

Candidates were required to read, comprehend the entire paragraph and answer. It is interesting that the very best in the cohort did not get it right. And they are the majority! They were misled by the word *'boring'* appearing in option *C* since the first sentence of the paragraph has the word *'bored'*. However, the idea is that one would soon get bored, not 'find everything you do boring'. Those who chose options *B* and *D* were likewise misled by the words *'goals'* and *'dreams'* which appear in the paragraph, but nothing is said about forgetting goals nor stopping to dream about one's future.

### 3.3 SECTION B: COMPOSITION

The percentage mean for the paper improved by 5.63 points from 35.47 in the year 2006 to 41.10 in the year 2007.

The paper tested the candidate's ability to compose a personal and convincing story about an event that is both urgent and exciting and which happened to him or which he/she witnessed and which he/she considers a *'must hear'* for his inner circle of friends. These friends happen to be in a different class from the one attended by the candidate – the story teller. The urgency and impatience is signaled by the words *"As soon as..."* and *"I rushed out..."* The story could not wait! *"I was eager..."* Perhaps the friends had not met for a while. Or perhaps the happening was so unexpected, so ridiculous... Whatever it was, this must come out of the story and how it is told.

The account had to be interesting, accurate grammatically and fluent to read. The candidates were expected to show some mastery of plot development and use a variety of sentence structures and a fair range of vocabulary and be conversant with the English idioms – the English way of saying things.

Once again, the majority of the compositions presented lacked originality, and were not well conceived. Most were full of clichés and misplaced sayings. Some took the occasion to tell folktales and were penalized for lack of originality.

In the year 2007 examination, the topic was as follows:

**You have 40 minutes to write your composition.**

*Write a composition that begins as follows:*

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

#### GROUP I (01-10 Marks)

##### Composition A

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

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classroom to look for my friends I was eager tell  
of the classroom to look for my friends. I was  
eager to tell them the story rushed out of the  
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As soon as the for break rang, I rushed  
out of the to look my friend. She was in  
classroom tell them the story I was happy I  
out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was  
eager to tell them the story.

So soon to tell them the story I was  
AS soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed  
out of the classroom to look for my friends.  
I was eager to tell them the story.

AS soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed  
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classroom to look for my friends. I was eager  
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of the classroom to look for my friends. I was  
eager to tell them the story.

The candidate simply copies the input sentence in the task, over and over. The attempt is not even an accurate reproduction! In the very first line, the candidate misses out the key word 'bell'. In the second sentence, the word 'story' recurs twice, followed by an unfamiliar 'word'. The 'account' degenerates progressively.

At least the candidate has a neat and legible handwriting and is aware of word juncture and terminal punctuation.

Mark awarded 02

## Composition B

### AN INTERESTING STORY THAT I WILL NEVER FORGET

You have 40 minutes to write your composition.

Write a composition that begins as follows:

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story. I started like this: Once upon a time they lived a man how had three children. One day one of the children had no any thing of eating his father got worried about him. He went where he was and told him that my daughter do not be worried any more. God is going to give us food.

When that boy heard that he was as happy as a fat tick sucking the blood of a thin dog. When he heard that he went to the house when he is singing some songs of praising God. That boy waited for the food but I did not come the boy was as angry as a hunter who had no catch any of the animal he went to his father and asked him where is some food his father told him that my son do not worry about the food. I am telling you once more that God does not hurry things.

The boy was very sad to hear that he went back to his house and closed it. When his father came he started to call him but he was not opening the door his father tried to call him but he was pretending that he was asleep. He stay inside the house for three days without opening and eating.

One day his father worked up and went to his sons house when he reached at that place he found he has not opened the door he went near and start to shake the door when he was shaking the boy was as afraid as a chameleon or a feeble.

When he was shaking the boy started to call his father but his father was the one who was shaking the door. He tried to call his father but he was not hearing any body responding he was calling his brothers but his brothers were at sleep.

The father continue to shake the door until it opened. When it opened he entered and he found his son under a bed he started to call him and telling him that I have brought for you some food. When that boy heard that he come out very quickly and he put on the light when he heard put on the lights he asked him where is the food.

One day his father went to his friends and told them that his pupils all die. He told them that he want them to help him with some food to give my pupils. One of them gave him one hundred shilling and told him that to go and buy some food to his pupils. He did not care any food to his pupils. He went and drank them all. He slept outside that his pupils could not now that he had drunk. The following morning he went back home and he cheated his pupils that he was look for the money to buy some food but I have not gotten anything.

