

**Caribbean Examinations Council** 

The Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)

# COMMUNICATION STUDIES SYLLABUS



# CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

# Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations

# Communication Studies Syllabus

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Amendments are indicated by vertical lines.

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# Introduction

The Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) are designed to provide certification of the academic, vocational and technical achievement of students in the Caribbean, who having completed a minimum of five years of secondary education, wish to further their studies. The examinations address the skills and knowledge acquired by students under a flexible and articulated system where subjects are organized in 1-Unit or 2-Unit courses with each Unit containing three Modules.

Subjects examined under CAPE may be studied concurrently or singly, or may be combined with subjects examined by other examination boards or institutions.

A CAPE diploma will be awarded for the satisfactory completion of a programme of at least six Units, including Caribbean Studies.

# **Communication Studies Syllabus**

# **\* RATIONALE**

The ability to communicate thoughts, emotions, ideas and attitudes is a critical factor in our management of the physical and social environment. Communication Studies provides students with the opportunity to respond creatively to the implied challenges, through the development of their communicative awareness and abilities.

The fact that communication is a complex set of processes to which language is central, informs this programme of study. The placing of language in this context emphasizes the nature of language as a unique marker of personal, cultural and national identity, as well as of social and political relationships. Language as a tool of international communication is also highlighted.

The syllabus integrates, enhances, deepens and broadens language skills and awareness already developed in the CSEC English A curriculum. It focuses specifically on the development of advanced competencies in Standard English and at the same time, attempts to develop an appreciation of the linguistic diversity of the Caribbean and the implications of this diversity for social, cultural and economic transactions. The Caribbean region comprises the small island states and mainland territories, the Greater and Lesser Antilles, and all the other islands in the Caribbean Sea (including the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, islands of the Francophone Caribbean and the islands of the Netherlands Antilles). It includes also, Belize, Suriname, Guyana and Cayenne.

The syllabus emphasises the wider framework of communication principles, systems and processes within which language use has context, achieves coherence, and is enhanced. The role of technology in the enhancement or retardation of communication is also considered important.

In summary, a teaching programme based on this syllabus must be characterized by the following:

- consideration of all aspects of communication: linguistic and non-linguistic, so that the dynamics of any communicative act can be clarified;
- provision of opportunities for students to be exposed to the dynamic range of communicative experience, and to appreciate how language functions as an instrument of educational, social, personal and vocational development. Particularly, it must provide opportunities for students to explore, in theory and practice, the use of register, code and style in relevant social contexts;
- commitment to helping students understand the relationship between language, society and identity
  and to develop an awareness of its variety and diversity;
- consideration of the impact of technological advances on communication, and the implications of this impact for language and society;



- the facilitation and enhancement of students' ability to gather and process information using variety of modes and strategies;
- the facilitation and enhancement of the students' own critical, creative and aesthetic responses to, c production of, language.

#### AIMS

This syllabus aims to:

- develop an understanding of the nature of language and its various functions in social, aesthetic, work-re and other contexts;
- develop an appreciation of speech and writing as mental and social processes;
- enable students to use language registers accurately, appropriately and effectively in a range of conte specified at 2;
- provide an understanding of the use of technology and its impact on communication;
- develop an appreciation of the role of language in shaping Caribbean cultural identity;
- develop an appreciation of communication as a complex process within a wide range of discourse conte
- 7. encourage students to use communication strategies appropriate to specific discourse contexts.

# SKILLS AND ABILITIES TO BE ASSESSED

The skills that students are expected to have developed on completion of the syllabus have been group three main headings:

- Comprehension;
- (ii) Language Awareness and Use;
- (iii) Expression.

#### Comprehension

The ability to understand and respond appropriately to written, oral and visual communication from a sources.

#### Language Awareness and Use

The ability to understand and discuss the features and various roles of language in general and languages in particular and to apply them appropriately in different communication contexts.



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#### Expression

The ability to speak and write English with precision, clarity and fluency.

# PRE-REQUISITES OF THE SYLLABUS

Any person with the ability to express personal opinions and factual information clearly, demonstrating logical sequencing and appropriate English registers up to the level indicated by Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) English A General Proficiency syllabus or the equivalent.

