



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

2005-2006

Division of Educational Research and Evaluation
Division of Curriculum Development

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FOREWORD

As we strive to address quality in our education system and prepare students for participation in the global context, the transition from primary to secondary school is an important stage in the education of our students. It is critical that students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills at the primary level to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the secondary level.

Transition from primary to secondary school is facilitated through the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) in Mathematics, Language Arts and Creative Writing. The SEA 2005-2006 Guidelines in this document are intended to assist teachers and all those involved in the preparation of students for secondary school. A number of changes to the specifications has been made to improve the validity and reliability of the SEA. It is anticipated that the specifications for each paper together with details of the changes made will allow teachers to better assist students in understanding the format and requirements of the SEA.

As we continue working together, utilising student-centred approaches to teaching and learning, emphasising the development of higher order skills, it is hoped that our students will be better prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Yvonne Lewis
Director
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SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT (SEA), 2005-2006

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education is pleased to present to teachers the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) Guidelines 2005-2006 booklet.

The SEA is a mechanism that facilitates placement of students in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. In an attempt to improve the reliability and validity of the assessment, and fairness in the placement process, a number of changes have been made. Details of the SEA along with the changes are provided below.

The Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) comprises three papers that must be attempted by all candidates.

1. Creative Writing
2. Mathematics
3. Language Arts

The schedule of the working time, the total time for the administration of the assessment and the number of items in each test are shown in the Table 1. The working time for each paper remains the same - 40 minutes for Creative Writing, 75 minutes for Language Arts and 75 minutes for Mathematics.

The total time for the administration of the assessment is approximately 4 hours 30 minutes, while the actual working time for the candidates is 3 hours 10 minutes.

Table 1: Working Time, Total Administration Time and Number of Items for the Three Papers in SEA

ACTIVITY	Time Limit (minutes)			Number of items
	Reading of Directions	Working Time	Total Time	
Distribution of Creative Writing Paper			*5	
Creative Writing	3	40	43	1
Collection of Creative Writing Scripts and distribution of Mathematics Test Booklets			*15	
Writing the Mathematics Test	3	75	78	46
Collection of Mathematics Test Booklets			*5	
BREAK			30	
Distribution of Language Arts Test Booklets			*5	
Writing the Language Arts Test	3	75	78	50
Collection of Language Arts Test Booklets			*5	
TOTAL	9	190	264	97

*The times indicated may vary depending on the number of students writing the SEA

The papers in SEA will contain open-ended items for which students are required to construct their responses, rather than select them from a number of alternatives. Open-ended items can elicit different correct responses from students, but the emphasis is on revealing students' thinking.

CREATIVE WRITING

To address the concerns about the equivalence of students attempting either essays or letters, and scoring both using the same scoring guide, three (3) topics on either essays or letters will be randomly assessed in any year. The teaching of both essays and letters is therefore necessary to adequately prepare students for the Creative Writing Paper.

The Creative Writing Paper will also be marked out of a score of ten (10) by each of two markers to give a combined raw score of 20 instead of twelve (12) as previously obtained. This will increase the discrimination between students' responses.

In Creative Writing, it must be emphasized that students use the writing process to develop their writing skills. While holistic marking will be used to assess students for SEA, the analytic method of marking should be used in the classroom as it focuses on the marking of specific skills.

MATHEMATICS

The number of items in the Mathematics Paper has been reduced from 50 to 46. The paper will still contain three sections, with 20 questions in Section I, 20 questions in Section II, and 6 questions in Section III. Questions in Section I will be worth 1 mark each as before; questions in Section II will be worth, two (2) or three (3) marks each and questions in Section III, five (5) marks each. This change will eliminate the summary classification of items as algorithmic thinking or problem solving in any question or section. All skills - knowledge, computation,

algorithmic thinking and problem solving will now be tested in each of the three sections of the paper. The Mathematics Paper will continue to be scored out of 100.

In Mathematics, students should be encouraged to show working as far as possible. Marks will be awarded for the steps taken to arrive at the solution.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The specifications for the Language Arts paper have been retained, as this is consistent with the emphasis and skills required in the curriculum. The Language Arts (grammar, punctuation & spelling - 60% and comprehension & graphic representation - 40%) will continue to be marked out of 100.

