

Scoring + Studying Tips: PSLE Foundation Science

Booklet B (Open Ended Questions)

There are many techniques available for approaching the Open Ended section of the Science exam paper. Below is an often followed, yet no less effective method – the RULE method:

(R) Read

- Read the question carefully.
- Analyse the question type (e.g. factual, experiment-based, process skills needed).
- Analyse the diagrams / tables / flowcharts.

(U) Underline

- Underline important keywords / contextual clues / instructions.

(L) Link

- Link question to topic(s) or concept(s) learnt. Write down by the side the topic(s) or concept(s) that will help you to craft the answer related to the question.

(E) Explain

- Explain in complete sentences for “Explain why/how”, “Give a reason”, “What is the aim/conclusion”, “Describe what should be done” type of questions.

Generally, markers look for two things in an answer:

key word(s)

key concept(s)

A “key word” is the word that forms the main answer. This word tells the marker if you know your work.

A “key concept” is the explanation of the concept that has been applied in the answer. It tells the marker if you understand the theory, concept and its application. If the key concept is missing in the answer, the marker will think that although you have the answer, you do not have a full understanding of the concept(s) involved.

Example:

Siti put some ice cubes to a glass of water. After a while, she noticed that water droplets started to appear on the outside of the glass. Explain clearly how this happened. [2]



Suggested Answer:

When the *water vapour in the air comes in contact with the cold outer surface of the glass*, condensation takes place and *water droplets are formed on the outside of the glass*.

In the sample answer above, the key word is underlined, while the key concept is *in italics*. The above answer is required to score the 2 full marks.

The key word here is "condensation". Without this word, it makes it very difficult for the marker to give you any mark, let alone full marks. This is because if "condensation" is missing, the marker knows that you do not know your work.

The key concept on the other hand, tells the marker that you know that condensation has taken place, and more importantly, tells the marker that you know under what conditions condensation takes place.

Hence, this question tests on knowledge (what is condensation) and understanding (how condensation changes the state of water and under what circumstances these changes will take place).

If you simply answer "condensation" without further explanation, you will get less than 2 marks.

If you explain the process of condensation, without mentioning the word "condensation", the marker will still not be fully convinced.

The student must give both, the key word **and** the key concept, to score full marks.