

PSLE FOUNDATION ENGLISH

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PSLE FOUNDATION ENGLISH EXAMINATION FORMAT

Candidates will be assessed in the following areas:

PAPER	COMPONENT	ITEM TYPE	MARKS	WEIGHTING	DURATION
1	Situational Writing	OE	40	26.7%	1 hr 10 min
	Continuous Writing	OE			
2	Language Use and Comprehension	OE/ MCQ	60	40%	1 hr 20 min
3	Listening Comprehension	MCQ	20	13.3%	About 35 min
4	Oral Communication	OE	30	20%	About 11 min (5 min preparation time; about 6 min examination time)
Total			150	100%	

Paper 1 (Writing)

Part 1 (Situational Writing): Candidates will be required to meet the demands of a given situational context.

Part 2 (Continuous Writing): Candidates will be required to write a composition of at least 120 words based on a series of three pictures.

Paper 2 (Language Use and Comprehension)

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to use language correctly and to comprehend graphic and textual information.

Paper 3 (Listening Comprehension)

This paper comprises 20 multiple-choice questions which test candidates' ability to understand spoken English. The texts may be in the form of news items, announcements, advertisements, instructions, conversations, telephone conversations, speeches and stories. Graphic options will be used for the first four items.

Paper 4 (Oral Communication)

For Reading Aloud, candidates are assessed on their ability to pronounce and articulate words clearly, as well as their ability to read fluently with appropriate expression and rhythm. For Picture Discussion, candidates are assessed on their ability to interpret the situation in the picture, using correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary. For Conversation, the examiner will engage the candidate in a conversation on a given topic.

Paper 1 (Writing)

Part 1 Situational Writing (10 marks)

You will be required to write a formal or an informal letter based on a situation. Read the question carefully to know the task you are required to do.

Examples of the types of informal letter you may be required to write are

- an informal letter
- a note
- a letter of enquiry
- an email
- a complaint letter, etc

What is the **purpose** in writing?
Who is reading it or who is your **audience**?
What is the **situation**?

Reminder:

Remember to use the appropriate format (Dear Lucas, etc)
End the letter appropriately (Yours sincerely,)
Read through to check the tenses
Check that you have responded to all the pointers given in the question
Do not spend more than 15-20 minutes for this section

Part 2 Continuous Writing (30 marks)

You will be required to write a story based on pictures given.
Your story should be at least 120 words.

Below is the suggested format which you can use for writing:

1. Introduction

- Can be a statement/declaration, a sentence or words showing speech or sounds, or a question
- Makes the reader want to read on and prepares the way for the rest of the story
- Should be short (about a paragraph or so)
- Description of the setting
- Description of the main character
- Dialogue
- A series of questions

2. Body

- Links the introduction to the conclusion
- May be presented in various ways/styles
- May be developed by brainstorming, story webbing, imagining, and/or focusing on the main ideas
- What is the problem?
- Who are involved?
- Did the problem become worst?
- How is the problem solved?

3. Conclusion

- Provides a proper ending to the story
- Should not end the story abruptly
- Should leave the reader feeling satisfied
- Write about how the characters felt. Why?
- How they had been affected by the situation.

Reminder:

Read through to check for

- Capital letters, commas, speech marks and full-stops
- Paragraphing
- Vocabulary used
- Spelling
- Linking words
- Examples are 'then', 'perhaps', 'however', 'before', etc
- Tenses
- Most of the time the story is written using the Past Tense
- Check that you have responded to all the pointers given in the question
- **Do not spend more than 50 minutes for this section**

Paper 2 (Language Use and Comprehension)

Language Use Component (60 marks)

Paper 2 / Booklet A:

- Section A: Grammar MCQ (8marks)
- Section B: Punctuation MCQ (2 marks)
- Section C: Vocabulary MCQ (5 marks)
- Section D: Graphic Stimulus MCQ(5 marks)

Paper 2 / Booklet B:

- Section E: Information Transfer (5 marks)
- Section F: Editing (Grammar) (5 marks)
- Section G: Editing (Spelling) (5 marks)
- Section H: Comprehension (Completion of Sentences) (5 marks)
- Section I: Comprehension Open-Ended (10 marks)
- Section J: Synthesis /Transformation (5 marks)
- Section K: Comprehension Cloze (5 marks)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Paper 2 / Booklet A: Vocabulary (5 marks)

For each question from 1 to 5, four options are given. Choose the correct answer and write it in the brackets provided.