Students are required to show their knowledge of the mechanics of language in the grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation items. For comprehension, students are required to demonstrate their ability to read carefully, extract the main ideas, make inferences and look for supporting details from the passages. They are also required to express their responses in complete sentences.

WEIGHT OF PAPERS AND PLACEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Table 2: Weight of Papers in SEA

PAPER	MAXIMUM SCORE	WEIGHT
Mathematics	100	100 (5)
Language Arts	100	60 (3)
Creative Writing	20	40 (2)

The weight of the Mathematics: Language Arts: Creative Writing has been changed from 1: 1: 1 to 5: 3: 2. This change has been made to reflect the instructional emphasis in the curriculum, thereby increasing the validity of the SEA.

Students' scores in each paper will be converted to standard scores and weighted as shown in Table 2. The weighted scores will then be combined and the combined score (Composite score) used for the placement of students in secondary schools.

Standard scores utilise the variance in each paper and therefore allows the student's relative standing (position) in each paper to be maintained when they are combined, thus ensuring fairness in the placement process.

Placement in secondary schools will continue to be on the basis of merit, choice of schools and gender. Only when student's choices of schools have been exhausted, will attempts be made to place students in schools closest to their homes.

SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS (2005-2006)

The **tables of specifications** indicate the structure of the papers, that is, the number of items that test the specified content areas and the level of skill assessed in the items.

The **assessment objectives** cover the content for Standards 3 to 5 as specified in the Primary School syllabi (1999).

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Paper consists of (46) items and encompasses the four strands of the syllabus.

- Number
- Measurement and Money
- Geometry
- Statistics

The paper is divided into three sections with 20 questions in Section I, 20 questions in Section II, and 6 questions in Section III.

Questions in Section I are worth one (1) mark each; questions in section II are worth two (2) or three (3) marks each and questions in Section III are worth five (5) marks each (Table 1 & 2).

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS – MATHEMATICS

Table 1: Distribution of Items and Marks by Section and Skill level

SECTION	NO. OF ITEMS	*SKILL LEVEL (MARKS)			TOTAL
		K/C	A/T	PS	
I	20	5	10	5	20
II	20	12	26	12	50
III	6	8	14	8	30
	46	25	50	25	100

*K/C – Knowledge/Computation

A/T – Algorithmic Thinking

PS – Problem Solving

Table 2: Distribution of Marks by Strands and Sections

STRAND	Number of Items	Section I	Section II	Section III	Total
Number	18	8 (8 items)	20 (8 items)	10 (2 items)	38 (18 items)
Measurement and Money	16	7 (7 items)	18 (7 items)	10 (2 items)	35 (16 items)
Geometry	8	3 (3 items)	10 (4 items)	5 (1 item)	18 (8 items)
Statistics	4	2 (2 items)	2 (1 item)	5 (1 item)	9 (4 items)
Total	46	20	50	30	100

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES - MATHEMATICS

A. NUMBER

Whole Numbers

1. Represent any number up to one million using numerals or word names.
2. State the value or place value of a digit in any whole number up to one million.
3. Express a whole number up to one million using expanded notation.
4. Order and compare whole numbers.
5. Add whole numbers.
6. Subtract whole numbers.
7. Multiply up to four digit numbers by one or two-digit multipliers.
8. Divide up to four digit numbers by one or two digit divisors.
9. Solve one-step word problems involving any one of the four basic operations on whole numbers.
10. Solve multi-step word problems involving any combination of the four basic operations on whole numbers.
11. Calculate the square of a number and the square root of a perfect square.

Fractions

12. Represent a fraction using diagrams, word names or numerals.
13. Express a fraction in an equivalent form.
14. Order and compare fractions.
15. Convert improper fractions to mixed numbers and mixed numbers to improper fraction.
16. Add two or more fractions (including whole/mixed numbers).
17. Subtract two fractions (including whole/mixed numbers).
18. Calculate the fraction of a quantity.
19. Express one quantity as a fraction of another.
20. Represent or calculate the whole given a fractional part.

