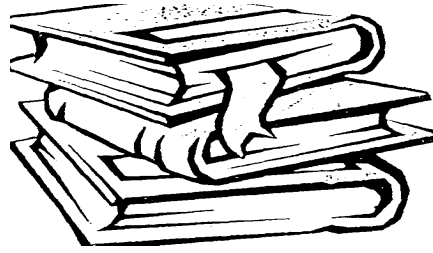


Malawi School Certificate of Education

EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH

Paper III

Note Making
Comprehension,
Summary Writing
&
Cloze Procedure



Introduction

This piece of work is intended for senior students, and provides a graduated course leading up to exercises such as those that are set at the Malawi School Certificate of Education examinations in English Language.

Examinations in English Language at MSCE Level consist of 3 papers: Paper I, Paper II and Paper III.

Paper I tests registers, lexis, semantics, idioms, grammar and structures in form of multiple choice. It is worth 60 marks.

Paper II tests composition i.e. letters, memorandums, speeches, reports, instructions, arguments, short stories etc. Three questions are given, and candidates answer only one question. Each question is worth 40 marks. This paper comes an hour after paper I.

Paper III has three sections: Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A tests Note- Making. It is worth 30 marks. Section B tests Comprehension and

Summary Writing and is worth 50 marks. Section C tests Cloze Procedure. It is worth 20 marks.

Inasmuch as Language teachers have endeavoured to present detailed work on the Teaching of Language in schools, few have focused on the actual practical skills required for excellence in Language examinations. My work assumes that the learner has already acquired the skills in Language learning, but needs to perfect them for examinations.

This booklet discusses Note-Making, Comprehension, Summary Writing, and Cloze Procedure which make paper III of examinations in English Language.

Essential skills have been included, and everything useless and unnecessary has been rigorously cut out. You will find definitions and explanations sandwiched by sample passages and suggested approaches to finished work of MANEB expectations.

NOTE-MAKING

Note making forms Section A of Paper II of examinations in English Language. A prose passage is given. Candidates are asked to read the passage carefully and afterwards make a summary of it in Note-Form. In their summary, they are

asked to provide a suitable title, give the Main Points and supply Supporting Points.

Marks are awarded for Note-Style, Brevity and a fair copy Layout as detailed below

The Main Heading, the Sub – Sections, and the Sub-sub-sections form the Note--layout (format) that is worth 10 marks in the examination. These should be neatly written:

- a. The Main Topic should be written in capitals at the top of the page.
- b. Skip a line or two before you write the figure one [1] outside the margin to introduce the first sub-topic.
- c. Supporting points of the sub-topic should be introduced by letters [a, b, c] inside the margin, and. the examples should be further indented, introduced by the Roman Numerals [i, ii, iii, etc].

The structure of your notes should take the following general format.

MAIN TOPIC

1. Sub-topic.

a.

b.

c. e.g.

i.

ii.

iii.

2. Sub - topic.

a.

b.

c.

d.

3. Sub - topic.

a.

b. e.g.

i.

ii.

iii.

c.

NOTE: It is to the discretion of the candidate to use figures 1, 2, 3, etc to introduce sub-topics. Some prefer to use letters A, B, C, etc. for sub-topics, and

dashes (-) or *bullets* (•) for supporting points.

Note Style

Note- style refers to the way your notes have been presented.

- They must NOT be simply copied from the passage as if it were a composition or written as if they were a summary of a passage in prose form.
- They must be brief, meaningful phrases.
- Conventional symbols and abbreviations must appear in your notes. These must be used sparingly, i.e. do not overuse them.

Symbols

Some standard symbols that are commonly used in notes are:

| | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| & | - | and |
| + | - | and or plus |
| % | - | percentage |
| ∴ | - | therefore |
| = | - | same as |

Abbreviations

Abbreviation falls into three main divisions:

a. Using capitalized initial letters e.g.

