

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

MALAWI SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION  
(MSCE) MANEB

## STANDARD INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE MAKING

TITLE



- Block letters and not underlined or small letters and underlined.
- Not numbered.
- Be centred.

## MAIN POINTS

- Be underlined
- Start from the margin.
- Be numbered with either of the following:
  - ❖ Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc).
  - ❖ Capital letters ( A, B, C etc)
  - ❖ Upper case Roman numerals ( I, II, III etc)

## THE MAJOR POINTS OR MINOR SUPPORTING POINTS

- Be numbered with either of the following:
  - ❖ Small letters (a, b, c, etc)
  - ❖ Lower case numerals ( i,ii, iii etc)
  - ❖ Bullets.

## SHORT FORMS, ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND SYMBOLS

### SHORT FORMS

- |                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| • People        | pple   |
| • Department    | dept   |
| • Approximately | approx |
| • School        | sch    |
| • January       | Jan    |

### ABBREVIATIONS

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| • CCAP | Church of Central African Presbyterian |
|--------|--|

- USA                      United States of America
- MCP                     Malawi Congress Party
- UDF                      United Democratic Front

## ACRONYMS

- COSOMA                Copyright Society of Malawi
- NDA                     National Democratic Alliance
- AFORD                 Alliance for Democracy

## SYMBOLS

- = Equals
- % percentage
- 1 one
- 2<sup>nd</sup> second
- ©            copyright
- ®            registered
- <            less than
- >            greater than
- /            or
- B4           before
- <sup>c</sup>n          when
- because
- #            number

## QUESTIONS

- ❖ Read the following passage carefully and afterwards make a summary of it in note form.
- ❖ In your summary;

- Provide a suitable title for the passage.
  - Give the main points
  - Supply supporting points for each main point
- ❖ Marks will be awarded for note – style, brevity and a fair – copy layout.
  - ❖ Candidates who simply copy the passage will be penalized.

## COMPREHENSION

### TYPES

1. Observation
2. Comparison
3. Reflection
4. Selection

### 1. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- Thinking of candidates
  - ❖ Candidates should be able to follow ‘line of thought’ that is what the passage is all about.
  - ❖ One should be able to show how one point depends on another.

### EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- ❖ Do you think Thoko’s mission to the forest was successful? Give one reason to support your answer.
- ❖ According to the passage, how many nights did Thoko spend in the forest?

### 2. COMPARISON QUESTIONS

- If they are able to notice differences or similarities between two items or facts.
- If a candidate has fully understood the passage, he/she will be able to compare:

- ❖ Actual words used in the passage.
- ❖ Writer's vocabulary.
- ❖ The way words have been used in the passage with expressions, sentences or context.
- ❖ Facts and questions asked in the passage.

## EXAMPLES OF COMPARISON QUESTIONS

- ❖ Two groups of people hold different views on how to contain the problem of deforestation, state each group's view on how to contain the problem.
- ❖ Give the meaning of each of the following words as used in the passage.

## 3. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Involve critical thinking in candidates to:
  - ❖ Notice the way something has been written.
  - ❖ Relate the passage to the mind of the writer.
  - ❖ Be able to scrutinize picture and see the author's mind.

## EXAMPLES OF REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ❖ What made Thoko think that the man who had fallen into the hole had died?
- ❖ Briefly describe Thoko's character.

## 4. SELECTION QUESTIONS

- Test candidates to see if they can select appropriate options from close reading and observation in the passage.

### *EXAMPLES OF SELECTION QUESTIONS*

- ❖ Mention any two incidences which show that Thoko was scared of the forest that night.
- ❖ What three things do herbalists obtain from trees to do their work?

## GENERAL RULES IN ANSWERING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Be as brief as possible.
- Use your own words as much as possible.
- Punctuate your responses properly.
- Do not left word for word from the passage as part of the answer.