The candidate hardly communicates although it is possible to guess what he is saying. The account is muddled and the language is broken. What starts out as a folktale with the opening formula ends up being some hypothetical situation depicting famine conditions. Basic spelling errors abound and there is no consistency in gender pronominal references.

Mark awarded 05

### Composition C

Write a composition that begins as follows:

#### A NERVE JARRING ORDEAL

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

I quickly called them nearer while smiling ruefully exposing a pearl white well arranged teeth.

Hardly had we settled down when I started telling them a very interesting story. Our teacher seen us but they didn't asked us anything. They just known that no smoke without fire.

I started like this one day as I was in my big circular old muddy house I heard a loud knock which would awaken the dead in my big robbust mettalic door.

My whole body went nerve while my heart pounded like a west-afrikan drum. Believe it or not you were hearing it at ton metres far from me.

Within a velocity of bullets millions of answerable and unknown questions criss-crossed in my golden mind leaving it full.

My hair stood straight while my legs wobbled like jelly. I got under my small rectangular blue plastic bed and kept quiet as a church mouse.

They all laughed distinctly and then we kept the pot boiling. Before I tried to talk all of them laughed at me.

I was as ashamed as a devil that time. Keep quiet so that I may finish this story.

No minutes time they all kept quiet and continued. After that I heard my metallic door being beaten thoroughly and powerfully so they may come in.

I shouted with no fear so that they may go. Within two shakes of a duck's tail I

heard them running fast.  
Wow it was a worry to me  
hearing gurgatic of men ranning  
because of only shouts.  
And this is the end" All  
of them shouted while  
smiling ruefully.

The candidate attempts to use the given sentence. It is simply tagged on and the story is improbable and hardly ever developed. The effort is further marred by an attempt to bring in clichés and far-fetched similes.

Mark awarded 10

## GROUP II

(11 – 20 Marks)

### Composition D

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

AS soon as the bell rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story because I did NOT like what I saw.

One of my classmates his name Kiptoo was a drug trafficker and he was selling ciggarrates and bhang to some boys in the classroom. The ciggarrates were manufactured and the bhang were homemade.

I saw him trying to sell the homemade ciggarrates filled with bhang to my classmates by their name Kariuki, Juma and Katana. Kiptoo started selling drungas after the last Vaccation.

When we closed school last vacation Kiptoo joined a bad company of dropouts and he found himself in a danger of drinking beer and selling bhang.

From that day Kiptoo started selling drugs and drinking beer. Our class monitor called the class teacher and the school headteacher.

He told them the case and they rushed to our class very quickly. When the headteacher asked the matter Kiptoo and his friends were ready to show a pair of clean heels but they were caught by our class teacher his name Mr Nthale.

Our class monitor was asked by the headteacher to look in Kiptoo's bag if he had left some of the drugs.

When I opened the bag he found fourty home made cigarettes filled with bhang. I carried the and gave the headteacher.

I was sent to call Kiptoo's parents. When I reached to Kiptoo's home I found his father in the Shamba. I told him the matter and I went with him to school.

When we reached the school I went to my class and Kiptoo's father walked at a speed which could



Make a snail the champion towards the headteacher office.

At this time Kiploo and his friends were crying and shedding Hyena's tears. After thirty minutes the class teacher called Kiploo and his friends from the class. He commaded them to follow him towards the headteacher office.

After ten minutes they came back to the class filling very ashamed

They sat at the back of classroom. At that moment the class teacher and the headteacher arrived. We were warned. From that day Kiploo became a very good pupils and the rest of his life - became easy like eating Ungali.

The take-off is shaky. No idea if it is an explanation to the reader or if it is the story told to the friends. The plot is unclear and nobody can tell the difference between the class monitor and the story teller. At one time he refers to the class monitor and in the same breath uses the first person singular pronoun. He goes for the drugs and the culprit's father.

The candidate lacks both the language resources, and creativity to sustain the account. He makes elementary errors of spelling (*forty, necks, went, feeling, ashamed, ugali*), construction and noun-verb agreement and has problems with even letter formation and use of capital letters.

Mark awarded 13

### Composition E

Write a composition that begins as follows:

## ESCAPE FROM GIANTS TEETH

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

I looked everywhere at the field. Suddenly I saw one of them playing hide

and Seek game. I asked him where the others were. He pointed where they were. I rushed to them as fast as my wobbled legs would carry me and within a blink of an eye I reached where they had settled.