### STRUCTURE OF THE SYLLABUS

This syllabus requires 150 hours. It consists of three Modules, each requiring 50 hours. While the Modules are presented in a linear manner, it must be emphasised that any Module may be studied first, and aspects of Modules may be studied concurrently, constrained only by the capacity of educational institutions and by students' needs and interest.

Module 1 - Gathering and Processing Information

Module 2 - Language and Community
Module 3 - Speaking and Writing

# APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE SYLLABUS

Teachers will find it useful to employ an integrated approach to teaching this syllabus. While the syllabus is divided into Modules, allowing students to see the connections between the various language areas, it facilitates communicative language teaching. For example, speaking and writing require many of the same skills. Therefore, a lesson on vocabulary would naturally address selection of vocabulary in both speech and writing situations. In the same way, students should be encouraged to make listening-reading connections in order to see that the comprehension process skills are similar in both cases. Reading-writing connections must also be emphasized. For example, a lesson on expository writing should also include reading of expository pieces to see how techniques work. In this case, specific objectives 1 and 8 in Module 2 would be taught simultaneously.

#### **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

On completion of this Module, students should:

- 1. use the structures of English correctly and appropriately, as well as with a degree of elegance;
- evaluate examples of written and spoken communication, including arguments, taking into consideration form and content of the communication and the context in which it is presented or constructed;
- apply comprehension skills of analysis and critical evaluation to a wide range of oral and written material:
- 4. express themselves in speech and writing with precision, accuracy, clarity and fluency;
- 5. demonstrate organizing competencies in oral and written communication.

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

- speak and write with control of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and conventions of English usage;
- identify the characteristic formats, organizational features and modes of expression of different gen types of writing and speech;
- evaluate the appropriateness of data collection methods, including the use of the Internet;
- 4. apply any of the six different levels of comprehension to examples of spoken and written material;
- write continuous prose and note-form summaries of specific types of written and spoken material;
- 6. evaluate the effect of source; context and medium or channel on the reliability and validity of info
- gather information about current issues;
- evaluate information about current issues;
- 9. present in appropriate oral form the evaluation at (8) above;
- 10. create a portfolio of oral and written work.



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#### CONTENT

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1.	Structural	Competence	(orai	and	written	ŀ

- (a) Grammar.
- (b) Usage.
- (c) Word choice.
- (d) Spelling.
- (e) Punctuation.
- (f) Pronunciation.
- (g) Enunciation.
- (h) Correcting errors and mistakes, revising and editing drafts.

#### 2. Levels of Comprehension

- (a) Understanding levels: literal, interpretive, analytical, application, synthesis, evaluative.
- (b) Understanding modes, genres and types of speech and writing, with specific attention organization and language used.
- (c) Levels of comprehension to different modes, genres and types of speech and writing:
  - (i) expository (for example, definitions, technical writing);
  - (ii) literary (for example, prose fiction, poetry, drama);
  - (iii) argumentative:
    - forms (deduction, induction, analogy, authority);
    - fallacies (such as non sequitur, unproved assertion);
      - evaluating arguments.

#### 3. Study and Summary Skills

- (a) General study skills:
  - preparing to study (understanding mental, emotional and physical connections, scheduling, controlling distractions);
  - (ii) defining and distinguishing between reading and listening;
  - (iii) setting purposes for reading (surveying, skimming, scanning);
  - (iv) setting purposes for listening (general, specific);
  - (v) understanding factors which affect reading and listening comprehension.
- (b) Summary skills:
  - (i) note taking and note making;
  - (ii) distinguishing main and subsidiary ideas;
  - (iii) understanding logical linkages between ideas;
  - (iv) formulating topic sentences and linking them to subsidiary ideas;
  - (v) sequencing;
  - (vi) condensing;
  - (vii) writing outlines;
  - (viii) writing continuous prose summaries;
  - (ix) editing drafts (peer-evaluation and self-evaluation).

#### 4. Current Issues: Evaluating Sources

- (a) Defining key concepts (authority, reliability, validity, bias, fact, opinion):
  - (i) giving examples and non examples;
  - (ii) comparing and contrasting concepts.
- (b) Identifying a significant issue.
- (c) Sources of information:
  - (i) locating sources;
  - (ii) choosing from among sources;
  - (iii) differentiating between data and information;
  - (iv) evaluation of the appropriateness of data collection methods;
  - (v) summarizing content of sources;
  - (vi) evaluating the reliability and validity of sources:
    - author and speaker (expertise, authority, perspective, social and political biases);
    - context (social and historical);
    - text (factual accuracy, logical structure, cogency).

#### Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities

To facilitate students' attainment of the objectives in Module 1, teachers are advised to engage students in the following teaching and learning activities.

 Let students keep a log of their communication activities at school or at home for a 24-hour period during the week. They should record the number of minutes spent on the four main language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, each day. They should then make a pie chart showing the percentage of time spent on each type of communication skill.

Follow-up discussion may focus on the implications of the distribution with regard to the student's own individual communication style and interactive environment relations, as well as broad conclusions that may be drawn about these four communication acts in general.

- Have students listen to a five-minute segment of a radio news programme. Let them recall and list the main items. Review the list.
- Have students watch a five-minute segment of a televised news programme and recall as much of the information as possible.
- Discuss the difference between listening only (Activity 2) and listening with reinforcement from visual cues (Activity 3). This activity can be linked with developing speech skills.
- Students view a video recording (15-20 minutes) of a discussion or conversation on television, with three or
  four participants. Students then answer in writing the following questions which are distributed to each
  student before viewing. (Recording can be sourced from local television stations or the Government
  Information Service.)
  - How did participants help develop ideas and supply details?
  - What were the differences in points of view?
  - What aspects of the topics were neglected?
  - What elements of good argument or bias or fallacy did you identify? How did these affect the conversation?
  - Did the use of elements such as lighting and set arrangement affect your response to the overall presentation? This can be linked with developing speech skills.
- Story-telling. Students select an experience or a story to tell the class. Give them guiding principles for the story:
  - select an interesting story or incident;
  - the story or incident must have an element of surprise;
  - organize stages in the story or incident for maximum interest;
  - provide information on where, when, who, what, why, how;
  - end the story or incident with the high point.

Students in the audience listen in order to discuss the evaluation points below:

- (i) Was the story told in such a way that you felt you were sharing the experience?
- (ii) Was the story in logical order?



- (iii) How did the speaker maintain suspense?
- Was it dramatized with suitable tone, gestures and illustrative materials? (iv)
- (v) In what way did the speaker's voice add to the interest of the story or experience?
- 7. Students select two newspaper reports on a similar issue.
  - Which statements were facts? Which ones were opinions? What criteria did you use to decide (i) between fact and opinion.
  - What made the report interesting? (ii)
  - How can you use the information given?
  - How did you react to new or different ideas? (iv)
  - Was the report clear, concise, well organized? Explain. (v)
  - (vi) What new facts or points of view did we learn from the report?
  - N.B. This can be integrated with the teaching of summary and note taking skills. This activity also facilitates the teaching of organizational skills in writing (Module 3).
- Organize panel discussions in the classroom. These can be linked to portfolio development where students 8. researching similar topics can form panels to present points of view and be questioned by the class.
- 9. Play the rebuttal game: Class is divided into two groups. A debatable topic is chosen and each group undertakes to argue for or against. One student makes a point and a student from the opposing side rebuts using the opponent's point to build his or her argument, and so on, until the topic is exhausted. This can be used as an introduction to argumentative writing (Module 3).
- Have students practise mock interviews or interview each other as a starter for a written piece. 10.
- 11. Use choral speaking activities to allow students to concentrate on the speech skills (articulation, modulation, enunciation). Students can select their own poems for choral arrangements and present in groups. Dub, rap or extemporaneous rhythms can be explored. Make audio recordings of the activity, and have students evaluate themselves. This activity also facilitates the teaching of specific objectives 5 and 9 of Module 3.
- 12. Have students construct different types of comprehension questions on specific passages. They can do this in groups and administer "tests" to each other. Ensure that students are aware that their questions should address the various levels of comprehension by exploring question and answer relationships.

- Organize library orientations for students to ensure that they understand how to use the library resources.
   Where possible students should use Internet search engines to access information.
- Have students select samples of different types of writing and discuss, in groups, variation in style, usage, literary devices.
- 15. Have students evaluate the reliability and validity of the different types of information gathered.

#### RESOURCES

Chaffee, J. Thinking Critically, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Grant, P. Reading and Study Skills, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1997.

