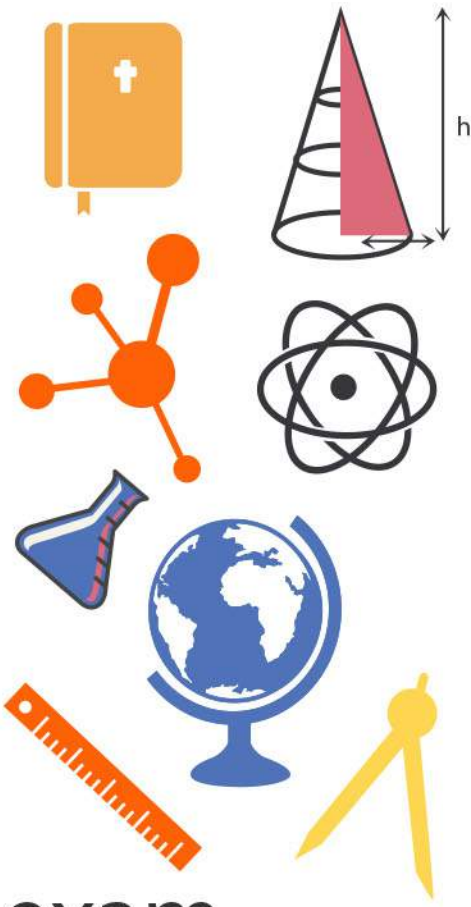

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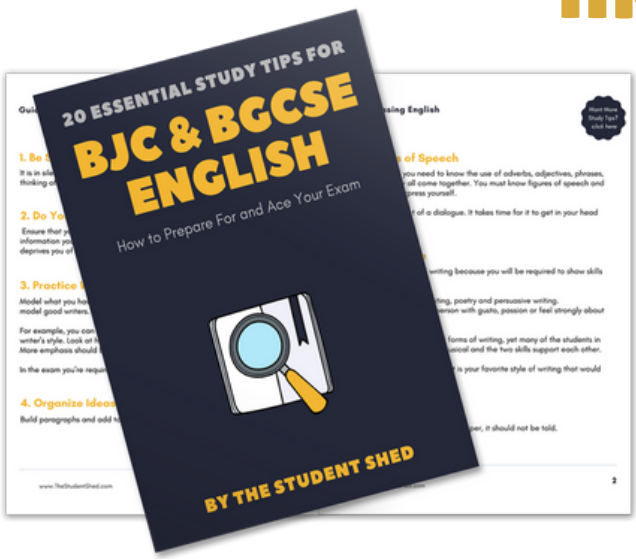

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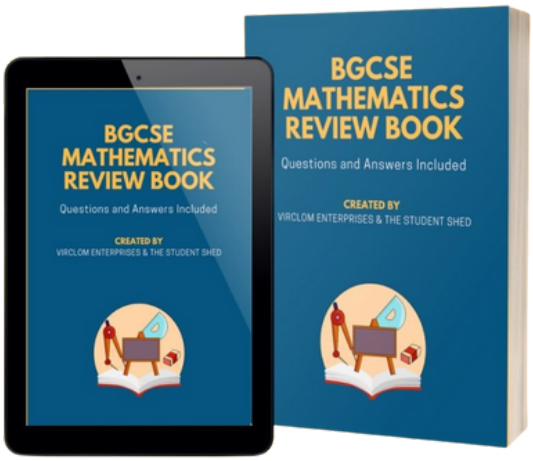

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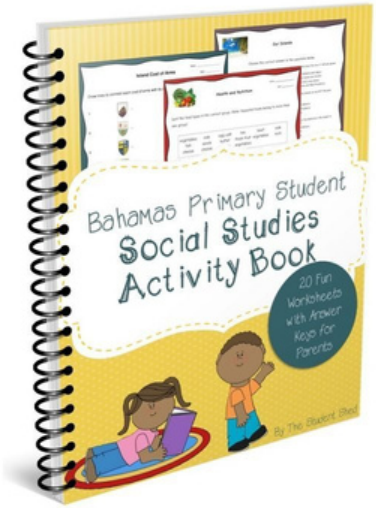

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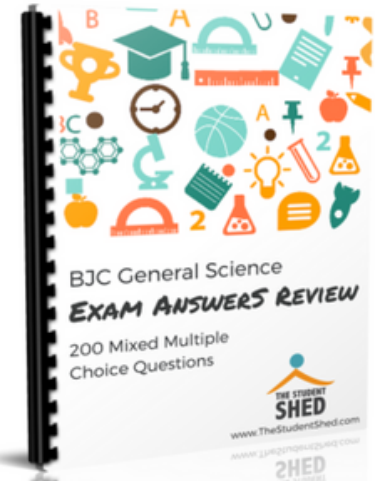