## ANSWERING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do herbalists obtain from trees to do their work?
  - Herbalists obtain roots and barks from trees to do their work.
- ❖ ***Advisable answer.***
  - Roots and barks.

## MEANING OF WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS

- What is required here is the contextual meaning which at times differs from the dictionary meaning.
- ***Question***
  - State each groups views on containing the problem of deforestation.
- ***Answer.***
  - i. Herbalist – Providing and promoting alternative energy sources.
  - ii. Government – Encouraging the rural communities to plant trees around their villages and in bare areas.
- Be mindful of question verb.

## SUMMARY

- Involves identifying main ideas in a passage and presenting them in one's own words within to specific number of words.
- Successful summary writing therefore depends on the ability that makes up a passage.
- These ideas may be contained in a single topic sentence or paragraph or in a group of sentences.

## THE PROCESS OF SUMMARISING

### STAGE 1

- ❖ Identify topic sentence.
- ❖ Once identified, you can simply underline them right on the question paper with a pencil for easy reference.

### STAGE 2

- ❖ One topic sentence have been identified, the second stage involves rephrasing the ideas in your own words.

### STAGE 3

- ❖ Removing less important words.

## SHORT STORY

- Short stories should not be confused with folktales.
- Folktales are stories of wisdom passed on orally from one generation to another.
- Folktales usually involve animal characters like hare, hyena and usually been with "once upon a time" or "A long time ago".
- Short stories explore real issues that concern the human race.
- Characters in short story are usually human.
- It contains a make believe element.
- Elements of a short story recommended by examiners.

# 1. CONFLICT

- ❖ A good story is built around a conflict.
- ❖ A conflict is a situation where one character wants to achieve a certain goal while the other character or circumstances are deterring him or her.
- ❖ A conflict may be physical, for example;

## A CARELESS COOK

The satisfied clucking of chickens dancing round the kitchen as they picked up the remains of a great feast reminded me of the groundnuts. Yes, every nut was gone. How stupid I had been to leave them there uncovered with the kitchen door wide open. But such self – reproach did not occur to me at the time. For I was seized by blinding rage and an overwhelming desire to punish the greedy offenders.

Now the most annoying thing about a chicken is that you can never hit it if you intend to. You are always bound to miss it, especially if you are really cross. At your failure it will make a noise half of defiance and half of disapproval and then march away majestically, leaving you more annoyed than ever. I added all these things up to make a sum of charges against them as I stood in the door way, thinking how best to launch my attack while they were still busy scratching here and there in search of a stray nut.

I seized the pestle and raised high up above my head. By this time they had seen me and were flying in disorder all over the kitchen. They tumbled over each other through the door way. I let down my powerful weapon just in time to hit the last one right on the head. I did it! I gasped as triumph as it croaked painfully. But my victory song did not last, for in a minute the poor thing was staggering frantically about the kitchen. Its strength failed after a while and it fell lifeless just near the fire.

In the above extract, the conflict resulted into the physical hitting of chicken by the main character, making this a physical conflict.

- ❖ Other types of conflict include psychological social and political. In any conflict, man can be in conflict with another man, environment or even himself or herself. Some conflicts are clear in a story while some are subtle.

# 2. STORY LINE AND PLOT

Once a conflict which forms the basis of a story, has been thought out the next thing



is to see how the story runs from the first incidence to the last. This is what is known as a story line – a chronological sequence of events from the beginning to the end.

### ***Example.***

1. John buys beautiful pen he thought he is the only one with such a pen in his class.
2. Jane of the same class as John, buys a pen similar to John's but does not know that John also has pen like that one.
3. Somebody steals John's pen in class.
4. John searches the class for his lost pen and finds Jane with a pen like his.
5. Jane knows that the pen is hers.
6. A physical conflict ensues.

In MSCE examinations, it is required that a story should have a clear plot.

The story should be seen having a temporal dimension that is, the story should develop from the even to another.