1. Maria realised that she had wrongly _____ her friend of taking her favourite pencil and she immediately apologised to her.

- (1) assumed
(2) accused
(3) confirmed
(4) declared ()

2. "Can you _____ the message Mrs Tan left for me?" Mother asked me. I nodded and told her what the message was.

- (1) recall
(2) retain
(3) restore
(4) refresh ()

3. Amy cried out in pain when the dentist _____ her loose tooth.

- (1) ejected
(2) extracted
(3) discarded
(4) removed ()

4. Adam felt _____ as he walked into the examination room. He was well-prepared as he had been revising his work consistently for the past few months.

- (1) nervous
(2) gloomy
(3) hesitant
(4) confident ()

5. The scouts _____ Andy because he was a courageous and accomplished leader. They regarded him as their role model.

- (1) loathed
(2) admired
(3) rejected
(4) tolerated ()

ANSWERS AND TIPS

Vocabulary

1) 2 (accused)

Clue: *wrongly, and she immediately apologized*
assumed: to accept that something is true without checking or confirming it
accused: to confront somebody with a charge of having done something wrong or undesirable
confirmed: to verify the truth or validity of something thought to be true or valid
declared: to state something in a plain, open, or emphatic way

2) 1 (recall)

Clue: *I nodded and told her what the message was.*
recall: to remember something or bring something back to mind
retain: to keep possession of something
restore: to bring something back to an earlier and better condition
refresh: to prompt or reactivate the memory with a piece of information

3) 2 (extracted)

Clue: *cried out in pain, loose tooth*
ejected: to cause something to burst out from something else with considerable force
extracted: to pull something out, often using force (eg. teeth)
discarded: to get rid of something that is not wanted or needed
removed: to take something away from somebody or from a place

4) 4 (confident)

Clue: *do well, had been revising his work consistently for the past few months*
Nervous: having a feeling of dread or apprehension
Gloomy: feeling despair and hopeless
Hesitant: slow to do or say something because of indecision or lack of confidence
confident: to be self-assured and certain of one's ability to succeed

5) 2 (admired)

Clue: *a courageous and accomplished leader, role model*
loathed: to dislike somebody or something intensely
admired: to regard somebody or something with approval, appreciation, or respect
rejected: to refuse to accept, agree to, believe in someone. because he is not good enough
tolerated: to withstand or put up with the unpleasant effects of something or someone

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Paper 2 / Booklet B: Editing For Grammar (5 marks)

Each of the underlined words contains a grammatical error. Write the correct word in each of the boxes.

The first LEAD Digital Media Competition (LDMC) finally came to a close. The winners (1) **are** announced during the Prize Presentation Ceremony on November 6, 2009, (2) **on** Times Centre Multi-Purpose Hall.

LEAD is hosting this competition for the first time for schools (3) **who** participates in our InfoComm club. It was an overwhelming response with over 200 entries, all with heart and passion in their work.

It was a tough (4) **decide** selecting the winners for our judges at LEAD as (5) **it** were all excellent entries. Next year's competition will be more competitive with elements of video and animation included. In addition, more attractive prizes await the winners.

- (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

ANSWERS AND TIPS

Editing For Grammar

(1) were
Clue: The sentence requires a plural verb that fits the subject 'the winners'

(2) at (location)
Clue: Times Centre Multi-Purpose Hall
The preposition 'at' is used to indicate a location, in this case, referring to the place (Times Centre Multi-Purpose Hall) where the Prize Giving Ceremony was held

(3) which (relative pronoun required for 'schools')
Clue: since 'schools' are inanimate objects, the relative pronoun to use is 'which'

(4) decision (noun form of the word 'decide')
Clue: The article 'a' in 'a tough ____' indicates that the noun form of the word 'decide' is required.