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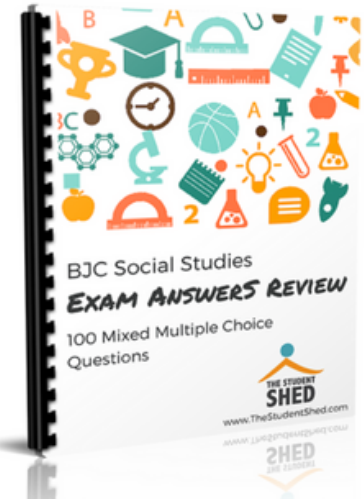

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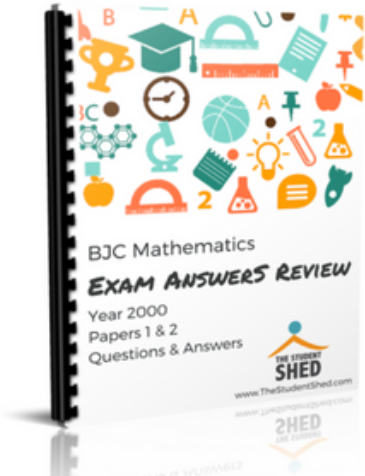

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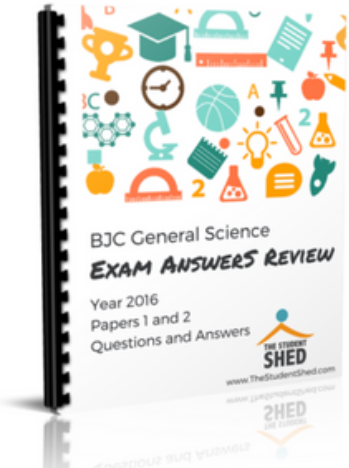

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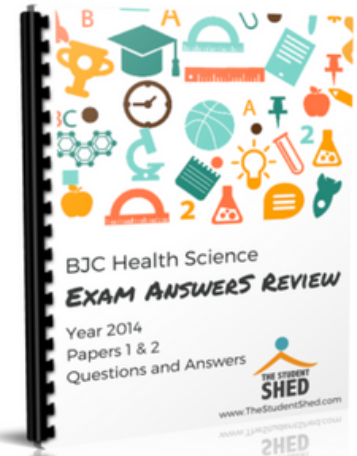

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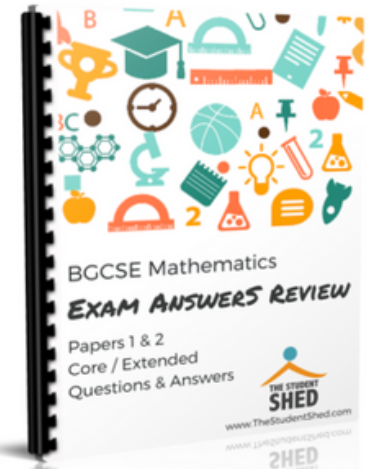

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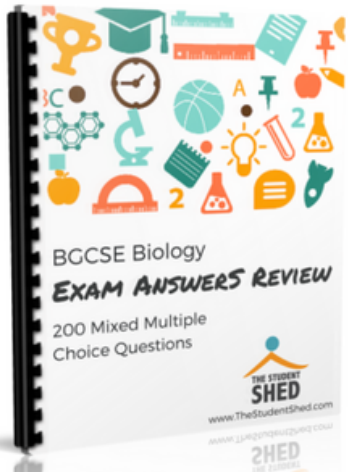

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAPER 1 – CONTINUOUS WRITING 1310/1

Tuesday **16 MAY 2023** **9:00 A.M.–10:10 A.M.**
(1 hour plus 10 minutes reading and planning time)

Additional materials:
Answer booklet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

BAHAMAS GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your school number, candidate number, surname and initials in the spaces provided on the answer booklet.

Write a composition based on **ONE** of the topics overleaf.

You should write between **350** and **500** words.

You should pay attention to punctuation, spelling and handwriting.

You will have **10** minutes to read and plan your topic. You should **NOT** begin to write your composition during this time. However, you should write your plan.

At the beginning of your composition write the number of the topic you have chosen.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Dictionaries are **NOT** permitted.

This paper accounts for 40% of the total marks available for the examination in this subject.

This question paper consists of 4 printed pages.

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Choose **ONE** of the following topics. Your writing should be planned on your answer paper.

1. Write a story that includes the following sentences: "My feet were beginning to blister as I raced beneath the heat of the scorching sun. I was determined to win!"

2. Describe the sights and sounds of general election season in The Bahamas. Be sure to include a variety of sensory details in your response.

3. There are many benefits that come from working as a team. Explain.

4. 'Overcoming fears'.

5. Many people don't think that the older generation can learn from younger ones. What are your views?

6. Write a composition based on the following lines of poetry. You may write about any ideas that the poem suggests to you, or you may write a story or a description based on the subject of the poem. You should **NOT** write a poem.

   It's only when all hope seems lost
   And our weary journey seems so far,
   When all the world's against you,
   We learn how strong we really are.