U.N. - United Nations

IBM - International Business Machine

b. Using the first few letters of a word (and if plural, add an 's')

divs - divisions

exams - examinations

lab - laboratory

ref - reference

c. Using a combination of the first few and the last few letters of a word e.g.

govt. - government

btwn. - between

ppl. - people

chn. - children

dept. - department

pts. - points

d. The commonest abbreviations which must appear in your notes are:

- i.e. - that is
- e.g. - for example
- viz. - namely
- etc. - and other additional points

Note-style is worth 8 marks in the examination.

- 2 marks are awarded for notes which are not a composition
- 2 marks for notes in meaningful phrases
- 2 marks for the presence of symbols used sparingly
- 2 marks for the presence of some few abbreviated words.

The Mechanics of Note-Making

Bearing in mind that Note Making is a selective process, the following important points must be noted:

- a. When reading the given passage, ask yourself what the purpose of the passage (or speech) is, and have a clear purpose and definite sense of organization for the notes.
- b. Use a conventional set of meaningful symbols and abbreviations.
- c. Write down what is really new and important and not what has already been written before.

- d. Be alert to those cues or signals that precede the information that should be noted down, for example : *First, Second, Next, Then, In conclusion, the most important point, for example*, etc
- e. In your fair set of notes use words and phrases meaningfully, and not complete sentences.

Strategies for effective Note-Making

In the first paragraph of the passage given, the purpose of the passage may be stated, or the central ideas and background given. And throughout the passage, there are signals to alert the reader to key points or shifts in focus. Pay attention to these as they assist you to select important points only from the passage. For example:

a. Signal of Purpose

- The purpose of the passage is
- In this passage, you will learn about

b. Signal of background information

- Let me explain how the situation came about.
- It all happened in this way.....

c. Signal of key-points

- This passage has three main points.
- There are six types of personality.

Transitions

Transitions are words and phrases that connect ideas, information or a section of the passage. They help the reader to follow the organization of the passage. For example:-

- a. Transitional words:
 - Instead
 - Consequently
 - Next
- b. Transitional phrases
 - Another problem is
 - Now let's turn to.....

Summary Clues

These are words that introduce the summary to emphasize important points, give the reader some chance to catch anything that might have been missed. For example:

- Let me summarize in this way.
- What I have been saying adds up to.....

Support

A good passage has support for every key-point or main idea. On taking down notes, where more than two examples are given to support a main point, pick just two.

Stages involved in Note - Taking/ Writing

- Skim through the material first to get a good overview.
- Read the material very carefully.
- Pay attention to words and phrases that signal main points and supporting points e.g. first, finally, for example.
- Quote only key words and phrases from the study text.
- Use abbreviations and symbols in your notes.
- Use mostly nouns and verbs in your notes. Omit articles such as *a, an, the*, and use adjectives and adverbs sparingly.

Outlining

- Use numbers (1, 2, 3,) letters of the alphabet (a, b, c, d) and Roman Numerals (i, ii, iii) to indicate the main ideas.

- Use phrases and avoid complete sentences.
- Organize information under main points.
- Supporting facts and details should be indented under main facts.

NOTE:

Note Making is the establishment of the structure of a text, pulling out the key ideas, and leaving out non-essential information.

NOTE MAKING SAMPLE PASSAGES AND NOTES

Read the following passage carefully and make notes on it. Credit will be given for **good note format style, content and brevity**.

Passage

There are three levels of courts in Scotland dealing with criminal matters. Supreme among these is the High Court of Judiciary that is presided over by a judge with a jury of 15 members of the public who have been called

together specifically to hear a particular case. This court deals with the most serious crimes such as murder, treason and rape.

For the next level of criminal court, Scotland is divided into six sheriff Doms with 49 Sheriff Courts. Each Sheriff Dom has a Sheriff Principal and there are 107 permanent sheriffs, all of whom are legally qualified. Most sheriffs are appointed to particular courts but in addition there are floating sheriffs who take cases in any sheriff Dom. The Secretary of State is responsible for the central organization of these courts through the Scottish Courts Service that is an Executive Agency within the Scottish Administration.