## **3. CHARACTERS**

- ❖ A character is a personality taking part in the events in the story.
- ❖ A story has one major character and supporting characters.
- ❖ Regardless of how characters are fielded, it is required of a candidate to develop the character.
- ❖ Character development (characterization) involves letting the characters show out his or her qualities through what he or she is doing in the story.
- ❖ A character may be flat or round.
  - A flat character displays only a single tract. It is easy to predict what a flat character will do in a particular situation.
  - A round character is unpredictable kind of personality whose tracts change depending on circumstances.

## **4. NARRATIVE AND DIALOGUE**

- A good short story contains both a narrative and dialogue.
- A narrative is a brief account of what is happening in the story.
- In a narrative, it is actually the one telling the story who is speaking.
- Example :

## Why Blame a Mosquito

There was some silence. The clergyman adjusted the wick of human lantern hanging on a nail in the wall. He stalked a mosquito that was taking liberties with his ankle and murdered the offending insect in an explosion out of all proportion to its size.

"Pastor," the old chief said, startled. "You educated people are funny. Killing a mere mosquito to as if you are killing an elephant. Why, why don't you let the little insect alone? How much of you can it bit to make any difference to you?"

- Dialogue refers to verbal interaction between characters in the story.
- Dialogue helps in developing characters and advances the story.
- Dialogue is always in direct speech.

## 5. PUNCTUATION

They all arrive at the place where the accident took place. Everybody was in tears except John.

"Who was driving?" The policeman asked.

"Rachel," John answered with a little tremor in his voice. He tilted his head at an angle as if trying to peek at the policeman.

"What happen, Rachel?" The policeman quizzed. "I can't really explain. I .. I don't know

### QUESTION

- Write an original story entitled "**LEFT BEHIND**".

### LEFT BEHIND

Chilipo tossed again in his bed. He stretched his right hand to gather Jane closer to him. She was there she must be at the toilet, he thought. How the hell can she manage to make her way to the toilet without lights on? He murmured under his

breath.

He reached for the switch and with the tip of his fingers pushed the creaky button down. Oh ! My God! The words spurted out his mouth reflexively. Jane's night dress lay neatly on the bed. He looked at the wall clock. It was twenty minutes before midnight.

Jane! He shouted. There was a tremor in his voice. His hands started shaking. No reply. He jumped out at the door and dashed to the toilet all along calling on top of his voice. The door was closed and lights were off. He groped his way through the darkness and checked every room. There was no trace of her.

Chilipo and Jane were different on one thing. Chilipo was a drunkard while Jane was serious Christian. Every Sunday, Chilipo drove Jane to church and went out drinking. This Sunday, Chilipo decided to attend the church service on Jane's insistence. Open your Bible on Mathew 26 verse 64. There was some cracking noise as the congregation leafed through Bibles. Chilipo swore under his breath as he went back and forth from Genesis to Revelation without locating where the book of Mathew was. Jane looked at him sympathetically. Slowly he gave him her Bible and took his which she opened to where the said scripture was.

"Jesus is assuring us that He is coming soon". The preacher continued after reading a small portion of the sighted scripture. The sermon seemed never-ending to Chilipo. The rest of the congregation seemed to enjoy the service very much. Periodically 'Amen', praise the Lord' and 'Allelujah' were chorused in unison. Back at home, Chilipo sank into a sofa, tired with the long church service.

"Darling," Jane started as she made herself comfortable beside her husband. "Did you hear what the Pastor preached, that Jesus is coming soon?"

'To do what?' he responded mockingly. 'To take the faithful to Heaven. That's what the Bible calls rapture.'

'I'm sorry Jane. I don't really believe in this Jesus kind of stuff.' He answered curtly. He now remembered how Jane recoiled in the sofa and released a deep sigh of resignation.