   From: 'Inner Strength' by John P. Read

7. Discuss what we can do as a society to ensure that we are not raising criminals.

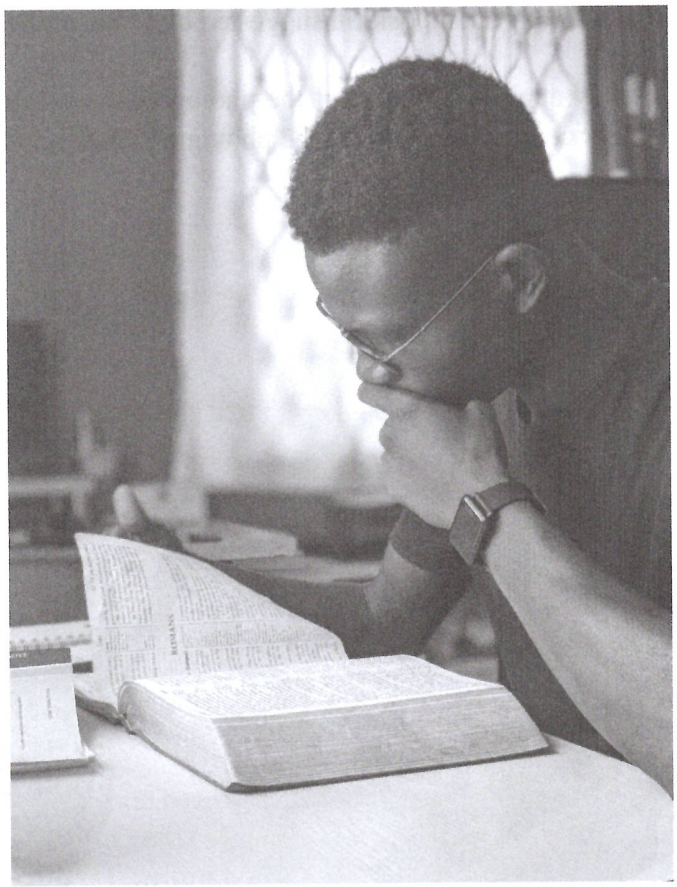
8. Write a story, description, or any form of composition suggested by **ONE** of the photographs.

Your composition may be directly about the subject of the photograph or take some suggestions from it. There must be some clear connection between the photograph and your composition.

(a)

jcfamilies.com

(b)



surrenderedandfree.org

End]

School Number	Candidate Number
Surname and Initials	

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAPER 2 – AURAL COMPREHENSION
CANDIDATE'S COPY 1310/2b

Tuesday 25 APRIL 2023 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.

Additional materials:
Compact disc recording
CD player

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

BAHAMAS GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

DO NOT open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your school number, candidate number, surname and initials in the spaces provided on the booklet.

The recording will be played **TWICE**.

FIRST PLAYING
Listen carefully to the **FIRST PLAYING** to gain a general impression of what is being said. **DO NOT** look at the **NOTES SECTION** or the **QUESTIONS** during the first playing.

AFTER THE FIRST PLAYING, turn to the **NOTES SECTION** of the paper. Read through the suggested points. Make any notes you wish on the points listed. Your notes will not be marked. **You will have 3 minutes.**

SECOND PLAYING
Listen again to the recording. You may make additional notes as you listen.

AFTER THE SECOND PLAYING, complete your note making. You will have 3 minutes. **You will be allowed a total of 45 minutes to complete your answers to PART TWO** of the test. Answer **ALL** questions.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES
The number of marks available for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

Dictionaries are **NOT** permitted.

This question paper consists of 9 printed pages and 3 blank pages.

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PART ONE

You have just heard the recording, "Are you ready for your interview?"

Make some detailed notes on the **NINE** points listed below. **REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL NEED THESE NOTES IN THE SECOND PART OF THE TEST**. Therefore, make them as full and as accurate as you can.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

YOUR NOTES ON THE RECORDING

1. What is an interview

_____

_____

2. What is an interview used for

_____

_____

3. How is an interview similar to shopping

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. The history of the interview

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. The part played by Thomas Edison in the development of the interview

6. New ways of conducting interviews

7. (a) Specific details about structured interviews

(b) Specific details about unstructured interviews

8. The Do's and Don'ts of Job Interviews

(a) What you should DO

_____

_____

_____

_____

(b) What you should AVOID

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Based on his conversation with Mrs. McPhee, what kind of person is James?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Methods used in the recording to make the information interesting

DO NOT TURN OVER UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO

PART TWO

1. What is an interview?

_____

_____ [1]

2. Explain how interviewing is similar to shopping.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ [4]

3. When was the first personality test developed?

_____

_____ [1]

4. Why did Thomas Edison need to invent the interview?

_____

_____

_____ [2]

5. Give **TWO** ways in which interviews are carried out using technology.

_____

_____

_____

_____ [2]

6. Explain **TWO** specific ways in which structured interviews are different from unstructured interviews.

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
1.	
2.	

