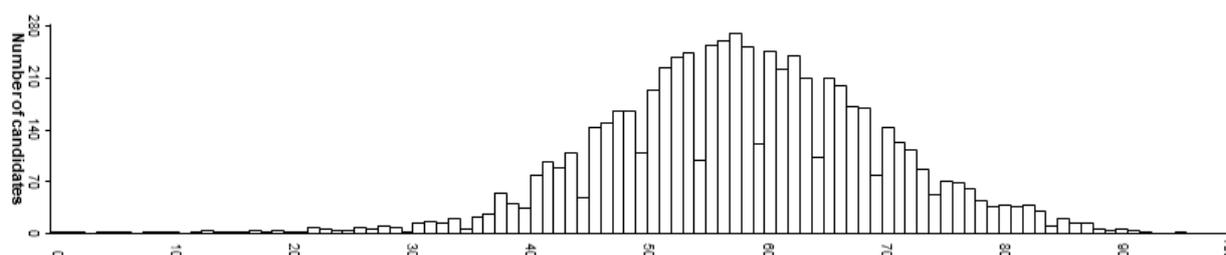




## Report for students on the 2014 WACE examination in English Stage 3

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2014	6531	128
2013	9614	183
2012	9379	125

### Examination score distribution



### Summary

The examination had a mean of 58.57%. Candidate scores for the examination ranged from a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 96.11%. The standard deviation was 16.73%. The section means were: Section One: Reading 57.37%; Section Two: Writing 60.19% and Section Three: Viewing 58.60%.

Candidates performed consistently across the paper, though the lowest mean was seen in the Reading section. In sections where candidates have a choice of question, questions across the paper were selected with no great preference for one. This was most evident in the viewing section, eliminating some of the early concerns from some about candidates not being able to recognise the syllabus concepts because of different phrasing to previous years. Candidates also selected a wide range of texts for discussion and there were some challenging and interesting choices for studied texts.

The area of greatest concern, expressed by examiners and markers alike, was the apparent unfamiliarity with key syllabus concepts from many candidates. The most problematic terms were *genre*, *ideology* and *representation*. Each of these terms appears numerous times in the syllabus document, and they are also concepts that are fundamental to the study of English. Yet many candidates failed to understand them or were unable to discuss them with confidence or accuracy.

While there were no changes to the structure of the examination or format, there was resounding praise for the improved print quality of this examination. The altered paper and image reproduction quality resulted in fewer misinterpretations of elements of images and no doubt increased candidate confidence when dealing with Section Three.

### General comments

#### Advice for candidates

- You are reminded that preparation for the English examination is crucial. This does not mean re-writing prepared answers in the examination, but studying the course concepts so that you are familiar with the terms that are common to the syllabus and examination questions, as well as revising important information about the texts you have studied, such as how they use generic conventions, the ideas they position us to understand and the ideologies they promote or challenge.

- Read through the whole paper before you make choices. Selecting the right question or text is extremely important. Carefully consider the whole paper in the reading time and re-read the questions for each section when you come to answer them.
- Stop and think before you write. Unpack the question so that you know what you need to include and highlight in your answer. Then plan! This doesn't need to be a formal plan, but a moment of organising your thoughts before launching into an answer. Remember, a well-argued, concise and targeted answer is much better than a long, rambling series of disorganised points.
- You need to read the entire passage in the Reading section, with the understanding that developments can occur that affect the understanding of the passage and its ideas.
- Include study of the syllabus document in your revision work. Being familiar with the main concepts of the course is crucial to success in the examination. If there are terms or concepts that you are unfamiliar with, ask your teacher to go over them with you.

### ***Comments on specific sections and questions***

#### Section One: Reading

Attempted by 6517 candidates                      Mean 19.13(/33.33)                      Max 33.33 Min 0

The Reading section continued to have the same format and requirements as previous years and the two questions were equally weighted. This section saw the lowest mean across the paper, indicating that close reading skills continue to be an area of weakness for many candidates. Across the two questions, markers observed that candidates lacked clarity when discussing generic conventions, and many candidates were incorrect in their identification of devices and their comments relating to context. Stronger responses were characterised by thorough analysis of passages and studied texts, and a targeted answer with focus on the questions. One marker remarked that 'consistency across both questions in this section is crucial, so time management within this section is an important element of planning.'

#### Section Two: Writing

Attempted by 6525 candidates                      Mean 20.06(/33.33)                      Max 33.33 Min 0

The Writing section of the examination offered candidates a wide range of questions with a number of markers expressing that this section truly sampled the syllabus and provided candidates with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, regardless of their studied texts or their strengths in writing. One marker commented that this section had 'a good level of specificity to the questions, requiring thoughtful answers to address the particular nuance' which provided a consistent and explicit set of criteria through which to award marks.

Markers also commented that the functional literacy level had improved this year; however, they also commented about the necessity of addressing the questions in this section. As with every section of the examination, candidates' ability to address the question and the key ideas or directives contained within it is the main discriminator between responses. This includes the form that candidates choose to write in. If the question invites a choice of form, part of the response is the choice of form and how well that form is controlled. Candidates writing imaginative responses might consider indicating their chosen form and some of the guiding ideas of the text in a statement of intent or description alongside the actual text that they compose. Candidates are also reminded that handwriting must be legible to ensure all ideas are effectively communicated.

#### Section Three: Viewing

Attempted by 6501 candidates                      Mean 19.53(/33.33)                      Max 33.33 Min 0

The format and structure of this section was the same as in previous years and there were five images for candidates to choose from. Candidate responses were relatively even across all five images, though Image 2 was certainly the most popular choice for both questions. The selection of studied texts were also varied and candidates demonstrated a thorough knowledge of these texts. The more contextual information that candidates provide markers about their chosen studied text, the more successful they will be in communicating their understandings. Unpacking specific key scenes of studied documentaries or feature films is required. This information,

however, must be closely linked to the discussion of the question. As with all sections of the examination it is imperative to focus on the question posed and selected, not recount or describe the texts selected. Candidates' ability to address the question and provide relevant evidence was again the most important discriminator in this section. Answers were quite evenly distributed between the two questions indicating no particular preference, or perceived 'easiness', across the section.

It was pleasing that the level of visual analysis appeared to be higher this year. Many candidates were able to make perceptive comments about the construction of unseen images and their studied texts. One marker's observations are worth the attention of teachers and candidates – 'the more carefully a candidate read the actual question and thought about it, the more successful was their response. Not rocket science, so I am befuddled why they find this idea so hard. I suppose we all teach it, but given that the questions are always essentially the same, it is the differences, the angles, the key words of the particular same question that are so important.'