Suddenly he heard a loud knock at the front door. Without asking who it was, rushed to the sitting room and opened the door expecting to see Jane in the doorway. 'My wife and children have disappeared right before my sight.' It was his neighbor Msakati. Chilipo gasped in response. He felt the earth sinking under his feet. For a long moment he stood fixed in the doorway, mouth agape, his gaze fixed on Msakati.

'Rapture.' He managed to spit the word with difficulty.

Msakati nodded and left without any further word.

# **SPEECH**

## **PARTS OF A SPEECH**

- Has three basic parts:
  - ❖ Introduction
  - ❖ Main body
  - ❖ Ending
- Each of these sections is very important.

### **1. TITLE**

- ❖ It must be positioned in the centre of the page.
- ❖ It must be in block letters but not underlined.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

- ❖ Introduction of a speech comprises of the salutation and the introductory sentence.
- ❖ Salutation
  - A speech is presented to an audience.
  - Normally, an audience comprise of invited guests and other dignitaries and the general audience.
  - In response to a question on speech, candidates are supposed to imagine such an audience.
  - The invited guests and dignitaries imagined, however, should be relevant to the occasion where a speech is to be delivered.
- ❖ Importance of salutation

- The salutation is not meant to constitute a complete sentence.
- *It is in essence a list of dignitaries and parts of audience.*
- *The list is mentioned in descending order of importance.*

## Example of a speech

You are the chairperson of AIDS TOTO Club at your school and you would like to organize your friends to go for voluntary counseling and testing at the nearest health centre, prepare a speech that you would deliver to the club members on the importance of VCT.

## Answer.

The Patron, the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary, the treasurer, all members of the Executive committee and all club members present here.

## Note:

- ❖ names of positions begin with capita letters
- ❖ The names should not be preceded by expression such as 'your honor' or respect expression such as 'your honor' or respect. These are literal translations.

## 3. THE MAIN BODY

- ❖ When writing the main body of a speech, candidates should imagine that he or she is literally speaking to the audience. That is, it should sound live.
- ❖ As such it should be written from first person point of view.

## Example

I would like to talk to you on the need to go for voluntary counseling and testing. I hope you will be with me up to my speech.

## 4. ENDING

- ❖ At the end the speaker is supposed to:
  - Mention the highest dignitary and the rest of the audience together.

- Thank the audience.

## Example

The Patron, all members present. I thank you very much for listening to my speech.

## Question

Imagine you are the Chairperson of a human rights club at your school. You have just learnt that there is a lot of teasing and bullying of form 1 students at a neighboring school. The Head teacher of the neighboring school has asked you to talk to the students of the school on causes and consequences of teasing and bullying. Prepare a speech to be delivered at the meeting.

# REPORT

- Reports are categorized into formal and informal short and detailed at MSCE level.
- However candidates are expected to write a short and informal report.

## LAY OUT OF A REPORT

A report is based on the same principles as letter writing except for the following;

- ❖ Date comes on top
- ❖ Addresses are clearly marked To: and From :
- ❖ The subject line is clearly indicated.
- ❖ Subject : Do not use RE or REF.
- ❖ The addresses start from the right margin and are wrapped in sentence order.
- ❖ Do not end the report with 'yours faithfully'. Rather , just sign and write your name in full below the signature

## Example

Cases of gender based violence are increasing at an alarming rate – a situation which has raised concern amongst members of your community. Write a report to the District Social Welfare Officer highlighting the problem.

In your report, you may include;

- i. The extent of the problem
- ii. What has led to the increase in the number of cases
- iii. Suggest ways how the problem can be addressed
- iv. Any other relevant points.

## Answer

12<sup>th</sup> December, 2007

FROM : Anderson Phiri, Chilipo Limited, Post Office Box 55, Limbe.

TO : The District Social Welfare Officer, Dowa District Assembly, Private Bag 2, Dowa.

**SUBJECT: INCREASE IN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

I would like to report that cases of gender based violence are at an alarming increase in our community, Chilobwe.

