

# SWAHILI

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Paper 3162/01

Paper 1

## General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory. Comments on individual questions are given below, but it should be noted that most candidates tended to lose marks by making small, simple errors, particularly in the grammatical areas of basic syntax and agreement. Many candidates struggled with more complex phrases, especially when it came to explaining in their own words what certain words or phrases meant in **Question 3**.

As in previous years, candidates performed much better in **Question 1** (Swahili-English translation) than in **Question 2** (English-Swahili translation).

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1: Translation into English**

Most candidates successfully conveyed the meaning of the Swahili passage in English. Amongst the characteristics that set apart the good answers were appropriate rendering of numbers (relating to age) and effective communication of the sequence of events.

Many candidates struggled with the middle section of the passage, particularly with translating words such as *vuma* 'become popular', *mitindo* 'styles' and *midundo* 'beats'. The sentence rendered incorrectly most often was '*kwa mikato fulani ya mwili*' with 'particular movements of the body'. Many candidates failed to translate correctly *afrika ya mashariki* as 'east africa'. Other mistranslations are mentioned below:

<i>Shabiki kweli:</i>	many forgot to make reference to <i>kweli</i> ;
<i>Kimarekani:</i>	some candidates translated this as 'in America' rather than 'American'
<i>Kijana:</i>	many translated this as 'boy'
<i>Vijana wenzake:</i>	many translated this as 'friends'
<i>Ala ya muziki:</i>	many did not know the meaning of 'ala'
<i>Wakaichezea ngoma:</i>	Many translated this as 'they played the drums', which was not acceptable in this case.

Some candidates mistranslated or omitted key words, in spite of the indication that they had understood the meaning of the text as a whole. For example, a large number of candidates were unable to score with 'They will mix the dance music from these countries' or 'They will mix the dance music from these different countries', either because they omitted the key word 'different' or because they used it in the wrong place in their sentence.

### **Question 2: Translation into Swahili**

This question was generally answered less well than the other three questions. Very few phrases in the source text were translated consistently well, with the exception of 'They help' and 'They also educate people'.

On the whole, candidates struggled with the more complex vocabulary. Very few candidates provided an appropriate translation for yellow fever, for instance. Some of those who did not know the Swahili translation of this disease translated it directly and provided an appropriate approximate answer. Many others, however, provided unacceptable translations and more still left the word untranslated and wrote 'yellow fever' in English.

Phrases such as 'serious threat', 'age-groups', 'vulnerable', and 'non-governmental organisations' were often incorrectly rendered or avoided entirely. There was a diversity of translations of the phrase 'mosquito net' of which only two – *neti* and *chandarua* – were accepted. The word 'donor' was sometimes translated as 'blood donor' which was not appropriate in the context of the passage.

### Question 3: Comprehension

Candidates generally achieved good marks for this exercise. Many seemed successfully to have understood the passage and the questions relating to it. Problems arose when candidates did not answer the question in their own words, and, instead, lifted chunks from the passage which they thought would contain the answer to the question. Other candidates wrote one-word or two-word answers which negatively affected their language mark.

Some candidates struggled with the last question which asked them to explain a proverb. Such candidates either copied the proverb or explained something else from the passage instead of addressing the question. The more articulate candidates usually answered this question correctly.

In addition, the following comments are made on each question:

- (a) Generally well answered. The most common mistakes were to answer that the conversation took place *duniani* or *mjini*.
- (b) Generally well answered, although many candidates lifted from the text. More skilled candidates used the verb *tua* or the noun *machweo*. Some candidates mistakenly used *macheo* rather than *machweo* or used *usiku* instead of *magharibi*.
- (c) Candidates almost invariably obtained at least one mark. Some did not consider the phrase: "*mada zinazohusu fikra za binadamu*".
- (d) Nearly all candidates understood the question, but occasionally miscounted the amount of times the question appeared in the text.
- (e) Candidates usually achieved at least one mark by answering that the members of the *baraza* did not answer because they were surprised. Many candidates were able to get the second mark by mentioning the fact that the question seemed obvious.
- (f) This was generally well answered. Some candidates only obtained one mark by giving either the opinion without the reason, or vice versa.
- (g) This question proved a good test of the strength of a candidate. A large number of candidates simply rephrased Samuel's statement, without considering the metaphorical meaning of *nyumba* and *kibanda* in this context. Stronger candidates were often able to recognise the use of metaphor and conveyed their understanding articulately.
- (h) Generally well answered.
- (i) Rather poorly answered. A common answer was that he disagreed because he had a different opinion.
- (j) Generally well answered. Very few candidates missed out on all two marks for this question. The stronger candidates were often able to formulate an answer in their own words, while weaker candidates tended to lift the answer from the text.
- (k) Very well answered. Few candidates got this wrong.
- (l) Very well answered. Few candidates got this wrong. Stronger candidates were often able to distinguish themselves through more idiomatic Swahili to express Mzee Makame's lack of interest in the conversation.
- (m) A fairly large number candidates failed to note the link between *mali* and *akili* often simply lifting the section from the text that said "*akili ni kama nywele, kila mtu ana zake*". Otherwise, this question was generally well answered.



In terms of language, few candidates achieved more than 3 out of 5 marks as they either lifted numerous answers from the text or failed to answer in full sentences. Only a very small percentage of those who achieved over 3 marks managed to obtain full marks for language.

#### Question 4: Composition

On the whole, the performance in this part of the examination was good. Most candidates wrote about what they did during their school holidays, particularly about trips to a nature reserve. Some candidates tended to repeat the same phrases and structures and/or wrote essays that were rather formulaic.

Stronger candidates wrote in Swahili that was more fluid, but only a few of the strongest managed to distinguish themselves in terms of their style.

Some comments are given below on the individual topics:

- (a) This was the topic chosen by the majority of candidates. The most successful candidates combined accurate and occasionally complex grammatical structures with interesting descriptions that made skilful use of idiomatic language and interesting anecdotes. Weaker candidates struggled to format their letter properly, specifically in terms of paragraphing and tone. In addition, noun/adjective agreements and verb forms were often incorrect or inconsistent.
- (b) There were some fascinating and well-thought out responses to this topic. The best essays showed a strong understanding of the concept of *ufundi* and gave original reasons why candidates would benefit from their teaching in schools. Weaker candidates often misunderstood the concept and showed weaknesses in the logic of their arguments.
- (c) This topic was generally well attempted, with the strongest candidates showing a wide knowledge of the problems of different forms of transport in East Africa and concisely suggesting workable solutions. Weaker candidates tended to concentrate mainly on the improvements of roads or repeated the same problem and solution for different forms of transport. Some candidates struggled to keep their answers within the word limit of 120 words.

It is recommended that candidates read the rubric with care. Compositions should be written in Swahili, not in English.