

**TO CRITICALLY ANALYSE THE ASSESSMENT TOOLS OF  
QUESTION PAPER OF ENGLISH SUBJECT GRADE XI  
DESIGNED BY THE BOARD OF INTERMEDIATE  
EDUCATION KARACHI, SINDH, PAKISTAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to critically analyse the assessment tools of question paper English subject grade XI designed by the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi. The scope of the study was limited to all the higher educational institutions (Public and Private) affiliated with the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi. The study mainly focussed upon the preparation of question paper of English subject grade XI in terms of items of contents of syllabus. This study was based on the question of covered and uncovered items of contents of syllabus of English subject grade XI for carrying out the research work. The study will help the concerned stakeholders to review their planning and policies for the betterment of assessment process. An exhaustive study of the related literature was made. The population of the research strategy was all the affiliated higher educational institutions of the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi. Purposive sampling was adopted in the research strategy. Therefore, the question papers of English subject grade XI (Science Group) from 2010 to 2014 were selected for the purpose of the study. The data was analysed and it was found that the selected items of contents of the syllabus of English XI were included in the question paper. On the basis of findings, it was found that the key items of contents of syllabus of English subject grade XI have not been included in the question paper of English subject grade XI.

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**Key words: Intermediate Board, Assessment tools, question paper and syllabus.**

The Intermediate Board means The Board of Intermediate Education Karachi.

Assessment Tools means multiple choice questions, short-answers question, detailed-answer questions, essay, translation, character Question paper means the question paper of English subject grade XI.

Syllabus means the complete course of studies for English subject grade XI: The Intermediate English Book-I, Two One Act Plays and The Selection from English Verse Part-I

## INTRODUCTION

This research study is an attempt to critically analyse the assessment tools of English subject grade XI designed by the Board of Intermediate Education (B.I.E.) Karachi for the Annual Examination. It is the primary responsibility of the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi to conduct the examination at the Intermediate level and appoint the experts of English subject to set the question papers. The paper setters/head examiners are also assigned duty to guide and supervise the examiners in English subject with the support of deputy head examiners. The selection of the paper setters/head examiners is done by the committee and the members of selection committee are also appointed by the B.I.E Karachi in accordance with the rules and regulations. It is the responsibility of testing agency to make appropriate decisions on sensitivity of language of assessment, test coverage and fairness (Eckstein & Noah 1992).

Assessment is a process to measure knowledge, skills and attitude of the examinees (Erwin 1991). The information achieved by the results of assessment helps the concerned stakeholders to take appropriate steps for the betterment of the examinees and the educational system. The results of assessment provide opportunities to the examinees to seek admission in higher institutions and get jobs. Therefore, the importance of assessment in educational system is increasing day by day. The current format of the question paper was introduced in 2009 by the B.I.E Karachi. The prescribed format of question paper has been divided into three sections. The first section of question paper is based upon twenty (20) multiple choice questions and each multiple choice question carries 01 mark. The second section is based upon fifteen (15) short-answer questions with fifty marks and each question carries 05 marks. The last section is based upon four (04) detailed-answer questions with thirty marks and each question carries 10 marks.

The overall purpose of the study was to focus on the application of assessment tools, weaknesses and shortcomings of the content and mention the outcomes of the current scheme of the question paper of English subject grade XI. It will point out those issues which have produced impact on the quality of assessment. The present study will bring betterment in the format of question paper, help to improve the quality of assessment and help to the concerned stakeholders to design new methods for improvement of the quality of assessment. The present assessment system of the answerscripts of the English subject grade XI does not meet the modern standards of assessment at the Intermediate level and the paper setters do not consider the modern methods and strategies of assessment.

The comprehensive review of literature was done so as to go into the depth of the problem. Assessment is considered the valuable phase of any educational system which points out the goals and targets of the educational system. Generally, the decisions are made on the basis of outcome of assessment about progress of examinees and the teaching methods. It is an ongoing process which combines the learning practices and teaching methodology. The outcome of assessment motivates examinees to learn new knowledge and skills. Brown (2004) asserts that ‘assessment is probably the most important thing we can do to help our students learn. We may not like it, but students can and do ignore our teaching; however, if they want to get a qualification, they have to participate in the assessment processes we design and implement.’ The word assessment is a part and parcel of the educational system. The word ‘assessment’ has been derived from the Latin assessare and meant to impose a tax or to set a rate (Athanssou & Lamprianou 2002). The Australian National Training Authority has defined assessment as ‘the process of gathering and judging evidence in order to decide whether a person has achieved a standard or objective’ (Athanssou & Lamprianou 2002). The assessment is defined as the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs (Polmba and Banta 1999). The parents and educational experts bank upon the results of assessment and they consider it vital for producing sound, competent and skilled persons in the society. All the stakeholders have also recognized its importance and they are spending huge capital on its development. They have built their confidence and trust on assessment due to its modern and reliable techniques. At present, many institutions are involved in developing the modern and reliable methods of assessment. Hence, it is based upon an immense international research and application.

Assessment plays vital role in shaping the future of an examinee. In order to compete with others, an examinee gets accurate information. Assessment unfolds potential and capabilities of an examinee and the examinee also becomes aware of shortcomings and weaknesses. The linkage between assessment and knowledge, skills and abilities draws the attention of all stakeholders to devise and implement sound ways and means in the educational system. On the basis of results of assessment, the educational experts take immediate measures of allocating time, funds and strategies. The process of assessment exerts huge impact on teaching processes and learning styles. No doubt, assessment has become a multi-million global business in present times (Lynne 2001, p.216). The modern progress and scientific touch has made the assessment an important tool of social dignity. It has taken social status because of its links with formal qualifications. Assessment is also changing day by day as the methodologies and strategies of teaching and learning change (Race 2005).