Without hesitating I started telling them the story. Last evening as I was going back home after school, I met with a stranger coming towards me. He was hiding at the bush. When I noticed that he had a bad intention I walked as fast as a deer. To my surprise he was still following me. At this time he even ran so that I could not hid in a bush.

After a couple of minutes I felt as if I had no strength to walk any more. I decided to sneak in a nearby home. The stranger then pretended that he was thirsty and he had come to borrow some water. When I saw him my heart was about to come out of my skinny body. I knew that surely I was in giants' teeth. Nothing else rather than that. I tried tooth and nail but all fall in vain. The stranger

Stayed as he stared at me angrily. I decided to leave that home and proceed with my journey to home. Thinking that the stranger will not follow me any more.

No sooner had I left the home, that looking behind me, the same stranger was following me. Tears of despondency cascaded me through my ruddy visage. I saw everything as my foe. At this juncture I was trembling with fear. Immediately I approached to my aunt's home. I branched there and revealed everything to him.

The night was approaching and my aunt told me to spend the night there. The stranger waited for me at the gate but I didn't go home then. All in all the stranger went back late in the night.

I thanked God for rescuing me from the wide mouth of being harrassed. For sure I conclude that in all circumstances it is rather better to seek help than getting incontact into misfortunes.

The candidate communicates with difficulty. The language is hesitant and breaks down now and then. The account does not seem to have a definite plot - and is certainly not quite the candidate's own work. There is hardly any development and the episodes are highly contrived and ridiculous. There are

numerous errors of construction, vocabulary, and English idiom. Many areas of vagueness and uncertainty are also evident.

Marks awarded 15

## Composition F

Write a composition that begins as follows:

### A RED LETTER DAY

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

This was the story of the day when everything went wrong. This day was a Sunday. This is the story:

Sunday was my aunt's wedding. It was going to take part in our church ground. We had arranged everything in place and we were ready for the ceremony. I ironed my clothes until they were really neat.

On Sunday I woke up very late. I did not know where to start and where to end. I decided to go to the bathroom and took a shower. I bursted into my bedroom and wore my best clothes. When I looked to myself at the mirror I really looked smart. I ran as fast as I can to dining room. There I found my breakfast ready waiting to be eaten. I took it hurriedly forgetting that hurry hurry has no blessings.

I went to the bus halt. The nine o'clock bus had already passed. I decided to cut through the shortcut to church. Not knowing that shortcuts are always dangerous. I showed a clean pair of feeble heels. I puffed and panted. I was tired like the one who had carried a heavy log. I decided to rest under a leafy tree. Due to my tiredness I slumbered.

When I woke up, I could not believe my naked eyes. I was in the middle of the forest. I saw some

monkeys. I picked a stone and threw to them thinking that they might move out of my sight. But in return, they pick some stones and threw them to me. I wondered how mischievous monkeys are. Our forefathers did not throw dust on our eyes when they narrated that 'If you are astonished of Moses' deeds, you will be more astonished of Pharaohs.'

I carried on with my journey. My senses and serene brain thought the proverb that says better late than never. I ran and ran as my feeble legs could carry me until I reached at the church. The wedding had already started. It was almost going to an end. The food was being served. Thick-headedly I went and sat where others were. People laughed at me, imagining how greedy I am.

When the wedding ended everyone went his or her way. I took a bus and went home. That night I explained everything to my parents. "There is no need to punish you hence you have learned a lesson." They said.

The bell rung. We hurriedly went to our classroom.

The account reads better than the previous one, but there are still many grammatical errors. The plot is contrived and incredible and the candidate is repetitive.

Mark awarded 18

GROUP III (21 - 30 Marks)

### Composition G

Write a composition that begins as follows:

A HEAD HENCE FORTH

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

I looked here and there for them but to no avail. As I was about to turn around and leave, someone touched me from behind. It was Vincent, one of my best ally.

He took me to the rest of them who were under a tree in the field chatting. I started beating around the bush instead of telling them the story. Finally after persuasion, I started, "Yesterday in the dead of the night, I heard shuffling of feet in our compound. I leapt out of my bed with the agility of a cobra and went to peep through the window.

What I saw chilled me to a spontaneous catch of breath. Eight men whose features were not like human were pell-melling towards our house. One had a scar that ran through his face, a result of gang fight I suppose. Some had iron-rod muscles that could make a Greek god skimper away in fear. My legs wobbled like jelly. My heart was pounding like the pistons of a locomotive.