[4]

7. (a) State **THREE** things that **James** did well before, during or after his interview **[DO's]**.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ [3]

(b) State **THREE** things that **James** should **NOT** have done before, during or after his interview **[DON'Ts]**.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ [3]

8. Give **TWO** adjectives to describe James' personality.

Support each with an example from the recording

PERSONALITY TRAIT	SUPPORT
1.	
2.	

[4]

9. Give **THREE** methods/techniques used in the recording to hold the interest of the listener. Place your ideas in the chart below, supporting each one with details from the recording

TECHNIQUE	SUPPORT
1.	
2.	
3.	

[6]

End]

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAPER 3 – WRITTEN COMPREHENSION & DIRECTED WRITING 1310/3

Thursday **18 MAY 2023** **9:00 A.M.–11:10 A.M. (including 10 minutes reading time)**

Additional materials:
Answer booklet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

BAHAMAS GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your school number, candidate number, surname and initials in the spaces provided on the answer booklet.

Answer **ALL** the questions in the answer booklet provided.

Number your answers clearly.

Special attention should be given to the directions for each question.

Work should be neat and well-organised.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks available for each question or part question is shown in brackets.

Dictionaries are **NOT** permitted.

This question paper consists of _7_ printed pages and _1_ blank page.

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Read the following passage carefully before you attempt any questions.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Knowing that their children live a comfortable and contented life is all that brings parents joy. That is why some parents try to become the architects of their children's futures by moving to a "good" neighbourhood, enrolling their children in the best schools, and often retaining high expectations of their children's grades and academics.

Yes, parents always want their children to be the best at everything they do and to achieve more than everyone else. To promote this vision, they put pressure on their children and push them to work harder. Some have even gone to the extent of creating a "To Do" checklist for their children:

- ☑ Study four hours a day
- ☑ Join multiple clubs
- ☑ Keep in touch with family
- ☑ Don't make mistakes
- ☑ Follow a balanced diet
- ☑ Volunteer every weekend

The recent college admission scandal involving actress, Lori Loughlin and other parents accused of buying their children's way into college raises questions about parents' high expectations for their children. Clearly, these parents were disappointed with their children's inability to succeed academically and gain entry into the universities their parents deemed worthy. This mindset pushes parents to take matters into their own hands by writing papers, setting up and running charitable foundations in their children's names and even completing and submitting college applications. According to a national survey by Ask.com, 778 parents with children younger than age 18 were asked if they do their children's homework. The survey showed that 43% of parents admitted to this. However, are these students really benefiting from their parents' deceit? Perhaps parents are hoping to spare themselves the embarrassment, disappointment and feelings of failure that may come along with their children not gaining admission to college. Whatever their reasons, these extreme measures cause young people to feel embarrassed, resentful and to doubt their self-worth.

The dismal condition of the educational system and the swelling volume of applicants each year for college entry and scholarships is a major stress point for most parents. Academic excellence has always been a symbol of pride and status in our society. A bright and happy future filled with top colleges, and followed by well-paid careers is what parents envision for their precious darlings. This means that children must perform well during the years of grade school and earn "perfect" grades, no matter the cost. Parents see the booming test prep. industry and feel pressure of their own to ensure that their offspring achieve a high score on the GLAT, BJC, BGCSE, ACT or SAT exams. And the children do perform well with the addition of extra classes and tutors. At many schools, parents can track their children's progress online and sometimes obsess over every single score. Meanwhile, children, at the thought of failing a quiz or test, sit in their parents' cars crying, and on the verge of a meltdown.

Despite all of these negatives, pressure can be a good thing for some young people. "My parents somewhat placed pressures on myself and my sisters to do well in school, and to pursue learning – they made everything educational. This has had a positive effect on my life because I was challenged to apply to great universities and to set high academic goals. This push to learn has motivated me to graduate on the Principal's List," exclaimed Jonathan.

Academics, though, is not the only area in which parents put pressure on children. "High-pressure parents" insist that their children enter one competition after another and practice constantly in order to perform well. Why all of this stress? Are the parents attempting to relive their own unfulfilled dreams? The hours of preparation for speech and essay competitions or the attainment of leadership positions in clubs can be tiresome for young people. However, it is all worth it when they are successful and their confidence and self-esteem are heightened. Parents also benefit as time spent chauffeuring their children to and from various events allows them to access the secret world of their teenagers, which include: victories, challenges, disappointments, friendships and possible budding romances.

