

## Introduction

The Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) has been in use in Jamaican Primary Schools since September 2001. Students who are currently in Grade Six, therefore, have been using this new curriculum since they were in Grade Four.

The Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) is a curriculum-based examination, meaning that the items on the GSAT match the objectives in the curriculum. With the implementation of a revised curriculum, some adjustments have had to be made to the GSAT, in order to maintain its alignment to the curriculum. The adjustments are outlined in this document and will take effect starting with the 2005 administration of the test.

## The Test Instrument

**No adjustment has been made to the subject areas being tested, the number of test papers, and the number of items or the types of items on each paper.** As in the past, therefore, the test instrument will consist of five papers. The Language Arts, Mathematics and Social Studies papers will still consist of eighty (80) items while the Science paper will have sixty (60) items. The Communication Task will still have two questions: task one demanding a structured response and task two a less structured response. **However, the topics and content areas on each test paper will reflect those in the RPC.** The table below sets out the areas of the RPC from which GSAT test items will be drawn.

**Table 1 : Features of the GSAT 2005 and onwards**

Subject	Type of item	Number of item	Duration of test	Curriculum Areas to be assessed
Language Arts	Multiple Choice	80	1hr 15min	Grades 4 and 5. Grade 6, Term 1 and Term 2 - <b>Units 1 and 2</b>
Mathematics	Multiple Choice	80	1hr 15min	Grades 4 and 5 Grade 6, Term 1 and Term 2 - <b>Units 1-3</b>
Social Studies	Multiple Choice	80	1hr 15 min	Grades 4 and 5 Grade 6, Term 1 and Term 2 - <b>Units 1 and 2</b>
Science	Multiple Choice	60	1hr	Grades 4 and 5 Grade 6, Term 1 and Term 2 - <b>Unit 1,Focus Questions 1 and 3</b>
Communication Tasks 1 2	Short Answer Extended Writing	1 1	} 1hr	Stimulus materials may be drawn from any curricular area

As is currently the case, the test items will be drawn from the Grades 4 and 5 curricula, and from Term 1 and the early part of Term 2 of the Grade 6 curriculum. (N.B. **The Grade 6 curriculum MUST be completed following the examination to ensure that students are adequately prepared for Grade 7.**)

The ratio of items to be drawn from each grade level will be **20%** from Grade 4, **30%** from Grade 5 and **50%** from Grade 6.

## **ITEM FORMAT**

The GSAT will continue to utilize the **multiple choice** format on the objective test papers. As in previous years the Communication Tasks paper will require students to supply their responses in writing.

## **COGNITIVE LEVELS OF THE TEST ITEMS**

The objectives in the new curriculum have been classified into content and learning level categories which are used to develop the test plan or blueprint. This blueprint is the basis on which the test items are written. The blueprint ensures appropriate coverage of the curriculum objectives and provides guidelines for the number of items to be included in each category.

The content categories differ from subject to subject as each subject has its own organization and body of content. Each content area represents a group of objectives for the particular subject. The objectives are stated at different learning levels at which students are expected to operate. While the levels are common across subjects, different levels may be emphasised in a particular subject. The number of items in each content area or learning level is proportionate to the emphasis in the RPC.

**The learning levels on the revised GSAT will remain as they were previously.** The categories are as follows:

### **Knowledge**

This level is common to all subjects but is further divided into Knowledge of Facts and Knowledge of Procedure for Social Studies. Items measuring Knowledge includes:

- Knowledge of specific facts and definitions learned routinely
- Knowledge of procedures and their applications including operations and rules for calculations
- Routine performance of non-computational skills like measuring
- Knowledge of how to verify and justify the correctness of procedures using concrete or symbolic methods

### **Conceptual Understanding**

Questions set at this level require students to:

- Recognize, label, describe and generate examples and non-examples of concepts which can be concrete, symbolic or abstract representations
- Use words, models, diagrams and symbols to represent concepts
- Convert, rename and translate concepts into equivalent forms

### **Reasoning and Analysis/ Problem Solving**

This level targets students' ability to:

- Deduce, infer, predict, evaluate, interpret draw conclusions and apply rules
- Judge the reasonableness and correctness of solutions
- Check or justify a solution to a problem
- Identify, explain and apply principles and generalizations
- Solve word problems in Mathematics

## **THE TEST BLUEPRINTS**

The blueprint for each paper sets out the content areas and learning levels for that test. The number in the total column indicates the number of items on the test measuring the various content areas and learning levels. For example, on the Language Arts test, seventeen items (17) will measure "Structure"; seven (7) of them will be knowledge level items, six (6) will measure conceptual understanding, and four (4) will be at the reasoning and analysis level, as set out in Table 1. This understanding is to be applied to the blueprints of the other subjects, as set out in Tables 2 – 4.