21. Multiply two fractions (including whole/mixed numbers).
22. Divide two fractions (including whole/mixed numbers).
23. Solve word problems involving concepts and operations on fractions.

Decimals

24. State the value or place value of any digit in a decimal fraction up to hundredths
(*decimal fractions refer to fractions written in decimal notation*).
25. Express decimal fractions using expanded notation.
26. Order and compare decimal fractions.
27. Add decimal fractions (including whole numbers).
28. Subtract two decimal fractions.
29. Multiply two decimal fractions.
30. Divide two decimal fractions.
31. Solve word problems involving measures expressed in decimals.
32. Express decimal fraction, as common fractions and vice versa.

Approximation and Computational Estimation

33. Approximate whole numbers to the nearest ten, hundred or thousand.
34. Approximate decimal fractions to the nearest tenths or hundredths.
35. Estimate the result of a computation involving any of the four operations on whole numbers, decimals or fractions.

Percent

36. Calculate the percent of a quantity.
37. Express a percent as a fraction and a fraction as a percent.
38. Express a percent as a decimal and a decimal as a percent.
39. Express one quantity as a percent of another.
40. Calculate the whole (or part) given a part expressed as a percent.
41. Solve one - step and multi - step problems involving percentages.

B. MEASUREMENT

Money

42. Identify coins, bills, their value and the value of a set of coins/bills.
43. Determine the possible combinations of coins/bills, which are equal to given amounts.
44. Add and subtract quantities expressed in dollars and cents.
45. Calculate total cost and the change in money transactions.
46. Solve problems involving payments (for example salaries) and charges (for example rentals), given a unit rate.
47. Calculate profit or loss given cost price and selling price.
48. Express profit or loss percent as a percentage of the cost price.
49. Calculate the VAT on an item when given as a percent.
50. Calculate the discount on an item when given as a percent.
51. Calculate the simple interest and amount of an investment or loan given principal, rate and time.
52. Solve problems involving direct proportions.
53. Determine the best buy comparing rates.

Linear Measure

54. Name an appropriate standard metric unit for measuring the length of an object.
55. Convert units of length within the metric system.
56. Compare two lengths.
57. Measure lengths of lines using standard or non-standard units.
58. Read and record linear measures using decimal notation.
59. Estimate the length of an object to the nearest centimeter.
60. Solve problems involving addition and subtraction of measures in (a) metres and centimetres (b) kilometres and metres.
61. (a) Calculate the perimeter of polygons.
(b) Calculate unknown sides of polygons given the perimeter.
62. State the relationship between the circumference and diameter (or radius) of a circle.
63. Solve problems involving perimeter of polygons and circumference of circles.

Area

64. Name an appropriate standard metric unit for measuring the area of a region.
65. Compare the area of surfaces.
66. Measure the area of a region using square units and record measures to the nearest unit.
67. Estimate the area of a region to the nearest square unit.
 - (a) Calculate the area of squares, rectangles, and triangles using formulae.
 - (b) Calculate the total area of a compound shape.
 - (c) Calculate an unknown side of a square or rectangle given its area.
68. Solve problems involving area of plane shapes.
69. Solve problems involving area and perimeter of plane shapes.
70. Solve problems involving area and money, for example, the cost of tiling.

Volume

71. Name an appropriate standard metric unit for measuring capacity or volume of a given container/solid.
72. Compare the sizes of containers.
73. Measure the capacity of containers in standard and non-standard units.
74. Measure the volume of a solid by counting cubic units.
75. (a) Calculate the volume of cubes and cuboids using the formulae.
 - (b) Calculate unknown sides of cubes or cuboids given the volume.
76. State the relationship between the metric units of volume and capacity.
77. Solve problems involving volume/capacity.

Mass

78. Name an appropriate standard metric unit for measuring the mass of a given object.
79. State the relationship between the gram and the kilogram.
80. Compare the masses of objects.
81. Measure the mass of an object using appropriate metric units.
82. Read measuring scales and record masses using decimal notation.
83. Make reasonable estimates of the mass of objects in the environment in kilograms.