Kelly, W. J. Discovery: An Introduction to Writing, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, (Parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and and Lawton, D. 5), 1997.

Lalla, B. English for Academic Purposes, St. Augustine: University of the West Indies, Distance Education Unit, 1997.

Zeuschner, R. Communicating Today, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, (Chs. 3 and 4), 1997.

# MODULE 2: LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY

#### **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

On completion of this Module, students should:

- 1. use the structures of English correctly and appropriately, as well as with a degree of elegance;
- 2. evaluate examples of written and spoken communication, including arguments, taking into consideration the form and content of the communication and the context in which it is presented or constructed;
- appreciate the nature, characteristics and roles of language in society in general and in Caribbean society in 3. particular;
- understand the salient features of the interactive relationship among communication technologies, language 4. and society;
- 5. appreciate the significance of communication technologies in cultural interaction.

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

- 1. speak and write with control of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and conventions of speech and writing in the use of English;
- 2. discuss the concept of language;
- identify the salient features of one Creole or Creole-influenced vernacular (in their territory or any other 3. territory) which make it different from Standard English;
- 4. explain the challenges faced by the Creole or the Creole-influenced vernacular speaker in learning English:
- 5. evaluate the role of language in Caribbean identity;
- 6. analyze the social, political, ethical and psychological roles of language in human societies;
- 7. describe their territory or any other territory along the following lines:
  - (a) the range of languages (including Creoles);
  - the influence of history on the language situation; (b)
  - (c) attitudes to languages used;
  - the potential of these attitudes for integration, marginalization and alienation;



- assess the use of registers, dialects, ranges of formality and other aspects of language in various types o
  interactive settings;
- 9. identify the technological advances that have impacted on communication;
- examine how communication is: (i) affected and (ii) effected, by the use of technology in different cultur settings and interactive contexts.

#### CONTENT

- Structural Competence (oral and written)
  - (a) Grammar (including syntax).
  - (b) Usage.
  - (c) Word choice.
  - (d) Spelling.
  - (e) Punctuation.
  - (f) Pronunciation.
  - (g) Enunciation.
  - (h) Correcting errors and mistakes, revising and editing drafts.

#### 2. Defining Language

- (a) Characteristics of language Language as:
  - (i) human;
  - (ii) verbal;
  - (iii) symbolic;
  - (iv) systematic (non-arbitrary);
  - (v) maturational;



- (vi) non-instinctive (naturally acquired);
- (vii) dynamic.
- (b) Differentiation between 'language' (generic) and 'a language' (individual).
- (c) Purposes of language, such as persuading, questioning, directing, providing aesthetic pleasure, informing.
- (d) Clarifying concepts:
  - variation (changes in language in response to various influences, for example, social, geographic, individual, group factors);
  - dialect (any version of a language spoken by a particular geographic or social subgroup, for example, British Standard English, Yorkshire English, Cockney English);
  - (iii) register (the range of language choice available for use in different situations);
  - (iv) standard (the dialect used for education and other formal or official purposes);
  - (v) Creole (new native languages which have their beginnings in situations of contact where groups of people who do not share a common language are forced to communicate with each other).

#### Characteristics of Creole languages

- (a) Features of Creoles and Creole-influenced vernacular which make them different from Standard English:
  - (i) grammar (include unmarked nouns, verbs and pronouns; time marking with adverbs, particles [for example, ben, wen.]; predicate adjectives [for example, mi sick / mwen malad]; word order including formation of questions and the use of front-focussing [for example, 'A come yu come?' 'Is lick im lick me']);
  - (ii) sound units or combinations of sound in initial and final positions (for example, den, aks, sen, tief);
  - (iii) vocabulary (focus on Creole words, for example, pickney, nyam.);

(iv) semantics (include {a} focus on words shared with English, but with different denotative and connotative meanings, for example, bath, miserable, ignorant, gipsy, never) and {b} focus on calques, for example, nose hole, eye water, house bottom, door mouth).

#### Language in Society

- (a) Influence of social, political and other cultural factors on the development of language and related communicative behaviours.
- (b) Social, political, ethical, and psychological roles of language.
- (c) The influence of historical factors on Caribbean language situations.
- (d) Attitudes to Caribbean language: implications for regional, national, social, gender, ethnic and other sub-group relations.
- (e) Language in international situations.
- (f) Language in interactive settings: influence of factors such as audience, message, purpose, occasion, gender, age, on choice of language and related communicative behaviours.