District Courts, the third level, are the responsibility of local authorities and the judges here are generally lay justices of peace, many of whom have given long service to their local authority as elected representatives.

Sample Notes

LEVELS OF COURTS IN SCOTLAND

1. High Court of Judiciary

- a) presided over by judge c jury of 15 members of public
- b) deals c most serious crimes e g.
 - i) murder
 - ii) treason
 - iii) rape

2. Sheriff Doms

- a) Scotland divided into six sheriff Doms c 49 sheriff courts
- b) each sheriff Dom = sheriff principal + 107 permanent sheriffs - all legally qualified
- c) floating sheriffs take cases in any sheriff Dom
- d) Secretary of State responsible for central organization thro Scottish

Courts Service

3 District Courts

- a) responsibility of local authorities
- b) judges - generally lay justices of peace c long service to local authority as elected reps

COMPREHENSION

Examination Skills

- Read the passage thoroughly once or twice and make sure you understand it before attempting the questions.
- Questions test the candidate's competence in understanding language concepts, grammar, vocabulary, etc
- Lines are drawn for the candidate to write on. Use them neatly. Avoid crossing out or dirtying work unnecessarily.
- Don't write your responses in capital letters throughout. Observe rules of punctuation as much as possible.
- Make sure that your responses are factually and grammatically correct.
- Do not lift answers from the passage i.e. do not just copy the whole paragraph or lines assuming that the marker will select what is an answer in your response.

- Be guided by the number of marks at the end of the question. This too will determine the length of your responses.
- Follow the basic rules of responding to comprehension questions. Do not rush!
- Observe all the grammatical and punctuation rules, beginning a sentence with a capital letter, putting comma, full stop, spellings, and word omissions.
- Try to write much of your responses in your own words as much as possible, unless otherwise. This demonstrates adequate comprehension of the passage. Don't get into the habit of copying everything.
- When attempting questions of vocabulary or meanings of words or sentences, respond with close reference to the way the sentence or word is used in context.

SUMMARY WRITING

Definition

Summary writing is the cutting down of literary matter written in a continuous and readable form. It includes everything essential in a passage or document, and excludes everything relatively unimportant. It is expressed in the briefest and clearest terms possible.

Uses of Summary

- a) It is a time saver to a newspaper reader whose pressure of work may prevent his sparing the necessary time for the reading of the news in detail.
- b) To the business man, it is very valuable. Some transaction which has been the subject of a long correspondence can be surveyed within a few moments.
- c) The brief of a barrister is really a summary of a client's case prepared by the solicitor from the evidence and documents placed before him.
- d) Ability to summarise a lesson or the contents of a book is of great value to the student preparing for examinations.

Success in Summary Writing depends mainly upon two qualifications: a thorough knowledge of the English Language and a keen perception of and

ability to grasp readily the important points in any document. The first of these qualifications can be acquired by study and by wide reading of the best productions of English literature. The second one is to a very great extent a natural one. Rules may be laid down for the guidance of the learner, but success depends upon practice in the working of exercises.

General Principles of Summary Writing

- a) Read the passage carefully at least twice
- b) The purpose of Summary Writing is to give the main stages in a narrative, the chief points in a description or explanation, and the leading ideas and the conclusion in an argument. As a general rule, omit the details of description or explanation, and also illustrations, examples, and facts stated as evidence.
- c) A summary must be a well-composed statement that would be perfectly intelligible to anyone who had never seen the original passage. Each sentence must lead naturally to the next, so that there may be proper continuity of thought.

