

SWAHILI

Paper 3162/01

Paper 1

Key message

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- ensure that all the words and phrases in a sentence have been translated and carefully proofread the translations in Section A
- read the text carefully and write concise responses to the questions in their own words in Section B
- choose a topic on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and vocabulary in Section C.

General comments

Most candidates performed well in this year's examination. It is hoped that the following recommendations and observations will help improve future performances even further:

1. A number of candidates lost marks for omitting words such as *mno*, *mwingi*, *basi*, *sana*, *kila*, *tu* and *pia* in their English to Swahili translation. Likewise, words such as 'each', 'so', 'but', 'now' and 'whenever' were often left out in the Swahili to English translation. These qualifying words are crucial in conveying the precise meaning of the source text.
2. It is important that candidates know how to produce comparative sentences in Swahili and do not rely on English grammatical structures to produce such sentences in Swahili.
3. Candidates are reminded that the word limit for **Question 4** is 120 words. This means that students who write more than the prescribed number of words will only have part of what they have produced marked. It is important therefore that candidates get straight to the point and not write long introductions to their essays if they are to avoid the risk of not having addressed the topic question within the prescribed number of words.
4. Where candidates are unsure of adjectival agreements in the English to Swahili translation and in their essay, it is advisable for them to remain as consistent as possible. Some candidates produced different incorrect answers for the same phrase, thus losing more marks than they would have for making one consistent mistake.
5. Some candidates used words from local dialects or tried to coin Swahili words out of English words. Candidates are therefore reminded of the need to use standard Swahili in the examination. Regularly consulting a Swahili dictionary when reading and studying in preparation for the examination will help them expand their standard vocabulary.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates seemed on the whole to answer this question well and errors were largely consistent across the board. Some common examples included:

- Mistranslation of *kipindi* as 'channel'
- Mistranslating *utani mwingi* as 'a joke'. The word *utani* appeared twice in the passage, and this is where consistency – subject to the context in which a word is used, of course – is advisable. If candidates mistranslated this as 'funny' or 'a joke', then they only lost one mark since a consequential error is only marked wrong the first time it appears. But when candidates produced two different translations for the same word and both were wrong they dropped two marks. Consistency is key.
- Mistranslating *mwenyeji* as 'the owner' or 'the local'. Candidates are advised to consider the specific context in which a word is used in a passage at all times.
- Mistranslating *hutoa alama* as 'remove points'. It is important to remember that the particle *hu-* acts both as an indicator of habitual action (e.g. *hutakiwa*) and a negative (e.g. *hunipi*). Candidates are expected to be able to distinguish between the two uses. The former usage as it occurs in the passage

(*wageni hutakiwa*) was sometimes confused with the latter usage and the phrase mistranslated as 'are not required/permitted'. This was also the case with *hutoa*.

- Quite a large number of candidates overlooked seemingly minor but actually quite important words and phrases, such as *kwa siri*, *wengine* and *mno*.

Question 2

This question was more challenging than the first as it focused on the ability to produce not only an accurate translation but also accurate Swahili. The following will need to be addressed:

- Class agreements between nouns, adjectives, etc. These seem to cause the biggest problem for candidates and will need to be learned by heart. For instance, the correct structure is *miaka michache*, not '*miaka chache*'; this is a class 3/4 noun class agreement, as is '*miguu mirefu*'.
- Candidates are advised they must observe correct Swahili orthography and beware the negative impact (informal) spoken Swahili can have on spelling. '*Nilivo*', for example is not acceptable, and *nilivo* must be used. '*Alafu*' and '*ata*' are not acceptable alternatives for *halafu* and *hata*. By the same token, '*hio*' is not a correct form of the word *hiyo*.
- Similarly to the point made above, candidates should not to split words which are written as one, especially verbs with relatives. Examples of this type of orthographical mistake include '*alipo zaliwa*', and '*iliyo pita*'.
- Some candidates translated the word 'why' in the sentence 'she told me why spiders have long legs' as '*mbona*' instead of *kwa nini* (written as two separate words), indicating they had not taken the context of the sentence in the passage fully on board.
- A large number of candidates appeared not to know the word *buibui* and offered words such as '*spida*' or '*dudu*' as alternative translations. Similarly, some candidates struggled to translate 'First World War' accurately and used phrases such as '*kupigana*' and '*mapigano makuu*' as alternatives for *Vita (vikuu) vya kwanza vya dunia*.
- Most candidates translated 'chores' as '*kuosha vyombo*' (= wash dishes), which was close but not sufficiently precise.

Question 3

As in previous years, candidates did very well in this question. Important advice for future candidates to keep in mind is:

- Read the passage at least twice and do not lift sentences from it when answering the questions. It is important to use your own words as far as possible to show that you have understood the passage and the question
- Answer in full sentences and do not give one-word answers unless specifically instructed to do so. It is important to remember that your answers will be assessed for Language as well as Content
- When a question instructs you to mention, for instance, two things (*taja mbili*) you should do so as a mark is allocated to each bit of information you are asked to provide.

Question 4

Candidates produced some very interesting essays in response to the essay questions this year. The topics chosen were relatively evenly spread between the three options. Common mistakes were similar to those made in previous years, namely:

- Word separation errors, especially with verbs
- Repetitiveness
- Poor punctuation
- Errors with adjectival agreements
- Lack of grammatical variation (e.g. the absence of relative markers)
- Writing more than 120 words.

Candidates are strongly advised to read their essays after they have finished writing to correct any mistakes they find, including such errors as '*alinioba*' (instead of *aliniomba*), '*mda*' (instead of *muda*) and '*anaefahamu*' (instead of *anayefahamu*).