**Table 1: THE LANGUAGE ARTS TEST**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Learning Level</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Conceptual Understanding</b>	<b>Reasoning &amp; Analysis</b>	
<b>Structure</b>	7	6	4	17
<b>Mechanics</b>	4	4	4	12
<b>Vocabulary &amp; Spelling</b>	7	4	4	15
<b>Study Skills</b>	3	3	4	10
<b>Reading</b>	8	5	13	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	29	22	29	80

**Table 2: THE MATHEMATICS TEST**

Content Area	Learning Level			TOTAL
	Knowledge	Conceptual Understanding	Problem Solving	
<b>Number</b>	13	8	5	26
<b>Measurement</b>	7	4	3	14
<b>Geometry</b>	7	4	3	14
<b>Statistics</b>	7	3	3	13
<b>Algebra</b>	4	3	2	9
<b>Probability</b>	2	2	-	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>80</b>

**Table 3: THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEST**

Content Area	Learning Level				TOTAL
	Procedural Knowledge	Knowledge of Procedure	Conceptual Understanding	Reasoning & Analysis	
<b>Location &amp; Environment</b>	9	10	11	8	38
<b>People, Identity &amp; Culture</b>	2	3	2	1	8
<b>Social &amp; Political Activities</b>	3	3	6	6	18
<b>Economic Activities</b>	4	5	4	3	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>80</b>

**Table 4: THE SCIENCE TEST**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Learning Level</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Conceptual Understanding</b>	<b>Reasoning &amp; Analysis</b>	
<b>Energy, Forces &amp; Motion</b>	7	6	5	18
<b>Living Things</b>	17	7	5	29
<b>Earth Science</b>	6	5	2	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>

### **THE COMMUNICATION TASKS PAPER**

This paper assesses students' ability to provide responses to a structured and an unstructured writing task.

The unstructured task will assess the extent to which students are able to:

- generate ideas in response to a task
- organize these ideas to create a coherent response
- invoke a variety of emotional responses by conveying the writer's feelings
- select appropriate words and phrases to convey meaning or impression, to create the right mood or picture, to clarify meaning and to create particular feelings
- correctly construct sentences which begin in different ways, vary in length and are grammatically correct.
- Correctly use the conventions of written language i.e. spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing.

Each task is rated on a six-point scale. The scale for task one varies from year-to-year depending on the nature of the task. Task two focuses on the quality of the writing so the same scale is used from year to year with adjustments made for the interpretation of content. An example of each scale is given overleaf.

## TASK ONE

Although task one will still demand a structured response from candidates the range of sources for this task will increase. Instead of the task always requiring candidates to complete a form these items could require candidates to respond to tasks such as

- Reading a passage and identifying the main idea and supporting details
- Rewriting a passage correcting errors in either conventions of writing (structure or mechanics)
- Arranging sentences to form a cohesive paragraph
- Supplying words/phrases to complete a passage

Stimulus material for this task may be drawn from any subject area covered in the RPC.

### GUIDELINES USED IN SCORING THE COMMUNICATION TASKS

**DIMENSION:** A description of the aspects of the task which will be taken into consideration in marking the task.

**ACCEPTED RESPONSES:** A description of what would constitute an acceptable response for each section or item given in the task.

**LIST OF POSSIBLE ERRORS:** Describes the unacceptable responses which might be given by candidates.

### RATINGS

**BELOW LEVEL ONE:** Responses show no understanding of the task.. Responses may consist of:

- ◆ Blank forms (there should be sufficient evidence to indicate that the candidate was present for the examination e.g. name written on front cover, attempt at task two)
- ◆ doodling
- ◆ instructions copied on to the lines
- ◆ transcription of task
- ◆ all responses incorrect
- ◆ a combination of incorrect responses and blank spaces.

**LOW: Responses show little understanding of the task.**

**Level One:** One or two section(s) correctly completed.

**Level Two:** Three or four sections correctly completed.

**MEDIUM: Responses show average understanding of the task.**

**Level Three:** Five sections correctly completed.

**Level Four:** Six sections correctly completed.

**HIGH: Responses show complete understanding of the task. Information is accurate and is correctly placed.**

**Level Five:** Seven sections correctly completed /or  
All sections correctly completed but there is/are spelling error(s)

**Level Six:** All eight sections are accurately completed filled.

## **TASK TWO**

### **DIMENSIONS:**

1. **Content:** Sufficient details to show time, action/events, mood, setting, and offer insight into the character(s) portrayed.
2. **Organization:** Appropriate sequencing of events i.e.
  - ◆ A beginning, which captures the reader's attention and gives direction to the rest of the story
  - ◆ Events in the body identify the problem/conflict, or establish a pivot which helps to develop the story and take the story to the conclusion.
  - ◆ Conclusion resolves the conflict, solves the problem or creates an element of suspense
  - ◆ Sentences written in appropriate paragraphs
  - ◆
3. **Vocabulary:** Use of words and expressions to capture and maintain interest, clarify points or make emphasis.
4. **Sentence Structure:** Effective use of a variety of different types of sentences. Sentences should be structured in Standard Jamaican English. (Jamaican Creole may be used as direct speech.)
5. **Surface Features:** Observation of conventions of written English (punctuation, spelling, etc.)

