions:

- no more than five multiple choice questions which will test the candidates' understanding of the main points of the extract (structure and argument).

- no more than four structured questions which will test other aspects of the extract, such as vocabulary and the author's attitude toward the subject matter.

Candidates will be expected to make inferences, deductions and give explanations.

**SECTION B** will require candidates to:

- respond to one Directed Writing question which will test the candidates' ability to understand, interpret, summarize and/or produce information in a different form.

# PAPER 4

## EXTENDED COMPREHENSION AND DIRECTED WRITING

Only candidates who have maintained a C or above average throughout the year should be recommended to write this paper.

There will be either two short passages (500 - 600 words each) or one extended passage (1000 - 1200 words) varying in form (prose, poetry, drama) and followed by a series of questions which will be divided into two sections (A and B).

Questions in Section A will test the candidates' ability to understand the main points of the extract (structure, argument); tone; vocabulary and author's attitude and style. Questions in Section B will also test the candidates' ability to use and develop information in another form (letter, report, speech etc.)

Candidates will be expected to make inferences and deductions, and give explanations.

### GRADE DESCRIPTIONS TO BE USED WHEN ASSESSING PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS 1 - 4

Grade G - The candidate has shown ability in:

- understanding some of the relevant information at a very simple straightforward level and conveying it in a simple manner;
- understanding very basic facts and ideas and presenting them with some degree of coherence; selecting material and making a very simple comment on it;
- describing experience in very basic terms, making some attempt to express what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing very straightforward meanings and very explicit attitudes;
- showing some awareness that language is used in different ways;
- writing in simple sentences but with some weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and construction which, on occasion, impair communication.

**Grade F - The candidate has shown ability in:**

- understanding and conveying information at a straightforward level;
- understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions, and presenting them with a degree of coherence;
- selecting material and commenting on it at a literal level;
- describing experience in concrete terms and expressing in a simple manner what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing clear meanings and explicit attitudes;
- showing awareness that language is used in different circumstances;
- writing at least in simple sentences - weaknesses in punctuation, spelling and the construction of complex sentences will be apparent, but will not seriously impair communication.

**Grade E - The candidate has shown ability in:**

- understanding and conveying information at a straightforward level, occasionally showing an awareness of more complicated detail;
- understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them coherently;
- selecting material and commenting on it in a fairly detailed way;
- describing experience in fair detail and expressing intelligently what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing meanings and attitudes with an occasional recognition of what is implicit rather than solely the explicit;
- showing an awareness of a variety of uses of language;
- writing in clear sentences with some paragraphing; there may be some weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and the construction of complex sentences but they will not seriously impair communication.

**Grade D - The candidate has shown ability in:**

- understanding and conveying information at straightforward level and occasionally at a fairly complex level;
- understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them clearly and with basic accuracy;
- selecting material, commenting on it in a detailed way, and demonstrating an ability to begin to evaluate;
- describing and considering experience and expressing, often effectively, what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing meanings and attitudes, occasionally recognizing more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes;
- showing some sense of audience and an awareness of a variety of uses of language with some understanding of their appropriateness;
- writing in clear sentences of various kinds generally arranged correctly in paragraphs and usually exercising care over punctuation and spelling.

**Grade C - The candidate has shown ability in:**

- understanding and conveying information both at a straightforward level and at a complex level;
- understanding basic facts, ideas and opinions and presenting them with a degree of clarity and accuracy;
- evaluating material and selecting what is relevant for specific purposes;
- describing and reflecting upon experience and expressing effectively what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes;
- showing a sense of audience and some understanding of appropriate uses of language;
- writing in paragraphs, using sentences of varied kinds and exercising care over punctuation and spelling.

**Grade B - The candidate has demonstrated competence in:**

- understanding and communicating information at both a straightforward and more complex level;
- understanding facts, ideas and opinions and ordering and presenting them with a good measure of clarity and accuracy;
- evaluating material and selecting and presenting carefully what is relevant for specific purposes;
- describing and reflecting upon experience and expressing and analyzing in some measure what is felt and what is imagined;
- recognizing the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes and in some cases those which are less obvious;
- showing a sense of audience and some understanding of appropriate uses of language;
- writing in clear paragraphs, using a good variety of appropriate sentence structure and showing accuracy in punctuation and spelling.