For the past four years, we have had so many cases of reported and unreported gender-based violence in the community. Among the most notable cases is the issue of a woman who had both her arms amputated by angry husband. The woman named Sabina separated with her husband because of some marital problems. This made her start going out with other man a thing which imitated her husband. In one of her encounter with a boyfriend, the husband found them and cut off her hands while the boyfriend fled for his life. Several other cases of this nature have been reported in our area. This has worried the community so much. This violence is not only done to women. A number of men have also been victims of gender based violence.

There are a number of factors that have led to the increase in such cases. Firstly, drug and substance abuse is at an increase in the area. Most people abuse such drugs as Indian Hemp and cocaine. Under the influence of drugs, these people cannot control their emotions and resort to violent response to any quarrel that may arise between them and their spouses. Under a normal circumstance, it is not possible for a person to literally cut off another person's limbs. This is only possible when one is under some bad influence like that of drugs. Secondly, infidelity among married couples is also factor perpetuating gender based violence. When married people engage in extramarital affairs, they create room for quarreling with their spouses which eventually leads to violence.

There are several ways of addressing the problem of gender based violence. The first one is to deal with the problem of drug abuse. The police should intensify their investigations and arrest all people involved in dealing in intoxicating drugs. Secondly, a heavy penalty should be imposed on those people who are caught abusing drugs or dealing in intoxicating drugs. Finally, people who are caught in extra marital affairs should be convicted by the courts. People will eventually be faithful to their spouses for fear of the law.

I hope your office will treat this issue with urgency so that the problem can soon come to an end.

## LETTER WRITING

### LAYOUT

- ❖ A formal letter comprises of two addresses, the sender's address on top right corner and the recipient's address on the left below the date.

### IMPORTANT POINTS

- ❖ Even when the receiver's address come up with one and both of the addresses must be complete postal addresses.
- ❖ The receiver's address must always be aligned straight vertically on the left margin.
- ❖ The salutation must be either 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam' and not 'Dear Sir/madam'.
- ❖ The heading must be in upper case (block letter) aligned at the centre of the page and must not be underlined.
- ❖ 'Yours' in the end must not have an apostrophe and 'faithfully' must begin with a small letter.
- ❖ The ending must always be 'Yours faithfully' and not 'Your sincerely'.
- ❖ The receiver's address must start with the position of the person or the office that will receive the letter (addressee). Sometimes you are not given the



addressee in the question .

- ❖ You are required to come up with one.

## Example

- ❖ If you are writing a letter to a company, you can use positions such as 'the Executive Director', 'The Manger', 'The Director', 'and 'The General Manager'.
- ❖ If you are writing to a specific office, you can just mention the office and add offices at the end. For example, The Youth Office if you are writing to the Youth Officer.

## BLOCK LAYOUT

Salima Secondary School,  
Post Office Box 34,  
Salima.

23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2007

The General Manager,  
Madalitso Company,  
Private Bag 2,  
Zomba.

Dear Sir,

## **APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF CLERK**

I would like to apply for the post of clerk which you advertised in the Daily local newspaper.

I am a young woman aged twenty one.

Yours faithfully,

**TIONA DZONZI.**

Salima Secondary School

Post Office box 34

Salima.

24<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

The Director

Wells Company

Post Office Box 2

Lilongwe.

Dear Sir,

## APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF CLERK.

Yours faithfully

**TIANA MAGURIA**

## SUBJECT AND VERB AGREEMENT

### RULES

#### Basic rule

- ❖ A singular subject (she, Bill, car) takes a singular verb (is, goes).
- ❖ Whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb.

#### Example

- ❖ The list of items is/are on the desk.

#### Rule 1

- ❖ Two singular subjects connected by or, either/or OR neither/nor

## Example

- ❖ My aunt or my uncle is arriving by train today.
- ❖ Neither Jilan nor Carmen is available
- ❖ Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decoration.