

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

International GCSE Swahili (4SW0)  
Paper 01

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## General Introduction

This year's exam is of a comparable standard to the one sat last year.

At the same time it must be noted that there is a resemblance in the type of errors that candidates are making. Candidates are continuing to form the negative future tense incorrectly and similarly not joining verbs to prefixes.

## Question 1

This part of the examination is designed to test grammatical elements of the language.

Question 1a: the sentence 'she looked for her black hat everywhere'. This was testing third person singular possessives – ake, and using colour as an adjective. While most candidates got this question right, some had problems especially with uncertainty surrounding what class kofia belonged to, and thus mismatched. For example kofia lake/kofia chake/kofia yake. On the colour, the issue was exposed itself where some candidates gave 'nyeupe' or 'white' for 'nyeusi' or 'black'. There was also a tendency to say 'ya nyeusi' or 'of black' instead of 'nyeusi' or 'black'.

Question 1b: this question was testing the usage of a question mark. Many candidates misread the sentence thus rendering it to be a statement rather than a question – as is a particular characteristic of the Swahili language.

Question 1c: this question was testing the habitual tense hu- with the verbs to be. Some candidates had a problem with this structure thus giving napendanga. Candidates ought to note that the word 'ofisi' or 'office' cannot be spelt officci/ ofici in Swahili as the letter 'c' can only be used with the letter 'h' in 'ch' type words like 'chakula' etc.

Question 1d: here candidates were tested on the negative continuous tense and there were many excellent responses. Centres and candidates should be praised on their performance here.

Question 1e: as mentioned in the introduction the use of future negative remains to cause difficulties with candidates, with many giving an incomplete word, 'hatuta'. It is recommended to centres that possessives colours as adjectives, habitual tenses are covered with particular attention being paid to future negative formation.

## Question 2

This question tests transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. This question was based on a fictitious piece of work about a recurring dream. There was a clear distinction between the performances of less and more able candidates. The question comprised of two parts, both which described in detail the environment of an equatorial region. While the transmission was mostly well done, some vocabulary was a cause of difficulty for candidates.

Some of the main translation errors encountered by candidates are exemplified in the table below:

English	Correct Swahili	Incorrect Swahili
Past years	Miaka iliyopita	Miaka zilizopita
Forest with/that has	Msitu ambao una	Msitu ambaye
It generally has	Huwa na	Hua na
It recurs	hurudiarudia	inarudiana
Sweet dream	Ndoto tamu	Ndoto mtamu

It is recommended that special attention is paid to noun class agreements and other simple grammatical structures.

## Question 3

The passage was constructed around the idea of what goes on inside a website café. While most candidates were conversant with technological terms a handful did not differentiate a website from the internet and some candidates mixed it up with a library.

As in question 2 this question tests transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. However, less able candidates found the listed areas problematic:

Swahili	Correct English	Incorrect English
Iwapo tu kuna stima/umeme	If only/ when there is electricity	If there is light
Wakawapoteza wateja	Lose customers	Loose customers
Kuacha maoni yao	To leave their opinion	To live their opinion
Tovuti	Website	Library
Kupigiana simu	Kupigania simu	To call each other on phones/ calling each other on phones

It is recommended that basic grammatical structures are taught and revised before future examinations. This is particularly important in Swahili where a simple mixture of letters as demonstrated above (see last row in the case of 'kupigiana' or 'to call each other' can be confused with 'kupigania' or 'to fight for') could result in lost marks.

#### Question 4

This question required candidates to express themselves in Swahili as it tested Communication and Content and also the Quality of Language. Candidates were to write an essay of 200-250 words on four topics:

- What do you think about the Olympic Games London 2012?
- You are asked to help the president of your country for a week. What important issues do you think must be addressed to make the lives of young people better? State your reasons.
- Do you think it is better to buy second-hand or new goods?
- Write an application letter to the head of your prospective university. Mention all your achievements and why you like to attend the university.

Of the above essay questions 4d attracted the most candidates, while 4a proved to be the least popular question. The responses were written confidently with the following issues being raised in 4b: drugs, litter, homelessness, lack of employment, lack of payment in employment, lack of schools, lack of school fees, the environment, sex, discrimination, prostitution and infrastructure. These are points to consider for future improvements:

- I. Using appropriate idiomatic expressions for example, 'leo ni leo asemaye kesho mwongo' or 'the present moment is the most important' would have resulted in scoring higher marks.
- II. Letter writing was done well by majority of the candidates however, there was a number of responses that had no addresses, thus losing marks on structure. Candidates often started their work with a statement giving their names, which is not necessary in letter writing. There also was a tendency to make informal greetings in a formal letter.
- III. There was an issue with word splitting for example 'tutaenda' or 'we will go' being given as 'tuta enda'.

It is recommended that as the Swahili language is full of metaphors and idioms, these should be evident in essays. Letter writing should be distinguished from any other type of writing with addresses, date, heading, salutation, body and an appropriate conclusion.

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