(5) They (a plural noun)
Clue: were, excellent entries
The pronoun 'they' is required to refer to the entries sent in by the participants and can only be used with the verb 'were'

Strategies to Tackle Comprehension Open-Ended Questions

1. When reading through a Comprehension passage:

- **Read the questions first**
It helps you to skim or look out for answers in the passage
- **Scan through the passage**
- Pick out key words and ideas
- Note important details
- **Have a good understanding of grammar rules and usage**
- Check that you have used the correct tense in your answer (as found in the questions)
- **Use your imagination**
- **Ask questions as you read (who, what, when, where, why, how)**
- **Underline and number the answers found in the passage for easy checking of answers**

2. Questions come in 4 general forms:

- **Direct questions**
Answers can be found directly from the passage.
 - **Indirect questions**
Answers have to be thought through or inferred from the passage.
 - **Vocabulary questions**
Answers have to be inferred from the passage.
Try out different words in the same sentence to see if it fits.
Read before and after the line where you find the words to determine the meaning of the words as used in the passage.
 - **Questions that begin with 'Explain clearly...'**
Use your own words when explaining the given word, phrase or sentence, bearing in mind the context of the passage
- ##### 3. When answering Comprehension Open-Ended Questions
- **Contextual Clues**
When you come across a word that you have never heard before, but you understand the other words, sentences, and paragraphs that come before and after the new word, you will be able to figure out what that new word means.

Example:
Two friends met and had a persiflage over lunch. They talked about seeing a movie, going shopping, or going to the beach.

The two friends did not discuss anything of major importance. Can you tell that '**persiflage**' means light, frivolous talk?

• Cause and Effect

We all know that actions have consequences.
Think of the actions as causes and the effects as their consequences.

Example:

The Miami Heat wants the fans to wear white during the NBA Finals games. As a result, the seats in the arena are filled with fans wearing White Hot shirts!

Question: WHY are the fans wearing White Hot shirts?
Answer: They are wearing white shirts BECAUSE the Miami Heat requested it.

When you ask a 'why' question (the effect), you want to know the reason (the cause).

• Drawing Conclusions

Sometimes you will be asked a question about information that has not been given. There will be enough clues to imply the meaning.

Example:

Dan was excited when his parents allowed him to stay up past his bedtime so he could see the fireworks at a nearby park. Luckily, there would be a great view from his own room! The fireworks were scheduled to start at 11:30pm but, by 10:30pm, Dan was feeling extremely tired. When he woke up the next morning, Dan asked his mother why the fireworks had been cancelled.

Although the information is not directly given, you can draw the conclusion that Dan was so tired that he fell asleep and missed the fireworks.

• Sequencing

When you are putting directions or events in sequential order, you start at the beginning and go step-by-step, in a logical or chronological order, to reach a conclusion.

Sentences describing such directions or events usually begin with words such as First, Next, Then, and Last.

Example:

She rubbed some oil on top of it. My mom went to the store and bought a chicken. Into the oven it went! Following that, she sprinkled some seasoning over it.

As written above, this story does not make sense. Who put oil on top of what? Do you really season a chicken after it is in the oven?

The correct version would read like this:

My mother went to the store and bought a chicken. She rubbed some oil on top of it. Following that, she sprinkled some seasoning over it. Into the oven it went!

Comprehension Open-ended (10 marks)

Sample Passage / Questions

Read the passages and answer questions 1 to 5. Answer in complete sentences.

Diana loved football, and she had been playing for the school football team - Casuarina Secondary. However, ever since Mr Lim, took over the soccer team, Diana had been miserable. She could only settle on watching her teammates play in matches. Mr Lim believed that girls were no match for boys in terms of physical and mental strength.

Now, her school team was in the final of the Inter-schools championship and the score was 2-0 - Patterson Secondary was winning. Just after half time, things became worse. One of the opponent's huge boot hit Seng Leng's leg and everyone heard a crunching sound.