Sports are another major area in which parents knowingly burden their children to be the best. The mindset of having to always be a winner gets so ingrained at such a young age that it can be hard to break. During the drive home from a swim competition, Tanya's mother expresses disappointment and frustration, "You need to work on your stroke. Practice doing better and you could come first. Ya mean, your aunty dem come out here to see you come second?" These harsh statements did not help to motivate Tanya, who decided, "If whatever I do is never enough, why bother in the first place?" While it is true that being scolded in such a manner can serve to foster a spirit of competitiveness, and the development of self-discipline and leadership abilities in some children, it is also true that this kind of pressure can be so great that they may feel the need to do anything to win. When winning becomes the priority, youngsters have no problems with cheating or using high performance drugs that help them to run faster, jump higher, or throw farther.

On the flip side, parental expectations also have the benefit of encouraging children to cash in on their athletic abilities. In these cases, parents look at their children's physical talents as an investment – no different from parents who capitalize on their children's cuteness by putting them in commercials or pageants. They hope that if their children focus on just one sport that they excel at early, they will master that sport and be able to land a college scholarship or professional career. In all of this, however, it is important to remember that the whole point of youth sports is for children to have fun, be exposed to new things and learn valuable life lessons. While it is important to make children realize that hard work and discipline do pay off, putting too much pressure on them can have a negative impact on their mental health and result in strained parent-child relationships.

The truth is, parents can't escape having expectations. From the moment they find out their child's sex, they start to imagine what they will be like. Parents often find themselves welling up with pride even before their newborns open their eyes for the first time. Even in those early days and weeks, they begin to envision their children walking across the stage at school plays, recitals and graduations. Parents just can't help themselves!

One parent shared, "I always wanted my child to be like me. I can't wait to see what she becomes." Basically, that parent wants her child to become a tinier version of herself, with the same hobbies, the same mannerisms, the same beliefs, and even the same looks.

Social standing is another big cause of parental pressure. Caring more about how the world perceives them can cause parents to dismiss the true talents of their children. A child may be a gifted artist, but because pursuing art will not result in a "respected" career or high-income parents say, "Oh no! Oh no! We don't have time to waste on studying art because you have to be a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant! I done brag and tell people you will have one of those jobs. Art!?! How am I supposed to tell people my child want be an artist?" How do teens say "NO!" to such overbearing parents? Well, in most cases, they can't and end up being pushed into careers that they have no passion for.

What about personal relationships? Are youth free to select who they want to be a part of their inner circle of friends? An eleventh grader lamented, "My parents often question my friendships and romantic interests. A few of my friends couldn't even visit the house. My parents were cordial when they did happen to stop by, but it was clear that they did not approve of my choices. They were judgmental especially towards those who were not members of our church. That is why I don't even bother to introduce them to anyone."

Many parents rightly assume that raising children with some measure of religion is the best way to teach children how to behave morally – both when they're young and as they grow into adults. They compel their children to attend church and constantly remind them of the consequences of not doing so. Even though teenagers crave independence, many still respect the morals and belief systems they grew up with and become responsible, law-abiding adults. As a result of a heightened level of morality, young people will tend to engage less in habits of drug use and alcohol abuse. They also tend to make wiser decisions and have greater hopefulness.

On top of all of these expectations, children are sometimes forced into various adult roles: caregiver, part-time parent, breadwinner and more. Many of us have had to satisfy some version of these roles to one degree or another, but is it fair? Absolutely not! Children should be focused on what is vital to their own development: school and socialization. Instead, **their grades take a dive for the worse**. All too often, their cry is, "Mrs. Brown, I had to make sure my baby sister and brother got into class. I also had to make them breakfast and lunch. Then, I had to clean the whole house before I could study or go out. To be honest, I did not have time to do your work nor hang out with my friends."

Sometimes, parents do not realize the pressure they put their children under and make things worse by constantly scolding, pestering, creating schedules and interfering. Young people, who are already unhappy with themselves and are unable to impress their own parents, gradually start to lose their confidence. Eventually, they will either seek to break free from their parents' influence, becoming rebels who choose a path of self-realisation, or they will feel obligated to fulfil their parents' wishes and suffer from the stress, anxiety and confusion that that brings. Truly, at some point, **high expectations become an anchor, not an engine**. If not encouraged, they might give up completely.

By allowing young ones to pursue their passions, parents give children the power to be the architects and designers of their own lives. Instead of trying to control every aspect of who their children will become, parents can encourage, support and build on those qualities which truly make one a successful human being: love for others, integrity, resilience and the like. Albert Einstein put it rightly, "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid". So, parents should find out what interests their children and stop forcing them to climb that tree.

Answer ALL of the questions in the answer booklet provided. **Do not write any answers on this question paper.**

Unless otherwise indicated, ALL answers must be based on the information presented in the passage.

In answering questions 1 – 4, write the letter A, B, C or D **in your answer booklet** to indicate the most appropriate answer.