They were luxuriously sauntering towards our home wielding sharp weapons. It hit me like a thunderbolt that I had to act without delay. Credence to the old adage, time and tide awaits no man, I rushed to where we kept our 'panga' and held it firmly. I stood beside the door to meet them. My heart was pounding spasmodically threatening to break my chest open.

I was prepared root and branch for them. Suddenly the door was kicked open and they stomped in. I gave one a hefty blow that sent him sprawling to the ground. He lay

there motionless. The others started groping for the switch. They wanted to put on the light badly. Blood froze in my veins when one caught my leg. He started pulling it.

I played dead. "Two are down," one said. They made for the door but I leapt and shut it. I severed one's arm. An ear-splitting yell cut acutely through the air. They all jumped through the window breaking the glass. "There must be ghosts inside that house!" One of them said.

Instead of leaving, they surrounded our house. They wanted to burn it down. I swiftly went through the back door, armed to the tooth ready to take on those who wanted to burn our house. I cut one's head leaving him lying in a pool of his own blood. When the others saw that, they scampered away to safety. Within a split second, I was in the nearby telephone booth. I hurriedly dialled the magenta coloured phone.

It went through immediately to the police who arrived within a split second. Luckily, only one of them was dead. The others were badly injured. Those who escaped are being looked for in every corner of our country. They confessed that they wanted to steal my father's money which he had with him that fateful night. I woke up my parents who were still in

slumberland. When they learnt what had happened, they congratulated me for saving their lives.

"I am now the family's hero." "Wow, where did you learn those fighting skills?" Vincent asked. "It is a secret but I promise to teach you all."

The candidate manages to give a hyperbolic account that is highly improbable. One doubts the authenticity of the piece of writing. It reads like a hotchpotch of snatches from several memorized pieces. This candidate overuses similes and idioms - sometimes ending up with ridiculous statements, e.g. "What I saw chilled me to a spontaneous catch of breath". *Spontaneous* is, of course, misspelt! "PELL-MELL", an adverb is misused in this context, being used as if it were a verb. There are many errors, not to mention repetitiveness.

Mark awarded 22

### Composition H

Write a composition that begins as follows:

### IT WAS ALL A DREAM!

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

It took a while before I saw them but when I did I saw Poriot and Boniface sitting under a tree. I went straight to them and told them that I had something to tell them.

They listened carefully as I unveiled the story.

"Yesterday, I had a dream. It was on a Friday night and I sat on the couch keenly listening to our one and only radio. Some few days before, I had entered the toto six ninety niffle. The results of the winners were going to be announced on that day. My heart palpitated rapidly.

I was as anxious as a bridegroom waiting to hear my name.

As the names of the winners were being read I heard my name, Clinton Nyabuto. I had won one million shillings Kenyan money. I could



not believe my ears. The anchor read my name out again. This is when I believed.

I was as happy as a sandman and as fast as a deer I ran to my mother to tell her the good news I must say, the happiness I saw on her visage was one I have never encountered before. She hugged me lovingly got so near me that her breath nearly wet my forehead then uttered, "You are the best son a mother could ever sh for in the whole wide world."

We were at the most agonizing juncture of our family life after my father's absence from the abode. You see my father had been a drunkard. Every night he would come from his usual drinking sprees where the local 'Kumikumi' was selling like hot cakes, stone drunk.

Day in day out he filled his bones with illicit liquor. When he came home he would scorn by mother and curse her vehemently. Though he did not contribute even one cent for our well being all he did was ask if the children had eaten. Then he would ask for his own food. Actually what he was doing was reaping what he had not sown.

My mother had stomachached this obnoxious behaviour for quite sometime. One day she was fed up and decided to put an end to this once and for all. As usual, my father came home drunk and asked for food. Unlike the other days my mother refused to give her food. My father asked again but she still did not give in to his demands.

He was filled with wrath and worth and mercilessly started beating her. A high pitched horror stricken scream smote the air. It echoed like the sound of a wild dog crying in a dark night. My mother was in dire need of help and it was not long before the neighbours came to grant it. The police were called and my father taken.

Since father went we got from the frying pan into the fire. Things got worse and worse by the clock. My mother had to light the candle at both ends to keep us going. It got to the extent of sleeping hungry during some nights. My mother was nearly giving up when I got the money.

One million shillings was all we needed at that time. We would be able to buy new furniture, new house and even the playstation I wanted so much. I was to collect the money the following day.