84. Add and subtract measures in kilograms and grams.
85. Solve problems involving mass and money, mass and volume.

Time

86. State the various units for measuring time and the relationship between these units.
87. Tell time using analog and digital notation.
88. Convert analog notation to digital notation and vice versa.
89. Solve problems involving calculation of total time and elapsed time in hours and minutes.
90. Solve problems involving time using both digital and analog notations.
91. Solve problems involving time and rate.

C. GEOMETRY

Solids and Plane Shapes

92. Identify solids from drawings.
93. Describe the properties of solids with respect to the number of vertices and the number and type of edges and faces.
94. Draw solids given models or descriptions.
95. Name a solid given its net.
96. Draw nets of cubes, cuboids, cylinders, triangular prisms, pyramids and cones.
97. Identify plane shapes from drawings.
98. Describe the properties of plane shapes with respect to
 - (a) the number of sides and angles
 - (b) the number of equal sides, and
 - (c) the number of pairs of parallel sides.
100. Describe the properties of isosceles, equilateral and right-angled triangles.
101. Construct a plane shape given specific properties.
102. Describe a plane shape as a composition of other plane shapes.

Symmetry

103. Identify and draw lines of symmetry in plane shapes, including shapes with curved edges.

104. Complete a plane shape using the property of line symmetry.
105. Determine the number of lines of symmetry in plane shapes.

Slides, Flips and Turns

106. Identify and describe slides, flips and turns.
107. Describe the type of movement (slide, flip, turn), which transforms a plane shape from one position to another.
108. Perform a slide, flip or turn on a plane shape to create another plane shape.
109. Perform slides, flips and turns on plane shapes to create patterns.
110. Complete and describe patterns made by simple transformations.
111. Solve problems involving, recognising and describing slides, flips and turns.

Angles

112. . Use 'larger', 'smaller' and 'same' to compare the size of two angles.
113. Arrange a set of angles in order of size.
114. Explain what is an angle.
115. Represent angles using drawings.
116. Measure angles using standard and non-standard units.
117. Identify the degree as the unit for measuring angles.
118. Solve problems using a whole turn (360°).
119. Solve problems involving simple fractions of a whole turn.
120. Estimate the size of an angle given a unit.
121. Compare angles using 90° as a benchmark.
122. Identify angles in shapes and solids in the environment.

D. STATISTICS

123. Interpret data presented in simple frequency tables or tally charts.
124. Construct tally charts and simple frequency tables from raw data.
125. Interpret pictographs, block graphs, bar graphs and pie charts.
126. Construct pictographs, block graphs and bar graphs from given data.

127. Calculate the mode and the mean from a set of raw scores.
128. Determine the mode and the mean from data presented in frequency tables, bar graphs or block graphs.
129. Solve problems involving the mean.
130. Summarize data presented in tables or graphs.
131. Solve problems involving interpretation of the data in tables and graphs.

CREATIVE WRITING PAPER

Specifications

The Creative Writing Paper will contain three topics/prompts:

Either (i) Three (3) Stories

Or (ii) Three (3) letters

Students will be asked to answer one topic.

Students' answers will be scored out of ten (10) marks by two markers and the scores combined to give a raw score of twenty (20) marks.

Assessment Objectives

Students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of report writing, descriptive writing, explanatory or informative and persuasive writing.
- Write personal/friendly and business letters
- Express ideas creatively and in different formats
- Express ideas using different vocabulary
- Generate a variety of sentence types, e.g. statements, questions, commands, exclamations and requests
- Show an awareness of the audience
- Demonstrate a sense of style using simile and metaphor
- Show accurate use of grammar, mechanics and sentence structure

ESSAY - MARK SCHEME

Criteria for scoring:

SCORE

CRITERIA

9 - 10

An outstanding response

- excellent development of ideas
- effective organization
- fluent, "lively" writing
- effective variety in sentence structure
- striking word choice
- accurate sentence structure, grammar, mechanics
- excellent in reader audience appeal

7 - 8

A good response

- ideas are well developed
- good organization
- fluent writing
- competent word choice
- generally accurate sentence structure, grammar
- mechanics
- some reader appeal