1. According to the parents' checklist at the beginning of the passage, their children will be successful if they:

   A. attend the best schools.
   B. take part in community service.
   C. follow a fixed schedule.
   D. get a part-time job. [1]

2. According to the passage, which word BEST describes Lori Loughlin as a parent?

   A. dishonest
   B. disinterested
   C. annoyed
   D. anxious [1]

3. What does the passage say is the purpose of youth sports?

   A. excellence, practice and strength
   B. instruction, triumph and pleasure
   C. pleasure, experience and learning
   D. victory, competition and skills [1]

4. In paragraph 3, why does the writer include the findings of the survey by Ask.com?

A. to examine the way that parents motivate their children to do well in school.
B. to question the reader about the best parenting skills and strategies.
C. to reveal the extent of parents' involvement in their children's education.
D. to show the writer's online research on the topic of parenting. [1]

5. Quote the four-word phrase from paragraph 4 (lines: 26 – 36), which indicates that getting students ready for exams is a big money-making business. [1]

6. Explain the following terms:

(a) ***"their grades take a dive for the worse"*** [2]

(b) ***"high expectations become an anchor, not an engine"*** [2]

7. Parents experience a roller coaster of emotions as they work to ensure their children's success.

(a) Based on paragraphs 9, 10 and 11, identify **ONE positive emotion** experienced by parents and briefly explain why/when they experience this emotion.

(b) Based on paragraphs 9, 10 and 11, identify **ONE negative emotion** experienced by parents and briefly explain why/when they experience this emotion. [4]

8. Identify and explain **THREE advantages** for parents that result from their children's success. [6]

9. Parental pressure **negatively** affects children in numerous ways. Using information from the passage, write a paragraph of ***no more than 140 words*** in which you support this statement. [10]

10. You are a 12th grade student. Write an article for your school's newspaper titled, "Positive Parental Pressure is Possible!"

In this article, you should discuss the **benefits that children gain** from positive parental involvement.

Your article should be ***no more than 400 words*** and should be based on ideas from the passage.

In the article, you should **BE SURE TO**:

- demonstrate a sense of audience and use an appropriate tone – persuasive and informative
- clearly convey the purpose of the article – to discuss the benefits that result from positive parental involvement
- provide support for each content point – move beyond merely listing points by identifying and **explaining how** parental involvement benefits young people

[16]

[TOTAL PAPER MARKS 45]

End]

10. You are a 12th grade student. Write an article for your school's newspaper titled, "Positive Parental Pressure is Possible!"

In this article, you should discuss the **benefits that children gain** from positive parental involvement.

Your article should be ***no more than 400 words*** and should be based on ideas from the passage.

In the article, you should **BE SURE TO**:

- demonstrate a sense of audience and use an appropriate tone – persuasive and informative
- clearly convey the purpose of the article – to discuss the benefits that result from positive parental involvement
- provide support for each content point – move beyond merely listing points by identifying and **explaining how** parental involvement benefits young people

[16]

[TOTAL PAPER MARKS 45]

End]

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAPER 4 – EXTENDED COMPREHENSION & DIRECTED WRITING 1310/4

Tuesday 23 MAY 2023 9:00 A.M.–11:30 A.M.

Additional materials: Answer booklet **(including 10 minutes reading time)**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

BAHAMAS GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your school number, candidate number, surname and initials in the spaces provided on the answer booklet.

Answer **ALL** the questions.

Number your answers clearly.

Special attention should be given to the directions for each question.

Work should be neat and well-organised.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks available for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

Dictionaries are **NOT** permitted.

This question paper consists of 7 printed pages and 1 blank page.

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SECTION A

Read the following article carefully, and then answer the questions that follow. In it, John Cocoran relates how he graduated from high school, attended university and became a teacher in the 1960s – a job he held for 17 years. Yet, as he explains here, he hid an extraordinary secret.

When I was a child, I was told by my parents that I was a winner. Even though I had had no pre-school education, at six years old, the winner in me went off to elementary school with high hopes of learning to read. For the first year however, reading was not a priority at school. Actually, there weren't many demands on us other than standing in the right line, sitting down, keeping our mouths shut and going to the bathroom on time.

Then in the second grade, we were supposed to learn to read. Some children learned to read like birds learn to fly, but for me, it was like opening a Chinese newspaper – I didn't understand what those lines were. Eventually, my teacher assigned me to the "dumb row" along with a bunch of other kids who were having a hard time learning to read, and when you're in that dumb row you start thinking you're dumb. After all, the dumb row was at the back of the classroom and students like myself were rarely called on or given an opportunity to participate. One would think that we each needed a little more instructional time, but we got the opposite. Somehow, just physically moving us to the back of the room was supposed to help us learn to read – maybe by osmosis, maybe by prayer, maybe by a miracle.

Initially, my parents did express some concern, but at teacher conferences they were always told,

"He's a smart boy, he'll get it," and the teacher moved me on to the third grade.

"He's a smart boy, he'll get it," and the teacher moved me on to the fourth grade.

"He's a smart boy, he'll get it," and the teacher moved me on to the fifth grade. But I wasn't getting it.

My parents, though loving, were a bit overwhelmed with caring for six children, and so they trusted my teachers and the system to teach me to read. However, during those early years, neither my teachers nor the system worked in my favour. I was accurately labelled as "struggling", but no one took the time to help me or to figure out why I was not reading.