I woke up earlier than usual and headed for the bank to get the cheque. I put on my Sunday best and went to the bank as happy as a king.

When I reached the door I hesitated as my heart beat boom boom boom. No sooner had I touched the door knob than the door flew open. A crowd of people was awaiting to give me the check. I stopped and waved expansively to acknowledge the warm welcome.

Just as I was about to be given the cheque I felt cold over. I opened my eyes. It was morning. I was lying on the floor of my bedroom. The one million, the tuffe, the aid it was all a dream. I finished narrating my story.

The plot development is good. The candidate has almost mastered the language. But there is evidence of carelessness and unwarranted ambition. Punctuation is still a problem. Misuse of words, such as, "sandman" (sandboy?), "juncture", "awaiting "... and wrong expressions "light the candle at both ends" (burn the candle at both ends?) lead to vague stretches that mar the account.

Otherwise, the plot is fully developed and the story complete. One can feel the disappointment the candidate feels at the end!. But the candidate could have enlivened the account by bringing in a bit of his/her audience and how they reacted to the tale.

Mark awarded 26

## Composition I

Write a composition that begins as follows:

### AN INTERESTING TALE.

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

It wasn't long before I saw Lilian's beady eyes peeping over the huge crowd of people, for she was as tall as a giraffe. As I meandered through the crowd of pupils, all occupied in their own conversations, finally I found my way towards my bosom buddies, Lilian and Orpah.

"Hi guys, how was class?" I asked enthusiastically. "Boring, I could barely stay awake, Mr. Pedro' is simply a boring being. I know history is supposed to be boring, but he takes it to a new level," Orpah said angrily. "Well then you will love to hear this story, I read it during today's library lesson. Miss Maple, said it was a page turner and indeed it was," I said enthusiastically. "Really what is it about and what is the title?" Lilian inquired a sudden smile appearing on her pale visage.

"Well, its title is the 'Weeping Willow'. Here is the story: it is one of turmoil and sorrow in its own way. About a century ago, when our country, Kenya, was at the pinnacle of the war between her and Somalia, there lived a girl

called Rebecca. Now Rebecca was a tall slim girl with a fair complexion, almond-shaped eyes and rosy cheeks. Luckily, her family was one of the few who were not leaving in or near the heart of the war. In fact, if it weren't for newspapers and radio announcements, I don't think she would have the slightest idea about the country's crisis. Nevertheless, Rebecca and her family were affected by the food rationing, because the war had brought agricultural production to a stand still.

Nonetheless, Rebecca went to school as usual and played with her friends, as any girl of her age would do. On top of that, Rebecca was terribly close to her father, who was a doctor. They did everything together, played games, read books and spent countless occasions collecting stamps, for that was their hobby.

However, one fateful day Mr. Kongo, Rebecca's father was called to 'Mandera' to assist the wounded soldier. Although Rebecca was devastated to watch her father leave her at home with her mother, she still knew that it was his duty to help those in need. Truly, a friend in need is a friend indeed.

After a month went by, one day, Rebecca's mother came home with a short dark girl with huge bright eyes and a bulbous nose. Her name was Kisha and she was from Somalia, she had

been brought over to Kenya because her parents had been killed by Somali warriors and since the main battle ground was in Somalia, it was not safe for her to reside there.

From the instant Rebecca laid eyes on her, she was as sure as death that Kisha was nothing but trouble. To make things worse, Kisha had to share a room with Rebecca. Rebecca dreaded the idea and avoided conversing with Kisha at all costs. On the other hand, Rebecca's father wrote them every week and his letters were always worth the read. For they were as true as the gospel and he narrated to them how agonising it was watching hundreds die and others escape death by a whisker, for their severe injuries were hardly curable. Rebecca loved listening to her father's letters, they made her think twice about others, which eventually led to Kisha and her becoming close companions.

One day as they sat at the dinner table, enjoying their evening meal, all of a sudden the warning siren was heard. "Come on, everyone get down to the basement as quick as lightning." Mrs. Kongo said hurriedly. Quickly, they sprited down to the basement and lit the candles. All was silent, unlike in place in Somalia and North Eastern Kenya, the warning siren was just a safety drill in case of any attack. Slowly, Rebecca approached Kisha and sat beside her. Kisha was as silent as

the grave, she had gone extremely pale and tears began trickling down her cheeks.