**Grade A - The candidate had demonstrated expertise in:**

- understanding and communicating information at both a straightforward and extremely complex level;
- understanding facts, ideas and opinions, and ordering and presenting them with clarity and accuracy;
- evaluating material and selecting and presenting in detail and analyzing effectively what is felt and imagined.
- recognizing implicit meanings and attitudes;
- showing a clear sense of audience and an understanding of appropriate uses of language;
- writing in well constructed paragraphs, using a full range of appropriate sentence structure and showing accuracy in punctuation and spelling.

**APPENDIX  
SUGGESTED TEACHING ACTIVITIES  
FOR  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

English Language lessons may include the following activities:-

- giving instructions and directions;
- explaining how things work or why things are done;
- giving legal statements;
- writing with a particular audience in mind e.g. newspapers, telegrams, circulars;
- filling in application forms;
- preparing notes and informational speeches;
- writing letters of application, requests, complaints, thanks, persuasion, comment;
- writing personal commentaries;
- thanking speakers and introducing others;
- giving personal views on a wide range of matters;
- presenting evaluatory comments on proposals and situations of various kinds;
- communicating experience in terms of observation and feelings with respect to events and places;
- interpreting experiences imaginatively through the medium of stories, plays, radio and/or television scripts;
- understanding directions, instructions;
- formulating relevant questions to acquire or clarify information through conversations, interviews, broadcasts;

- **note-taking during talks, interviews, documentaries;**
- **designing forms of various kinds;**
- **identifying main and secondary themes of a variety of media;**
- **recognizing devices and techniques used in literature.**



# AURAL COMPREHENSION SUGGESTED MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

## A. Materials

Recordings of:

- dramatic readings;
- news items ;
- talk shows;
- editorial comments;
- advertisements;
- passages which contain examples of slanted/loaded words,
- films, film strips, slides on a variety of topics.

## B. Activities

- acting out a story from one that is read aloud
- making or doing something by following oral directions
- participating in class or group discussions
- getting information by listening to announcements
- working on group projects
- critiquing a peer's draft of a story after listening to it
- enjoying good literature that is well presented orally
- evaluating an issue that is being debated
- evaluating products advertised in commercials

- **evaluating candidates from their campaign speeches**
- **comparing audio recordings with written reports of same events. (What is different? What needs to be clarified?)**
- **detecting and classifying emotionally toned words, conflicting statements, facts and opinions - determining the emotional emphasis and/or mood of selection/character of speakers;**
- **categorizing and classifying events, places, items, information on prepared charts and diagrams.**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
GUIDE TO CHOICE OF TEXTS  
MAIN TEXTS**

Teachers may select any one or a combination of the texts listed below.

Author/Editor	Text	Publisher
Kinneavy, James L. Warriner, John	Elements of Writing Grades 9 - 12	Holt, Rinehart and Winston Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998
	Success in Writing	Globe Fearon Educational Publisher, 1996
	Reading Comprehension Workshop	Globe Fearon Educational Publisher, 1979
King, Paul H.	Writing Summaries and Statistical Reports	Carib Publishing Limited, 1988
Banks, R. A. & Burns, F. D. A.	Summary and Directed Writing	Hodder & Stoughton, 1980
Shostak, Jerome	Vocabulary Workshop Levels C - E	Sadlier-Oxford, 1996
Etherton, Alan	General Certificate English	Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1994
Etherton, A.R.B.	Mastering Modern English	Longman, 1996
Shiach, Don	GCSE English	Hodder & Stoughton, 1987
Todd, Neila and Thomas, Marjorie	21 <sup>st</sup> Century English for Caribbean Schools	Macmillan Education Ltd., 2000
Grant, Mayne, Robertson & Siriram	Choices	Longman Caribbean, 1994
Narinesingh, Roy & Narinesingh, Uriel	A Comprehensive English Course	Royards Educational Books, 1992