### **RATINGS**

**LOW: Responses which show very limited writing skills or very little effort in attempting the task.**

**Below Level 1:** Doodling, blank sheets with evidence that the child was present for the examination (name written on front cover, attempt at task one) recognizable words, transcription of task, the given sentences are merely rearranged, sentence fragments.

**Level One:** One piece of information related to the topic /or  
Reworded prompt with an addition clause, phrase or word.

**Level Two:** Script communicates two pieces of information related or unrelated to task.  
This must be more than a rewording of the prompt. (Problems in spelling, punctuation and construction may make it difficult for script to be read.)

*N.B. Misinterpretations with errors in surface features which make it difficult for the writing to be read should be rated at level two.*

**MEDIUM: Fair communication skills with limited response to the task. (Few details)**

**Level Three:** Script is merely a list of sentence related to the task but do not make any attempt to link details to make a story.

- Sketch of story ( three events)
  - Response does not allow the candidate to display an adequate range of vocabulary
  - Sentences are occasionally properly constructed.
  - The writing may have errors in spelling, construction and/or

*N.B. Misinterpretations which display adequate communication skills, judged to be at level three or above, should be rated at level three.*

**Level Four:** A general outline of the events is given and few details to show time, setting and mood.

- Beginning of story is evident but response may lack focus or the story is incomplete.
- Writer may use words out of context
- There may be interference in the flow of the information due to errors in spelling, punctuation or construction.

**HIGH: Good communication skills with adequate content/coverage.**

**Level Five:** The beginning, middle and ending though evident may not be adequately used to engage and maintain the reader's interest. (Overall a cohesive piece of writing)

- Logical connections between and/among events.
- For the most part words and expressions are appropriately used.
- A variety of sentence types may be present, but not always, used effectively.
- Few surface feature errors which do not interfere with the flow of the writing
- Sentences are correctly sequenced, (physical paragraph separations may not be present)

**Level Six:** Details/events are logically arranged to show a beginning which focuses the story, middle which develops it and ending which shows the resolution. (Overall a dramatic effect may be created)

- Words and expressions create vivid pictures and help to hold the interest of the reader
- A variety of sentences types are effectively used (for clarity, to hold interest or to make emphasis).
- Few surface feature errors may be present, however, these error do not interfere with the communication.

## SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS

#### Language Art

1. **Which word correctly completes this sentence?**  
One of Jamaica's most popular fruit is the \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. pair  
B. pear  
C. peer  
D. pier
  
2. **Which word can be used to replace the underlined words in this sentence?**  
Jamie and his friends went to Disney World last summer.  
A. He and him  
B. Their  
C. Them  
D. They

#### Mathematics

1. Which **best** explains why 64 is an even number? It is \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. greater than 50  
B. a whole number  
C. divisible by 2  
D. a counting number
  
2. If 84 guineps are shared in the ratio of 1:2:4, what is the largest portion?  
A. 12  
B. 24  
C. 48  
D. 72

## Science

1. Which activity can be classified as a pull?
  - A. crushing a piece of paper
  - B. kicking a football
  - C. nailing with a hammer
  - D. stretching a piece of dough
2. Which food will help to improve the eyesight?
  - A. callaloo
  - B. carrot
  - C. cherry
  - D. melon

## Social Studies

1. Which shows the composition of the earth's surface?
  - A. 71% water 29% land
  - B. 29% water 71% land
  - C. 18% water 82% land
  - D. 98% water 2 % land
2. When it is autumn in the northern hemisphere, what season is it in the southern hemisphere?
  - A. autumn
  - B. spring
  - C. summer
  - D. winter

## Communication Tasks

1. **This passage has errors in punctuation. Read it carefully then rewrite it correcting all the errors.**

At about eight oclock, after my parents had gone back to the party, a nurse came into the room

My name is betty, she said. Ill be giving you your medicine. she brushed my hair as she spoke.

2. Write a letter to a pen pal in Canada convincing him/her to spend a part of the winter holidays in Jamaica. Your letter should include the ways in which your pen pal would benefit from vacationing in a warm climate.