5 - 6

A competent response

- fairly good development of ideas; supporting detail may not be especially well selected or relevant

- some attempt at organization
- generally accurate structure, grammar, mechanics (errors are not intrusive)
- writing not especially lively or interesting

3 - 4

A weak response

- the ideas are conveyed but they are either not well developed or loosely organized
- errors (grammar, structure, mechanics, expression) occur frequently

2

A poor response

- ideas are confusing and undeveloped
- organization is loose or non-existent
- errors occur so frequently as to intrude in the reader's enjoyment of the story

1

A very poor response

- writing is essentially incoherent because of the writer's inability to communicate in English

0

An extremely poor response or no response

- writing is incomprehensible
- words cannot be recognized

LETTER - MARK SCHEME

Criteria for scoring:

SCORE

CRITERIA

9 - 10

An outstanding response

- the purpose is clear, precise and detailed
- format is accurate, precise and effective
- excellent development of ideas
- effective organization
- effective variety in sentence structure
- accurate sentence structure, grammar, mechanics
- excellent in reader/ audience appeal
- excellent language /word choice for type of letter used

7 - 8

A good response

- the purpose is clear and precise
- format is accurate precise
- ideas well developed
- good organization
- fluent writing
- generally accurate sentence structure, grammar, mechanics
- some reader appeal
- good language/ word choice for type of letter used

SCORE**CRITERIA****5 - 6****A competent response**

- the purpose is generally clear
- format is has minor errors
- fairly good development of ideas; supporting detail may not be especially well selected or relevant
- some attempt at organization
- generally accurate structure, grammar, mechanics (errors are not intrusive)
- Appropriate language/word choice for type of letter used

3 - 4**A weak response**

- the purpose demonstrates some clarity
- format has major errors
- the ideas are conveyed but they are either not well developed or loosely organized
- errors (grammar, structure, mechanics, expression) occur frequently
- inappropriate/ word choice language for type of letter used

2**A poor response**

- the purpose of the letter is unclear
- format is has major errors

- ideas are confusing and undeveloped
- organization is loose or non-existent

1

A very poor response

- writing is essentially incoherent because of the writer's inability to communicate in English

0

An extremely poor response or no response

- writing is incomprehensible
- words cannot be recognised

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts paper consists of 50 items and assesses the five (5) areas in the Language Arts syllabus (1999).

- Grammar
- Vocabulary/Spelling
- Punctuation
- Reading Comprehension
 - factual/expository passage
 - descriptive passage/narrative passage or poem
- Graphic Representation

The Language Arts Paper will be scored out of a total of 100. Items in section I and II (grammar, vocabulary/ spelling and punctuation) will be worth 60 marks, while comprehension and graphic representation, will be worth 40 marks.

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS – LANGUAGE ARTS

Table 3: Distribution of Items by Strand and Skill Level

Strands	¹ Skill Level by Items						Total
	Know.	Comp.	Appl.	Anal.	Syn.	Eval.	
Grammar	6	4	9	-	3	-	22
Vocabulary/Spelling	6	2	-	-	-	-	8
Punctuation	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
Comprehension	2	1	-	1		1	5
I. Factual/Expository passage							
II. Poem/Narrative/Descriptive passage	1	1	-	2	-	1	5
Graphic Representation	1	1	-	2	-	1	5
Total	16	9	14	5	3	3	50

¹Know.- Knowledge
Anal. - Analysis

Comp.- Comprehension
Syn. - Synthesis

Appl. - Application
Eval -Evaluation

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES – LANGUAGE ARTS

Grammar

1. Identify proper, common, collective and abstract nouns in context.
2. Use proper, common, collective and abstract nouns in context.
3. Identify gender of nouns.
4. Use singular and plural nouns in sentences.
5. Use plural and possessive forms of nouns.
6. Identify nouns as adjectives.
7. Use nouns as adjectives.
8. Use personal and relative pronouns.
9. Use “self” as emphatic and reflexive pronoun.
10. Use pronouns to replace nouns according to function.
 - reflexive, possessive, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite.
11. Identify various types/classes of adjectives.
12. Identify adjectives placed before a noun or pronoun.
13. Use adjectives before a noun or pronoun.
14. Identify adjectives which follow a verb.
15. Use adjectives which follow a verb.
16. Use verbs to denote action, condition or state of being.
17. Use verbal forms (regular and irregular) in sentences.
 - Tenses
 - simple present, past and future.
 - perfect.
 - continuous or progressive.
 - Participles
 - present and past.
 - Infinitives
 - Linking verbs
 - Modal verbs
 - Transitive and intransitive verbs