- d) A summary should be written in simple, everyday language. The wording should be, in the main, your own. You need not, however, change the original words or expressions simply for the sake of changing them. Figurative language should of course be replaced by direct statement.
- e) Unless there is a special reason to the contrary, you should keep the points in the same order as they occur in the original passage.
- f) In general, a summary should appear as a continuous passage, even when the original contains paragraph divisions.
- g) If no particular number of words is prescribed, you should make your summary about a third of the length of the original passage
- h) It is usual to convert the Direct Speech of speeches, letters and articles into Indirect Speech

Skill in Summary Writing

- a) Study the title of the subject carefully before you begin writing. If it is a phrase or a sentence, take note of every word in it, so that you may clearly grasp the scope of the subject

- b) Do not start writing until you have thought out the general lines of your summary. It is useful to set down clearly expressed topics which should be arranged in an order that will secure proper connection of ideas. No summary can be satisfactory unless it has a sound, logical plan
- c) The opening paragraph requires special attention. Never begin with a few loosely connected sentences vaguely labelled 'Introduction'. Don't beat about the bush; come immediately to your main point. Also too abrupt opening can be avoided by the careful wording of the first sentence.

Do not begin with a definition unless it is really necessary. Do not open with a survey of historical facts unless this has a direct bearing on the theme.

- d) You will sometimes find the concluding paragraph troublesome. You must not bring the reader to a sudden halt; a well turned final sentence is sufficient to round off your summary.
- e) Unless the nature of the subject clearly demands that you should talk about yourself, you should write impersonally; that is, you should not introduce expressions like 'I think,' 'in my opinion' etc. Use impersonal

forms such as, 'Many people think.....' etc.

Skills for Examinations

- As candidates, read the passage and note down the main points and supporting points.
- Write your main and supporting points in point form on a draft paper.
- Start connecting the ideas in prose form - in a single paragraph. Use the past tense or reported speech as much as possible.
- Count the number of words. If the required number of words is 100, and the words exceed 100, go back and see which expressions or ideas need to be left out - (Shortening). If below 70, then find out which other necessary information has been left out.
- Long sentences should be paraphrased, e.g
 - a) I did not remember to close the door (8 words),
- I forgot closing the door (5 words)
 - b) I do not like men who are not honest. (9 words)

- I dislike dishonest men (4 words)

- When you are sure to have come up with the right number of words on your draft paper, transfer summary written to the space provided in the answer book.
- Remember to write a title for your summary. Do not assume that it is already provided in the comprehension passage.

SAMPLE PASSAGE AND SUMMARY

Passage 1

This passage has 365 words. Summarise it into 30 words or less.

A school Magazine ought to have an editorial in which the editor expresses his views. This should be written simply and clearly. There is no point in giving the editor a chance to say something if no one can understand what he writes.

Your School Magazine should contain school news. Reporters should help the editor to collect this and should see that they write it up in a lively and interesting manner, taking care, however, not to make the telling more important than the news itself. This is what sometimes happens in our national newspapers when a reporter is so busy making his story sensational that he distorts the facts. For example, there is no use your reporter writing about a tremendous exciting football match with great play by the home side, all of whom were heroes, if in fact your team were lucky to escape defeat in a goalless draw.

Features should be prominent in your magazine - an account of a school journey for instance. The writer should keep steadily to his story in this kind of writing, and not be diverted into lengthy treatment of things which happen on the way, however exciting they may have been. Other features may well take up less space but it is good to encourage as many contributors as possible to take part in the paper, especially those from the Junior classes who may some day have to run the Magazine themselves.

Little things like puzzles or tongue-twisters are a good 'fill-in' to help you balance

your space.

One last word, your Magazine should have a good printer, and good photographs. If you haven't, remember that a good School Magazine can be made from handwritten pages, duplicated sheets, or can even appear in a single copy as a wall sheet. Don't think any the less of it for that. During the World War II many very important pieces of news were passed on in this way to the resistance movements in German-occupied Europe. What is important is to have something to say, to say it clearly, and to arouse and keep the interest of your readers. If you do this we guarantee that your paper will succeed.