Mr Lim ran onto the pitch and looked at Seng Leng. "I think his leg's broken. Where's the stretcher?" Seng Leng was carried off the field.

Mr Lim stood on the pitch, his face red with anger. "Where are the substitutes?" he shouted.

All the Casuarina Secondary players looked at each other in dismay. "Sir, there aren't any," said Ramu. "What!!" shouted Mr Lim again. "No more players?" "Well, there is one," said Ali. "Well, get him here now!" Mr Lim shouted, losing his patience by then. "It's Diana. She's over there and she's dressed in her soccer gear."

Mr Lim's eyebrows went blacker and his face went redder. The players could see he was struggling to say the words. "All right then. As this is an emergency, go and get her."

Ali ran over to Diana. "Come on!" he said. "You're back on the team!"

1. What caused Diana to feel miserable? (2m)

2. Why was Seng Leng unable to continue playing in the soccer final? (2m)

3. Explain in your own words why Ali told Diana, "You're back on the team!" (2m)

Answers

1. Diana loved to play soccer but was not allowed to play in the school team (1m) and could only watch her teammates play in the matches (1m).

Clue: Pupils are to infer from the lines 'She could only settle on watching her team mates play in matches. Mr Lim believed that girls were no match for boys in terms of physical and mental strength.' that Diana was not allowed to play soccer for the school team and this made her miserable as she loved to play soccer.

2. (a) He was hit by a huge boot (1m) and injured/broke his leg. (1m)
(b) He was hit by a huge boot and there was a crunching sound. (1m)

Clue: crunching sound, "I think his leg's broken. Where's the stretcher?," 'Seng Leng was carried off the field.' However, response (b) is incomplete as 'there was a crunching sound' is vague and does not indicate which part of Seng Leng's body was injured.

3. Diana was asked to play for the team (1m) as there were no other substitutes who could replace Seng Leng (1m).

Clue: The clue is in the conversation between Mr Lim and the soccer boys: "Sir, there aren't any," said Ramu. "What!!" shouted Mr Lim. "No more players?" "Well, there is one," said Ali. "Well, get him here now!" Mr Lim shouted. "It's Diana. She's over there and she's dressed in her soccer gear." "All right then. As this is an emergency. Go and get her."

Strategies to Tackle Comprehension Cloze

1. Understand the gist of the passage
2. Understand the sentence containing the deletion
3. Understand the idea contained in the deletion
4. Find an appropriate word
5. Spell it correctly
6. Re-read the previous sentence
7. If another word is better, replace your previous choice
8. Check your answer by reading your choice of word to see if it makes sense
9. Read the whole passage again when you have finished to check that all the blanks have been correctly filled.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Comprehension Cloze:

Read the passage carefully and fill in each of the blanks with a suitable word.

Bullying is defined as a physical, psychological or verbal intimidation causing distress or harm to an intended victim. Every child gets teased or is (1) _____ by other children at some point in their lives. They may also participate in the occasional shoving match or playground scuffle and often, this may be passed (2) _____ as part of growing up. Bullying, on the other hand, (3) _____ extreme behaviour. Although bullying is characterised by teasing and fighting, what distinguishes (4) _____ from typical juvenile behaviour is the frequency and severity of attacks. Bullying can be in the form of physical or (5) _____ abuse.

Answer:

- (1) **taunted/mock**ed - synonym to teased
(2) **off** - phrasal verb
(3) **is** - singular verb for 'bullying'
(4) **it** - refers to bullying
(5) **verbal** - First sentence of the cloze passage: Bullying is defined as a physical, psychological or verbal intimidation or attack that is meant to cause distress or harm to an intended victim.

GENERAL TIPS in acing your Foundation English Paper:

- Cultivate good reading habits to acquire more vocabulary
- Be exposed to different types of reading materials and read on a daily basis
- Be exposed to proverbs, phrasal verbs, common phrases to enrich your vocabulary

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