

# 2001 JUNE, WASSCE ENGLISH - PART A

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Answer **one** question from this Section.

1. Write a letter to your father who has been on a long course abroad, telling him how the family has been faring in his absence.
2. Write an article for publication in a cultural magazine on the advantages and disadvantages of the extended family system.
3. The last nation-wide strike by secondary school teachers affected your school adversely. Write a letter to the Minister of Education suggesting at least three ways of preventing future strike actions.
4. You are a speaker in a debate on the topic "*Civilian rule is better than military rule.*" Write your contribution for or against the motion.
5. Write a story, real or imagined, which illustrates the saying: "*Make hay while the sun shines.*"

## COMPREHENSION PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.

Bitrus, a middle-aged man, was speeding along the hot tarmac one afternoon, oblivious of the countryside. By his side, reading a magazine was his first son, a twenty-year old university computer science student. On the man's mind was the contract he was pursuing in the capital city. It was worth several million dollars. Although he had handled bigger contracts before, Bitrus was preoccupied with this new challenge, his mind far away from the road before him.

His son was also buried in the magazine he was reading. So neither saw the goat crossing the road early enough. Like automation, Bitrus jammed on the brakes. In a flash, there was a skid and a somersault. The villagers worked for almost an hour on the huge Mercedes before rescuing the two.

There, in the casualty ward, the duo lay on the stretchers. Bitrus was soon in a fairly stable, but anybody would know that the son needed prompt specialist medical attention. The doctor was sent for, a surgeon who regularly handled such cases. Soon enough, the doctor came. The nurses heaved a sigh of relief. But then... “Oh no, I can’t handle this case. He’s my son!” Everyone was shocked. One of the nurses pleaded. “But doctor, you must do something otherwise,...” “No, he’s my son. I’ll have to transfer this case.” And so tearfully, more agitated than anybody around, the doctor hurried away to call a colleague.

Here was Bitrus, with multiple injuries, but not in danger. In the adjoining room was his son, still comatose. How then could a doctor come in and say, “This is my son”? Wasn’t Bitrus the father after all? Most people would reason that the doctor was truly the secret biological father. Others, reasoning hard, would conclude that the doctor was Bitrus’s father and thus was right in describing him as his son. But for how long would people continue to think that all doctors must be male? Couldn’t the doctor have simply been Mrs. Bitrus?

## Questions

(a)

(i) What was the remote cause of the accident?

(ii) What was the immediate cause?

(b) What does the passage suggest about doctors’ attitude to the cases they handle?

(c) Describe the conditions of Mr. Bitrus and his son at the hospital.

(d) What assumption about doctors does the passage illustrate?

(e) *His son was also buried in the magazine he was reading.*

(i) What type of figurative expression is this?

(ii) What is its function as it is used in the sentence?

(f) *...that the doctor was truly the secret biological father.*

(i) What grammatical name is given to this expression?

(ii) What is its function as it is used in the sentence?

(g) For each of the following, find a word or phrase that means the same and can replace it as it is used in the passage:

- (i) oblivious
- (ii) prompt
- (iii) regularly
- (iv) pleaded
- (v) agitated
- (vi) adjoining

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## COMPREHENSION PASSAGE 2

*Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.*

In the 1960s and 1970s undergraduates did not need to apply for employment. Employees usually wooed them by depositing offers of jobs in their halls of residence for those interested to pick and choose from as soon as they finished writing their degree examinations. How things have changed! We have since “progressed” from this age of abundance in which unemployment was hardly heard of to one of economic recession and widespread unemployment. The problem is so acute that one finds unemployment even among engineers and doctors.

What are the causes of this phenomenon? For one thing, our educational system does not train its products for self-employment. Everybody expects the government or the private sector to provide them with a job at the end of their studies. As we have now realized, the government and the private sector combined cannot create enough jobs to go round the army of graduates turned out annually by our universities. For another, many parents encourage their children to enroll in courses leading to prestigious and lucrative professions for which they may be intellectually unsuited. They end up obtaining poor degrees or none at all. Such graduates cannot compete on the job market, so they swell the ranks of the unemployable and the unemployed.

Perhaps the most important single cause of unemployment is economic recession. During periods of boom, economic activities are generated in abundance and these make plenty of jobs available. But the reverse is the case in times of

economic recession.

There is no simple solution to the problem. Everyone in the society has a role to play here. The government has a duty to ensure that the economy is buoyant, thus providing the right environment for the creation of jobs. The educational authorities have to orientate the process of education towards the production of job creators rather than job seekers.

Guidance and counseling services should be made available in all secondary institutions. Parents, too, should stop misdirecting their children into choosing careers for which they are ill-suited.

## Questions

(a)

- (i) What was the employment situation like in the 1960s and 1970s?
- (ii) What is the situation now?

(b) In what ways do the education systems, the parents and the students contribute to the unemployment situation?

(c) Mention three suggestions given in the last paragraph for solving the problem.

(d) Why does the writer enclose the word *progressed* (First paragraph) in quotation marks?

(e) .....*for which they may be intellectually unsuited.*

(i) What grammatical name is given to this expression?

(ii) What is its function as it is used in the sentence?

(f) For each of the following words, find another word or phrase that means the same and can replace it as it is used in the passage:

- (i) recession
- (ii) acute
- (iii) army
- (iv) lucrative
- (v) boom
- (vi) orientate