#### 5. Technology, Culture and Communication

- (a) Modern developments in communication technology:
  - (i) print;
  - (ii) electronic (such as radio, television, telephone, fax, Internet).
- (b) Use of media for enhancing and facilitating communication.
- (c) Cultural influences on the use of technology in communication.
- (d) The effect of technology on language use.

#### Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities

To facilitate students' attainment of the objectives in Module 2, teachers are advised to engage students in the following teaching and learning activities:

- Have students examine the possible interpretations of the word 'communicate'. They should provide examples such as:
  - (i) dark clouds communicate the possibility of rain;
  - (ii) aspects of body language communicate different emotional states;
  - (iii) music may communicate different messages about mental states (joy, sadness).
- Have students compare any (or all) of the above with human language. Discuss range, effectiveness, complexity, efficiency, economy, ability to deal with abstraction.
- Identify areas of difference of form between human language and other kinds of communication. Deduce the formal characteristics of human language (verbal, symbolic, systematic-grammar; sound, meaning).
- 4. Have students observe a game, show or event and prepare an oral or written report for (a) the class, (b) the principal. Have students discuss the differences in the level of language used and identify reasons for the differences.
- Present students with copies of maps of the Caribbean. Ask them to name the territories. For homework they
  should be required to identify the official language used in each territory. Students should match the official
  language and the Creole language of the territory. (Some historical information may be necessary).
- Prepare a list comparing Standard English words and Creole or Creole-influenced vernacular words for the same item. Discuss the possible reasons for the differences in vocabulary and semantics. Use the various dialects of either to show that differences often may exist within specific versions of a language.
- Have the students select passages or messages intended for different social levels.

- 8. Identify a passage which represents informal, oral Creole (you may wish to transcribe a section of an audio-tape from the suggested resources for Module 2). Have students (in groups so as to stimulate discussion) translate the passage to a formal, standard, written version of English. Advise them to pay attention to:
  - vocabulary and semantics;
  - (ii) grammar;
  - (iii) sentence structure;
  - (iv) idiomatic expressions.

They may wish to underline the sections to be changed in the original, and discuss their reasons.

- Have students examine the local daily newspapers for debates on the creole and standard languages. Students
  may be required to identify the basic positions taken and to:
  - (i) evaluate them;
  - (ii) support or reject them;
  - (iii) present a summary of the major arguments.
- 10. Use a map of the world to identify territories in which English is one of the major languages. Students should discuss the notion of "International Language." Be sure to raise the question of the use by international organizations, academic publishers, major news networks.
- Encourage students to build a comparative list of terms used for flora and fauna in various territories of the region. Have students group territories on the basis of similarity of items.
- 12. Divide students into groups. Have each group focus on new technological advancements in the home, school and workplace, for example, computer, facsimile, cellular phone. Each group should explain the varied used of these "new" tools and their impact on the communication process.
- Encourage students to (a) utilize modern forms of communication technologies to make class and portfoliopresentations and (b) evaluate the effectiveness of the technology used in the presentation.
- Have students use the internet for research purposes and evaluate the reliability and validity of the sources and information gathered.
- 15. Have students summarize the useful information gathered, taking care to avoid plagiarism.

#### RESOURCES

Allsopp, R.

Dictionary of Caribbean English, 1995.

Gorlach, M. and Holm, J. (eds.) Varieties of English Around the World: Focus on the Caribbean, Amsterdam:

John Benjamin, 1986.

Pollard, V.

From Jamaican Creole to Standard English. A Handbook for Teachers,

Caribbean Research Centre, New York: Medgar Evers College, 1993.

Roberts, P.

West Indians and their Languages, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Zeuschner, R.

Communicating Today, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, (Chs. 1, 6, 18, 19 and 20),

1997.

Audiotapes by performers

such as:

Paul Keens-Douglas (for example, Savannah Ghost, Tim Tim, Joan Andrea

Hutchinson (for example, Dat Bumpy Head Gal)

Videotaped films such as:

My Fair Lady Oliver At Large