"When I was in Somalia, whenever the siren was heard, everybody would run into their houses and lock the doors and windows. If you were found outside, you had to run to the nearest gas station for refuge. There, we would sit on the cold pavement, in tens or even hundreds. Some of us were tired others hungry, while others were injured we would sit in the cold darkness

waiting for the clearance bell. Sometimes it wouldn't be heard until morning. When it was finally heard we would come out of hiding. As you walked down the street, a building or maybe even your own house was nothing but a pile of bricks and blood would be strewn everywhere, a long with shards of glass." Tears were now trick down her cheeks continuously as she concluded

"Well continue what happened next?" Orphan asked. "Im not going to tell you, borrow the book and see what happens." I answered, a cunning smile on my face.

Generally a clean script, readable and even engrossing. But the punctuation is problematic making the reading heavy. It is not clear if the composition is patently the candidate's own work.

Mark awarded 30

Composition J

Write a composition that begins as follows:

NEVER WILL I - - - - -!

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

The ~~ideal~~ I had encountered the previous day had been sculpted in my heart not easily eroded, and I had much anticipation to spill the beans to my closest counter-parts. "I have been looking all over for you two, you seem to be disappearing each time I get a glimpse of you and try to reach you," I began, as soon as I got hold of Misha's and Fuma's complete attention.

"Us too! So now, what happened yesterday, when you were called to the headmaster's office?" curiosity had now taken over them as their eyes landed on me, anxious to hear about the encounter.

"It all started when I got to the headmaster's office. A young man had called for me claiming to bear some information that I had to do with. I <sup>did not</sup> recognize his face nor his shadow but something urged me on to listen to what he had to say. He was dark in complexion, with a wide nose and slitted eyes. His lips were barely visible as his moustache had covered everything. He clad in a primrose-yellow suit and his deep set eyes seemed to bore holes through my head, each time he looked at me," I paused and took in a deep breath to relieve the trauma that followed.

"I sat looking at him; checking him up and down - He kept fidgeting with his fingers and could not sit still as the headmaster droned on and on, introducing him - Apparently, he had known me before and needed to make a confession. As soon as the headmaster finished talking, he began, 'I - - - - I don't know where to start. I - - - I just can't keep on.' As soon as he finished he bent down and dipped his head in his hands as if he was crying." I stopped and looked straight into my friends' eyes. The noise in the dining hall was unnoticeable since the story had taken full control.

"He said he knew me when I was young, around four years of age. He had no job in his hands and one way or the other he urgently needed some money to cater for his needs. He asked my parents if they could

hire him so as to work for them, and they agreed on a small wage and for as long as he took good care of me," Fuma was now rubbing smoothly against my back as tears welled up my eyes on the verge of spilling out.

"He did his work well but around three months later, he broke his oath with my parents; as he said. He had trouble speaking and kept stuttering and stammering as he neared the confirmation. I had then torn all barriers and eagerly listened to him. Suddenly, there was silence and the sound of a pin-drop could easily be noticeable. The cat's curiosity was softly killing me when he finally blurted out that he was the one who molested me," I stopped to look at my friends' expressions. They had suddenly changed and Misha began shaking. Tears were now trickling down my cheeks forming accurate elevens.

He said he wanted to apologize but I was pretty sure that no-one in his right mind would forgive such a beast. He said that he was then a pedophile and had changed his ways but for him to be completely whole, he needed my forgiveness. I could not believe my ears, he was the same person who ruined my childhood life yet he asked for my pardon!" I stopped and gathered courage to continue.

I stood up and got out of the office running wild like a goose. He followed suit to try and catch me as the headmaster cried out for me to stop. I could not stop, I could not believe it. He had opened a wound that was yet to heal; a past that I made a solemn vow never to remember. He caught up with me and held me tightly with his muscular arms. I was too shaken to wriggle out of his grip. His pitiful eyes rest on my visage as he begged for my forgiveness. Just then, in a split second, I bent down to wretch, and the vomit landed squarely on his



polished black shoes. He let go of me and I ran continuously till home where I told the whole encounter to my parents, "I finished off in a shaky voice as they both hugged and patted me on my back to soothe away the pain. The end-of-break bell rang and I rubbed off my tears and rushed to class.

For as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West that day remains engraved in my heart swaying me back and forth like a hammock in the summer breeze.

The candidate communicates fully. The account is well conceived and the language flows. Yet the candidate has serious problems with punctuation and fails to execute direct speech. The candidate is ambitious but is culprit to phrase bandying and ruins the account by ostentation. The conclusion is forced and as a result distracts the reader.

