

TEACHERS COLLEGES OF JAMAICA

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 2021 EXAMINATIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

**ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS
[LA302GEB]**

YEAR 3

TIME: 2 ¼ HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: Candidates are required to answer **ONE** question from **SECTION A**
and **ONE** from **SECTION B**.

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

SECTION A

[30 marks]

Choose ONE question and write an argumentative essay in approximately 450-500 words.

1. Men employed in the public and private sectors should be afforded paternity leave similar to the maternity leave afforded women.
2. Persons who are caught stealing agricultural crops should be made to work on the farms as their punishment.
3. Corporal punishment should be supported as a viable option for teachers when disciplining their students.
4. To stem the spread of the Corona virus in the country, vaccination of all citizens should be mandated by the Jamaican government.
5. Social networking sites are good for our society.

SECTION B
[20 marks]

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Write a critical review of ONE of the following in 350 – 400 words.

EITHER

Question #1

Michael Abrahams | Is The Government Serious About COVID-19?

Published: Monday | September 21, 2020 | 12:11 AM

I am uncomfortable. When COVID-19 reared its ugly head and was threatening to evolve into a global pandemic, I thought our Government and our Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) did a great job preparing us for its impact.

There were public service announcements and virtual and physical flyers warning us about the inevitable and informing us how to protect ourselves. We were instructed to wash our hands regularly, and even shown how to do so properly, and to also use hand sanitizers if water was not readily available. The importance of social distancing was also stressed, although the Government was hesitant to recommend the universal wearing of masks. They eventually relented, and mask wearing in public became mandatory. Then there were the lockdowns in communities where outbreaks were detected, curfews, and the closing of our borders.

Eventually our borders were reopened. Then the authorities' vigilance waned. Movement around Emancipation and Independence Days was not restricted enough, and the lax restrictions, combined with our own indiscipline, ushered in a new wave of cases.

Then an election date was announced at a time when cases were increasing. Calling the election at that time was cause for concern. There may have been rational arguments for it to be held then, but the populace was not instructed to avoid congregating, as is customary on nomination day, and supporters of both parties came out in droves, ignoring social distancing and mask-wearing protocols. Restrictions were then announced for motorcades, but by then the horse had already bolted. Experts warned that there would be spikes in cases after Nomination Day and Election Day.

QUESTIONING INTELLIGENCE

Then on the day after the election, less than 24 hours after the Jamaica Labour Party was declared the winner, the MOHW formally announced that the country is now in the community spread phase of the pandemic, providing charts, graphs and data. In my opinion, the timing of the announcement smacked of disingenuity. They must have known this before.

I knew it, and my colleagues knew it, too. The way I see it, this declaration at this time was questioning our intelligence and also exposed the recklessness with which the pandemic was dealt with in the period leading up to the election. It seems that not enough was done to protect us. Then, to make matters worse, the regular press briefings have now ceased, this at a time when, more than ever, we need an increase in communication with the authorities.

At the time of writing this article, our first COVID-19 death was reported 186 days ago. There have been 60 deaths since, 20 of which have been reported over the last week. So, one-third, or 33 per cent, of deaths have been reported over the last seven days. Let that sink in. You do not have to be a maths genius to imagine what that graph must look like. The exponential rise we were fearing is here. We have failed to flatten the curve, and, as a result, more people are dying. The minister of health announced that “based on our modelling”, 1.5 million people are expected to contract the virus. If the death rate is, say, as low as one per cent, at least 15,000 Jamaicans are expected to die.

Even with this low estimate, if our fatality rate approaches this, there are likely to be thousands of people who will need ventilatory and intensive care unit (ICU) support and will not be able to get it. Not only do we not have enough ventilators, we are short of staff to manage them. We already have a chronic nursing shortage, and with cases now rising, more and more medical personnel, including nurses, are testing positive and being temporarily removed from the system.