- Active and passive voice
18. Show subject – verb agreement.
 19. Form regular and irregular adverbs and adjectives in the comparative and superlative degrees.
 20. Use regular and irregular adverbs and adjectives in the comparative and superlative degrees.
 21. Identify adverbs in different positions in a sentence.
 22. Use adverbs in different positions in a sentence.
 23. Use negative forms
 - “no” before the noun
 - “not” after the auxiliary verb
 - forms of “to do” + “not” with simple present;
 - simple past and future.
 24. Use the sequence of tenses.
 25. Identify prepositions.
 26. Use prepositions/prepositional phrase in context.
 27. Use prepositions/prepositional phrase with appropriate verbs.
 28. Use prepositions/prepositional phrase in expansion of simple sentences.
 29. Identify interjections in sentences and passages.
 30. Identify contractions and expanded forms.
 31. Use contractions and expanded forms.
 32. Identify sentences, clauses and phrases.
 33. Identify coordinating conjunctions.
 34. Use conjunctions to join words, phrases and sentences.
 35. Use conjunctions which join subordinating clauses to main clause.
 36. Combine multiple sentences into a single sentence.
 37. Construct simple, compound and complex sentences.
 38. Arrange sentences in correct order.
 39. Change direct to reported speech and vice versa.

Vocabulary/Spelling

40. Arrange words in categories.
41. Select words for different categories.
42. Use words in context to show different meanings.
43. Determine the contextual meaning of words and phrases.
44. Build words from root word by adding a suffix or prefix.
45. Use words formed by adding suffixes and prefixes.
46. Change suffixes to form new words.
47. Change adjectives nouns and verbs by adding suffixes.
48. Form adjectives, nouns and verbs from given words.
49. Form compound words.
50. Use homonyms, homographs and homophones.
51. Give the meaning of homonyms, homographs and homophones in context.
52. Substitute identified words with meaningful synonyms and antonyms.
53. Discover and correct commonly mis-spelt words. e.g. separate, business.

Punctuation

54. Use capital letters correctly.
55. Use appropriate end punctuation marks.
56. Use appropriate punctuation marks to indicate direct speech.
57. Use commas in different contexts.
58. Use the apostrophe correctly.

Comprehension

I. Factual/Expository Passage.

II. Poem/Narrative Descriptive Passage.

59. State events in a sequential order.
60. Identify signal words as aids to build transitions.
61. State the main idea in a passage.
62. Identify supporting details.

63. Provide relevant details supporting a main idea.
64. State in your own words ideas from a passage.
65. Respond to literal questions.
66. Respond to factual questions.
67. Respond to inferential questions.
68. Respond to application questions.
69. Give contextual meaning to words and phrases.
70. Predict outcomes of an event/ story.
71. Provide details to support predictions from an event/story.
72. Identify cause and effect in a given situation.
73. Identify cue words which facilitate identification of cause and effect.
74. Identify implied cause and effect.
75. State word meanings in poems, descriptions and narratives.
76. Identify feelings in poems, descriptions and narratives.
77. Identify connotations in poems, descriptions and narratives.
78. Identify keywords to show point of view of author(s).
79. State personal reaction to story or passage.
80. Judge the nature (good, bad etc.) of characters.
81. Identify propaganda and its techniques.
82. Explain the moral of the story or poem.
83. Make a statement on the writer's choice of words.
84. Make judgments on the behaviour of a character.

Graphic Representation/Visual Literacy

85. Demonstrate literal understanding of the graphic.
86. Respond to inferential questions.
87. Respond to application questions.

The Ministry of Education will provide copies of Specimen Papers for SEA 2005 to schools.