Mark awarded 32

### Composition K

Write a composition that begins as follows:

#### A DAY TO REMEMBER

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

The story itself was of my ordeal. It would be fitting to narrate the incident to you. It was during the weekend when I was running an errand given to me by my mother.

As I was trodding on the path leading to where I was sent, I saw a lady from a distance. She looked elegant and more of a no-nonsense human being but in the few seconds she was in front of me, I was able to gauge and dismiss her. Her hair looked old and frayed and her face was a monstrosity of poorly applied make-up which was screwed by a mockery of a permanent smile.

Her skirt which seemed to have originally been red was now pink due to overwashing. Her black leather handbag was cracked on one corner. Her shoes indeterminately looked genuinely new but I could not shake the feeling that there was something fake about them.

Having almost seen her move away from the corner of my eye, I heard, "Little girl would you mind holding this briefcase for me for a while?" I have just remembered something that I have forgotten. I knew more than to disrespect the elderly and so, I reluctantly got hold of what she was handing out to me for assistance. It was a briefcase.

It felt heavier than it really looked and I could not guess what its contents were. As soon as the lady was out of my sight, I shook the briefcase severally as a result of inquisitiveness. I knew very well that curiosity killed the cat but because I could not deduce as to what the contents of the briefcase were, I gave up.

I waited patiently for the woman to arrive like a vulture waiting for its quarry. "What could be taking her so long?" I wondered as my stomach began having a queasy feeling. In the process of waiting eagerly, a man appeared out of the blue. I was now as confused as Moses when he saw the burning bush; why? I will tell you why. The man looked suspicious and seemed like he was aiming for the briefcase. What could I do? I was only a helpless child.

Due to my suspense, I could feel my first stirrings of apprehension and before I knew it I was running as fast as my lanky legs could carry me. My greatest fear had just been confirmed; the man was indeed after the briefcase because as soon as I began running for my dear life, the man pursued me closely behind.

With no other place to run to, I found myself finding my way into a restaurant. I found my way into the washrooms and got into one of the cubicles. My heart was beating spasmodically in my chest as a chill ran down my spine each and every second. My hands felt as dummy as a frog as beads of sweat dotted my forehead.

I sat on the lavatory trying to take in deep breaths to ease my tension. I must have been in there for about twenty minutes when I heard a knock on the door, "how much longer are you planning to be inside there young girl?" Inquired a voice. I presumed it was one of the employees working at the restaurant and so I responded gingerly, "just a minute more."

After saying that, I walked out of the cubicle. My eyes popped out of their respective sockets on seeing my pursuer, smiling in a sly manner. My body felt limp as the thought of what the man would do to me hit me hard like a bolt of lightning on a clear day.

"I wonder little girl, what I should do take you or the briefcase," said the terrifying man. Luckily, he chose the latter and as he spent his time snatching the briefcase away from my hand, I found a moment of freedom.

As soon as he took it away from me, I scurried to the door, clutched the door-knob and got out. I thought it better to get away with my life than with someone else's briefcase. As soon as I got outside, I could see people giggling at the restaurant.

On turning back, I was flabbergasted to see smoke

and then a bang that almost deafened me. I began trembling like a rat in a cat's mouth but as I did so, I heard a familiar voice.

It was of the lady who had given me the briefcase. I gathered courage as I tried to think of how to explain to her of what had happened to her briefcase. On moving closer to her, I heard her telling someone on the phone on the other side, "do not worry, all has been taken care of. The little girl did the job. She blew up the restaurant!"

On hearing that, my stomach dropped toward my feet as my mouth went wide agape. I ran away towards home mindful of how close to death I had come that day.

That is an ordeal I shall surely never forget.

The candidate displays some mastery of the language. The account is generally captivating to read and the plot is well executed. Yet there are glaring flaws in the composition. The take-off is faulty. The candidate addresses the reader rather than the friends. There is no mention of the friends reaction. It is assumed the story we are reading is what was told to the friends at some other time. This is not correct.

The candidate has not quite mastered the use of direct speech and falls in the perennial trap of misusing English idioms. Some spelling and punctuation errors are also evident.

Mark awarded 34

### Composition L

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story.

#### A NARROW ESCAPE

As soon as the bell for break rang, I rushed out of the classroom to look for my friends. I was eager to tell them the story. I easily found them treating themselves to bottles of soda at the canteen. Breathlessly, I started to tell them the story. Once I was done most of them were laughing their heads off until their sides ached. Karanja, one of my friends, after laughing started to mock me. "You say you saw a monster? You must have bats in your belfry!"