Less People Being Tested

But wait, there's more. In the face of rising cases, reportedly less people are now being tested. I have been informed that more kits are needed, but whatever the reason is, it is not good. How can less testing at a time like this be acceptable? And there is still more. While we

ride this exponential wave, there is talk of schools being reopened in two weeks' time. Yes, while more people are dying, and hospitals are coming under pressure, there is talk of sending children out to school.

The reticence of the Government since the election disturbs me. The optics are not good. To announce community spread immediately after the election and discontinue regular press briefings while more deaths are being reported leaves me very concerned. It appears to me that the Government and the MOHW have shifted their response to the epidemic by 180 degrees.

One more worrying observation. While writing this article, I spoke with several colleagues, including specialists and general practitioners, physicians in private practice as well as in the public sector, and ones practising in corporate and rural areas, and not one is happy with how the Government is currently managing our COVID-19 outbreak. They feel like sitting ducks. So do I.

Michael Abrahams is an obstetrician and gynaecologist, social commentator and human rights advocate. Email feedback to columns@gleanerjm.com and michabe_1999@hotmail.com, or tweet [@mikeyabrahams](https://twitter.com/mikeyabrahams).

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OR

Question #2

Connell Farrell | **'Fighting Plastic Pollution'**

Published May 19, 2018 | Sunday Gleaner

Jamaica has signalled its intention to ban the use of disposable plastic bags and Styrofoam containers. By this landmark step, Jamaica will join the global effort of 40 countries and municipalities in trying to stave off the damage to the environment by the volume of plastic that we discard each day. Warnings about the havoc plastic and Styrofoam can wreak on the environment are not simply the sounding of alarm bells by crusading NGOs - the threats are real. From flooding to mosquito-breeding sites, plastics can become a nightmare for communities.

Huge Toll

The Earth Policy Institute based in Washington, DC, estimates that one trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. That is phenomenal growth given the fact that the first plastic sandwich bag was said to have been introduced in 1957. It's convenient for shoppers to tote their purchases in 'free' plastic bags, but this convenience takes a huge toll on the environment.

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) used for food containers take up to a million years to decompose. Plastic bags are made of polyethylene, a material produced by petroleum and natural gas, which is not biodegradable. When they are indiscriminately discarded, the winds toss them along the roadway, they clog drains and waterways, or leach chemicals into the soil and they wash up on the shores.

Animals and marine life are at risk because of the continued use of plastic. Indeed, one of the main drivers behind the ban is to lower the amount of plastic that will find its way into the marine world. It is estimated that more than 250 species of animals have been harmed by ingesting plastic or becoming entangled in the discarded material.

Many developing nations of Africa are at the forefront of the war on plastic. Already, 15 countries on the African continent have either banned plastic or placed taxes on their production, distribution and use. Indeed, Kenya has, by far, the harshest plastic bag ban, for as of August 2017, anyone in Kenya found using, producing or selling a plastic bag faces a prison term of four years or a \$38,000 fine. Denmark was the first European country to start charging for plastic-bag usage in 1994. As other nations joined the fight, there were reports of significant reduction in the usage of plastic bags and the resultant damage to the environment. Europe aims to cut plastic usage by 80 per cent by 2019.

Countries have employed measures such as bans, taxes and fines to put some teeth into the effort to curb the use of plastic. In some cases, the money goes into an environmental fund. Together with the official ban, the Government needs to emphasise that individuals must accept some personal responsibility for the manner in which they treat waste and dispose of garbage as a way of responding to the environmental crisis brought on by plastic use. Then there is the matter of enforcement of the ban. In assessing the efficacy of legislation such as the Noise Abatement Act and the anti-litter law, it is evident that compliance is a major problem.

Littering is a behavioural choice, and too many Jamaicans treat the environment with scant regard. Educating the people on the dangers associated with littering and improper disposal of garbage is critical if these attitudes are to change. In the absence of consistent enforcement and realistic penalties, we cannot see the ban working.

END OF EXAMINATION