I remember praying aloud at night, because I wanted to ensure that God heard my prayers. I would say, "Please Lord, let me know how to read tomorrow when I get up" and sometimes I'd even turn on the light, get a book and look at it to see if I had gotten a miracle. I'm certain that my sisters prayed for me as well, but I didn't get that miracle, and my siblings never communicated to our parents just how grave my problem was.

Sadly, by the fifth grade, I'd basically given up on myself in terms of reading. Instead, I hated the classroom. It was a hostile environment. I was going to war and I had to find a way to survive that war: I was in fights, I was defiant, a distractor and a disruptor. This meant that when I was not suspended from school, I spent the majority of each day sitting in the principal's office. This also meant that I was able to avoid being confronted about my lack of literacy skills.

Why didn't I scream, "HELP!"? Well, as a child of six, seven, or eight years old, I didn't know how to articulate the problem. Yet, the way I behaved wasn't who I felt inside. I had a desire to succeed, but it made me angry and frustrated to think that I had played this game fairly, but I was still failing. It wasn't until I got older and started high school that I decided to try a different approach to beat the system at its own game.

From now on, I was going to behave and capitalize on my strengths. I had always wanted to be an athlete, and so I focused my efforts on that. Besides my athletic skills, I also had social skills. I ran around with college kids, dated the valedictorian and was the homecoming king. So, it was fairly easy to recruit people – mostly girls – to do my homework. As for tests, I would look at someone else's paper, or I'd pass my paper over to someone and they'd answer the questions for me – it was fairly easy, amateur cheating. Everyone thought that I was simply *too cool for school*, but the truth is that I was in high school and reading at the second or third grade level. I could write my name and there were some words that I could remember, but I couldn't write a sentence.

Nevertheless, I graduated from high school, and went off to college on a full athletic scholarship. At first I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is way over my head! How am I going to get through this?" I soon learned that there was a way around just about anything. For starters, I belonged to a fraternity that had copies of old exam papers. That was one way to cheat, because there were professors who used the same test year after year. Also, I tried to take classes with a partner, somebody who would help me through. At times though, I had to resort to more creative and desperate acts. For example, there was one exam that I couldn't figure out how I was going to pass. Late one night, I went by the professor's office, opened the window with a knife and went in like a cat burglar. I looked around for the exam and sure enough, to my great relief, there were more than 40 copies of the exam – a multiple choice paper – in the top drawer of the file cabinet. I took one copy back to my dormitory, where a "smart" classmate made a cheat sheet with all the correct answers. Whew, mission impossible accomplished! However, I'd crossed the line now – I wasn't just a student that was cheating, I was a criminal.

Coincidentally, when I graduated from college, there was a teacher shortage and I was offered a job. I had just escaped from the lion's cage and then I went back in to taunt the lion again. Why did I go into teaching? Looking back, it was crazy that I would do that, but because I had been through high school and college without getting caught, being a teacher seemed a good place to hide.

During my 17-year teaching career, I taught many different subjects including physical education, typing and social studies. Sometimes I felt like a good teacher, but I wasn't. I was trespassing. I was teaching my students to be seekers of truth but I was the biggest liar in the room. That is why I never wrote on a blackboard and there was no printed word in any of my classrooms. Instead, I relied on films, discussions and two or three students in each class whom I appointed as teacher aides. Of course, my students didn't suspect at all – nobody suspects a teacher of not knowing how to read.

I got married while I was a teacher and for the first time I thought, "I'm going to trust this person; I'm going to tell her." I even practised in front of the mirror: "Cathy, I can't read. Cathy, I can't read." And one evening we were sitting on the couch and I said, "Cathy, I can't read." But she didn't really understand what I was saying. She thought I was saying that I didn't read much. You know, love is blind and deaf.

SECTION B

Read the following passage carefully, and then answer the questions that follow.

The Great Debate: Social Promotion or Retention?

Social promotion is the practice of passing unprepared students on to the next grade level with the goal of maintaining the students' social and psychological well-being. Basically, educators who support social promotion say that when students move on to the next grade level along with their peers, this creates a "feel-good-factor" that motivates students to do better the following year. Yet, is that what social promotion achieves? For many countries, decades of social promotion have proven that it not only frustrates students who cannot do the work expected, but it also sends a message that little is expected of them. Over time, students fail to grasp the importance of working to achieve academic goals and learn that they can get by without much effort. For many, the ultimate consequence is that they fall further and further behind and leave school unprepared for college and unprepared for immediate employment. In fact, social promotion has been pointed to as one of the main reasons why many colleges and businesses must spend time and money giving high school graduates remedial training in math, reading and/or writing skills. This wholesale movement of everyone to the next grade level has resulted in high school leavers who cannot understand a monthly utility bill or write a simple letter to a bank to explain a credit card error. This is unacceptable.