My efforts to make my friends believe it proved futile. But I was utterly sure of what I saw. A large red monster was looking at me. I was able to catch a glimpse

of the queer thing as I was hanging the clothes on the line. All of a sudden, there was a growling sound coming from beyond the fence. I timidly as a hare peered over the fence but was only lucky enough to see it disappear behind a wall.

The hours of the day passed by quickly and before anyone could say Jack Robinson, the sun was sending its last rays of golden light across the face of the earth. I walked home with my friends continuing to ridicule my story. I sadly hung my head. I wished that there would be some way to prove to them.

My friends started growling in a bid to mock the monster's sound. They then started calling out for the monster. Suddenly, the surrounding bushes started to rustle. At first it was unnoticeable, but soon it was evident that there was something in the bushes, and it was coming closer. We all huddled together in the middle of the path, whilst wobbling like jelly. Suddenly Karanja yelled out. "Help! I'm being pulled by something. Our efforts to save Karanja was fruitless. In a last gasp of fear, he sunk into the leaves.

We were all trying to be lion hearted, but who were we feeling when we trembled like chameleons on frail twigs? We were hindered from showing a clean pair of heels as Karanja's life was probably at stake. I prayed to the Omnipotent to save us, remembering the adage that goes 'God helps those who help themselves.' Just then, pitiful cries for help were heard. It was Karanja's voice! Absent-mindedly, I made for the source of the sound. I could hear heavy footsteps following me. Thinking it was my friends, I turned round, only to see a humongous red figure chasing after me. It was the monster from before! I quickened my pace, still following Karanja's faint voice. Up ahead, the land was cleared of bushes. I was sure that I would be faster running there. But I was unable to enjoy it, for I tripped over a root jutting out of the ground. I fell onto the bushes in such a way that I was looking upwards. Low growling sounds of victory were coming closer to me. The monster's face, which I was seeing for the first time, was one only a mother could love. Several spikes jutted out of its wrinkled face. Its coffee brown teeth were exposed as it bared its fangs at me. Tears of despondency cascaded down my visage. This was truly the end. Just then, I passed out.

When I came to, I found myself fettered to a cold metallic chair in a pitch black room. I could tell someone else was there, for there were groaning sounds coming from beside me. Just then, a door was opened and light leaked in. I was now able to realize Karamja beside me fettered to a chair as well. A man walked into the room. He was wearing a red costume. In his hands was a mask that seemed very familiar. The man had a smile of malice spread across his face that exposed his yellow teeth. "I am your monster," he started, "it is too bad you won't live to see me wear it again." And with that, he brandished a large knife from a sheath strapped onto his belt. "I am a criminal mastermind and my life has prospered from since I became a pick pocket and grew to my present status. But of late, you have been talking about my costume, which I use to scare people away and steal their goods without shedding blood. Police have most recently gotten wind of this and have started searching high and low for me. A police car was following you since you got out of school and are bound to find me here. But before I am put behind bars, I must rid this world of you two." He proceeded to lash out his knife. He missed me by only a hair's breadth to get my heart palpitating erratically. He dashed Karamja in the chest and was about to turn on me, when two bullets tore through his skull.

Transition from the given input to the personal account is superb. The suspense created by the delay or rather bypass of the story to the reaction of the friends heightens the curiosity of the reader. In fact, it creates a flashback style of ..... which is not only noteworthy but quite unexpected. Indeed the very twist in the story involving the 'doubters' and 'mockers' makes for much of the enjoyment.

The narrative proceeds at a fast pace and the suspense is sustained till the very end! The reader heaves a sigh of relief with the unexpected end to the whole episode.

The candidate has numerous tickable items of vocabulary, idiom and whole construction types.

Yet the enthralling composition has its share of flaws. There are construction errors. "*I timidly as a hare ...*", "*...the first time, was one only ...*". This last instance causes vagueness and near absurdity. Instance the expression "*.. in a last gasp of fear.*" What does that mean? The candidate misspells '*unnoticeable*' and misuses a number of words and expressions, such as, "*mock the monsters' sound*" (perhaps '*mimick*'); "*pitch black room*" (perhaps '*pitch dark*'); "*..missed me by only a hairs breath.*" There are areas too fantastic to be believed.

Nevertheless, the candidate has presented a generally clean, readable and interesting piece of composition that is meritorious at the level and in the circumstances.

Mark awarded 37