(365 words)

Draft

The School Magazine

- ought to have an editorial
- written simply and clearly
- it should also have school news collected by reporters.
- written in a lively & interesting manner.
- features e.g. school journey, should be prominent.
- keep steadily to the story.
- encourage contributors from the junior classes
- balance up the magazine space with little things like puzzles & tongue-

twisters

First draft

The school magazine should have an editorial which is written simply and clearly. It should also have school news which is collected by reporters and written in a lively, interesting and straightforward manner. Features like a school journey should be prominent in the magazine. The space should be balanced up with puzzles and tongue-twisters.

(54 words)

Final draft

THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE

It should have a simple and clear editorial. The news should be lively, interesting and straightforward. Features like school journey should be prominent. Puzzles and tongue-twisters should balance up space.

(30 words)

CLOZE – PROCEDURE

Examination Skills

1. Knowledge of Register (Technical Language)

Some gaps might require a register word and as such, it is important for the candidate to possess a wide knowledge of this e.g.

- i. The baby was admitted to the _____ ward at the hospital.
(paediatric)
- ii. The General Manager's _____ got seriously injured in the accident. (chauffeur)

2. Knowledge of grammar and word usage

Some gaps might require a word that can best be guessed if one has adequate knowledge of grammar e.g.

- i. The most _____ girl won the beauty contest. (beautiful)
- ii. He insisted that I _____ him my bicycle. (lend)

3. Knowledge of articles

Some gaps might connect very well if an article is inserted e.g.

- i. We are still looking for _____ watchman for the house (a)
- ii. _____ elephant has escaped from the zoo. (An)

NB: You use THE for what has already been identified.

4. Knowledge of preposition e.g.

- i. The teacher congratulated me _____ passing the exams. (on)
- ii. He was admitted _____ Mlambe Hospital. (to)

5. Knowledge of certain words combination e.g.

- i. The soldiers at the Army _____ are parading today.
(Barracks)
- ii. The mentally disturbed student was taken to Zomba
hospital. (mental)

6. In some cases, the passage in itself might contain clues for the gaps.

Sample Cloze Procedure Passage

Hello boys and girls. Today, I want us to discuss what true love is. When Jesus walked on earth, he taught his disciples that the greatest commandment is ____ 1 _____. Boys and ____ 2 _____, how do you feel when someone, particularly of the opposite sex, says, 'I ____ 3 _____ you?'

Love is a word ____ 4 _____ triggers a smile ____ 5 _____ your lips. I wouldn't, therefore, be surprised if you ____ 6 _____. Love is a ____ 7 _____ that soothes a sad heart. Probably, the problem is that ____ 8 _____ same word is ____ 9 _____ used by some boys, girls and older ____ 10 _____ and women, as a weapon ____ 11 _____ flatter the ____ 12 _____ sex.

Youths, aren't _____13_____ statements common among you today? 'Oh, I love your _____14_____ face; _____15_____ appeals to me _____16_____ than your love; you love is a solid rock that can't be _____17_____. I love you more _____18_____ I love my parents; you're the most beautiful one _____19_____ have _____20_____ met in my life'.

Responses analysis

1. Love - from Bible Knowledge and title.
2. girls - combination
3. love - repeated
4. That - grammar knowledge
5. on - preposition
6. Smile - repeated word
7. word - repeated
8. the - definite article
9. being - language use/ grammar.
10. men - word combination
11. to - grammar
12. opposite - repeated
13. These - grammar
14. beautiful - grammar
15. Nothing - knowledge of English - refer to context.
16. More - word usage/ grammar

- 17. Broken - word combination/ context
- 18. Than - repeated
- 19. I - grammar/ context/ repeated
- 20. Ever - context

Note

- All those responses indicated repeated are within the passage.
- Don't just slot in a word for the sake of completing the gap.
- Don't leave a gap unattended. Write lightly in pencil first read the passage and hear it in your head. If satisfied neatly rub off pencil and complete in ink.