For these reasons, retention is often mistakenly viewed as the only alternative to social promotion. What is retention? Simply put, it is a policy that holds failing students back to repeat a grade level. For years across America, widespread retention practices resulted in 12-year-olds stuck in the 4th grade and 17-year-olds sitting in 8th grade classrooms. Why the lack of progress? Well, in most cases, retention simply means a repetition of the same material, taught in the same way that students failed at in the first place. As with students who are socially promoted, students who repeat a grade are treated as "lost causes." Teachers generally have low expectations of retained students and assume that they have low potential. Besides that, because retained students are older than their peers (and, in some cases, significantly older), many children view repeating as punishment and are more likely to drop out before graduating from high school. In addition, grade retention is an expensive "solution" to students' academic failures. At the end of the day, millions of taxpayer dollars are spent for students to repeat a grade that they will likely fail again.

Clearly, there is no winner when it comes to social promotion or retention. Neither being promoted without regard to achievement or retained without extra assistance closes the learning gap for low-achieving students, and neither practice is an appropriate response to the specific academic needs of students who have not mastered the required coursework. Thus, if neither retention nor social promotion is effective, what are the alternatives? Fortunately, there are a number of proven strategies for addressing low student achievement. These strategies stand on two pillars: prevention and intervention.

Of course, preventing failure should always be the target for educators. The first step is for the government and school districts to develop clear and challenging standards for all grade levels. Officials need to set higher standards than now exist for what students should know and be able to do to be promoted. Next, these objectives must be clearly communicated so that educators and parents understand the performance targets that need to be met at key grades. For example, one such objective could be that every child should be able to read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Raising standards is effective because it means insisting on results and holding all accountable when expected outcomes are not realized.

Another key to fostering student success is to start early. Reading must be introduced to children at a very young age, integrated into preschool activities, and reinforced at home. Early childhood education can help educators to identify children possibly at risk of school failure and take steps to ensure their readiness for school and successful learning in 1st grade and beyond.

There also needs to be changes with how schools are structured and managed so that students can be successful the first time around. Schools must be staffed with trained teachers, who understand the process of how children learn language skills. It would be a mistake to think that anyone can teach pre-school or elementary school. Besides this, schools must provide smaller classes, especially for the most disadvantaged students. It is difficult for a teacher to meet the learning needs of 30 six-year-olds, or even 20 of them. Finally, schools must not only be aware of national standards for each grade level, but also ensure that all educators are working rigorously to attain these. While teachers should be given a measure of creative freedom with how concepts are presented, teachers should be held accountable for ensuring that students grasp the specific skills that are outlined for each grade level.

What happens though, when educators are still confronted with low-achieving students, even after all of these prevention measures have been taken? The best solution is to promote those students, but to now utilize a number of intervention strategies to help them to get back on track. Promotion coupled with intensive special help is much more effective than either retention or social promotion alone.

To this end, skilful teaching is once again essential. Students who are failing need highly trained specialists, i.e., the best teachers that the system has to offer. These specialist educators would be able to identify at risk students who need extra help before they fall too far behind, and provide it immediately. Additionally, for students who have gaps in their prior knowledge, or find an area of learning particularly difficult, programmes that extend learning time – such as after-school programmes, Saturday school, summer school and year-round schooling – can help to prepare them academically and developmentally to move to the next grade.

For those who still have difficulty meeting standards despite prevention and early intervention efforts, intensive one-to-one teaching can be effective. Programs like "Reading Recovery" and "Success for All" both include one-to-one assistance models in which specially trained teachers work intensely with students in the early grades who are having difficulty learning to read. Both have been found to be effective in helping students gain the skills that make them successful and confident readers.

Putting an end to the practices of social promotion and retention involves holding firm to the commitment to help all students reach high standards. It requires that schools and students be held accountable for performance. It requires a focused use of resources. And most importantly, it requires truly embracing the idea that all children can learn – and ensuring that all children do.

This passage is based on the following reports:

1. Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion: A Guide for Educators and State and Local Leaders
United States Department of Education, 1999
https://permanent.fdlp.gov/lps18684/socialprom.pdf

2. Alternatives to Grade Retention by Linda Darling-Hammond
https://www.aasa.org/schooladministratorarticle.aspx?id=15030

In answering the questions below, you should write as far as possible in your own words. You should spend approximately one hour on this section.

3. ***In no more than 200 words***, explain the positive strategies that educators can employ to ensure student success. [12]

4. The Minister of Education is considering putting an end to the practices of social promotion and retention in The Bahamas.

   You are an adult literacy specialist who has seen first-hand the negative consequences of these practices.

   Write a letter to the Minister of Education, highlighting the negative effects of social promotion and retention.

   In your response, you are expected to:

   (a) use ideas based on information from both Passages A and B
   (b) include one or two ideas of your own
   (c) develop ideas clearly and logically

   [16]

[Paper Total Marks 52]

End]

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