

Key Skills Communication
January 2009

Acting Chief Examiner
Report

KEY SKILLS COMMUNICATION (JANUARY SERIES) 2009

Acting Chief Examiner's Report

Level 3

There was a large number of entries from a wide range of centres for this series. The average overall performance was quite impressive and the percentage of candidates from CCEA centres who attained a pass grade was, as usual, higher than the national average.

Most candidates showed a clear command of the skills required at Level 3 – effective synthesis and the technicalities of spelling, punctuation and grammar, but as ever some candidates still have problems in this area. There was evidence of improved ability to focus on, and select, the appropriate information from the relevant documents. It is pleasant to report that time management is less and less of a problem generally and hardly any candidates failed to complete the five questions on the paper. It is still true that some candidates spend too long on Q.1, which is best answered in bullet-point form, a useful time-saving device.

The source material was very accessible to candidates. The level of language and content in the documents was appropriate. One of the questions was devoted to images, which were accurately interpreted by the majority of candidates but the second half of the question was generally not well done. It would benefit candidates if more emphasis were put on 'extent'. The basic question posed is 'Why did the writer choose this image to support the text?'

In Section B, candidates were required to write a letter and in nearly all cases, they failed to use an appropriate form. The basic format for a formal letter – 2 addresses, date and opening salutation/matching ending - needs to be learned, as the letter will be used in later series. Apart from that, it is a life skill, which students will be using in all kinds of ways for the rest of their lives.

In general, work is needed on spelling, punctuation and grammar to prevent a serious loss of marks in Q.5. In a paper about modern language, it is not acceptable that 'languages' is written down repeatedly with only one 'g'. Candidates are writing in a hurry; however, accuracy is one of the Key Skills. Many candidates performed very well in the test and deserve our congratulations.