Assessment has been classified into many categories but its important categories are formative assessment and summative assessment. The summative assessment has minimised the content of the course. The paper setters selects only those items of contents which are available in the past question papers. Therefore, the paper setters neglect important topics of the syllabus. This practice has squeezed the content of syllabus and has narrowed down the curriculum (Cheng 2006, p.43). The summative assessment has promoted superficial and rote learning. Generally, the examiners emphasize upon quantity of assessment instead of quality of assessment. Due to this, the examiners do not help each others. Therefore, prevailing practices in summative assessment are harmful because the examiners emphasize upon awarding the grades.

National Curriculum for English language (2006) asserts that summative assessment is the traditional end-of-term or final examination that determines promotion of the suitable candidates for higher class, course or university. Therefore, it is often considered that results of summative assessment offer future academic and employment opportunities (Cheng 2006, p.43). The impact of summative assessment is life-affecting and mistakes and errors committed during assessment process are difficult to correct (Bachman 2004, p.39). The other drawback of the summative assessment is complacency. The examinees with high grades or marks may become victim of it and may reduce their effort and the examinees with low grades can lose motivation for further learning. Moreover, the audience for summative assessment is generally large and its results are brief and lacks in details.

## Methodology

The overall strategy of the research was mixed methodology. The purposive sampling was adopted. The question papers of English subject grade XI from 2010 to 2014 (Science group) Annual Examination were selected for content analysis. The question papers of English subject grade XI were collected for the last five years. The study was limited to the question papers of English subject grade XI (Science Group) Annual Examination administered by the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi from 2010 to 2014.

## Research question

This study was based on the question of covered and uncovered items of contents of syllabus of English subject grade XI in the question paper of English subject grade XI Annual Examination.

**TABLE 1 (POETRY)**

S.No	UNIT	Year 1010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
1	Under the Greenwood Tree	×	×	×	×	√
2	The Character of a Happy Life	√	×	×	×	√
3	The Abbot of Canterbury	√	√	×	×	√
4	Lines from the Deserted Village	√	√	×	√	×
5	Lucy Gray	√	√	√	×	×
6	Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge	×	×	×	×	√
7	Lines from the Lay of Last Minstrel	×	√	√	√	√
8	Abu Bin Adhem	×	×	√	×	×
9	Incident of the French Camp	×	×	×	√	√
10	The Toys	×	×	√	×	√
11	I had reached Your doorsteps	×	×	×	×	×
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

This table reveals that poems 'Lines from the Lay of Last Minstrel' has been included four times, the poems 'The Abbot of Canterbury', 'Lines from the Deserted Village' and 'Lucy Gray' have been included three times, the poems 'The Character of a Happy Life', 'Incident of the French Camp' and 'The Toys' have been included two times and the poems 'Under the Greenwood Tree', 'Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' and 'Abu Bin Adhem' have been included one time and the poem 'I had reached Your doorsteps' has not been included in

five years. Therefore, the poems ‘Under the Greenwood Tree’, ‘Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge’ and ‘Abu Bin Adhem’ have been marginalized and the poem ‘I had reached Your doorsteps’ has been completely ignored. No question has been included from the poem ‘I had reached Your doorsteps’. The format of question paper and inclusion of all the poems have not been considered by any paper setter and the B.I.E. Karachi has also not taken any initiative to implement its policy, rules and instructions for paper setting. Ultimately, the format of question papers has narrowed down the syllabus and it has exerted negative impact on the methodology of teaching and learning practices. The proportion of short questions from Poetry is 26% in 2010, 2011 and 2012, 20% in 2013 and 46 % in 2014 out of fifteen short-answer questions.

**TABLE 2 (INTERMEDIATE BOOK ONE)**

S.No	TOPIC/UNIT	Year 1010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
1	Pakistan Zindabad	√	√	√	√	√
2	Birkenhead Drill	√	√	×	√	√
3	The United Nations	√	√	√	√	√√
4	My Bank Account	×	√	×	√	√
5	The Miracle of Radio	×	×	×	×	×
6	Air Travel	×	×	×	×	×
7	Letters	×	×	×	×	×
8	The Wolves of Cernogratz	√	×	×	√	√
9	By Car Across Europe	×	×	×	×	×
10	The English Language	×	×	×	×	√
11	Science and Scientists	×	×	√	×	×
12	Science and Society	×	×	×	×	×
13	The Hostile Witness	√	√	√	×	√
14	Silence	×	×	×	×	×
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>

This table reveals that the lesson ‘The United Nations’ have been included six times, the lesson ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ has been included five times and the lessons ‘Birkenhead Drill’ and ‘The Hostile Witness’ have been included four times, the lessons ‘My Bank Account’ and ‘The Wolves of Cernogratz’ have been included three times, the lessons ‘The English Language’ and ‘Science and Scientists’ have been included once and the lessons ‘The Miracle of Radio’, ‘Air Travel’, ‘Letters’, ‘Science and Society’, ‘By Car Across Europe’ and ‘Silence’ have not been included one time in five years. Hence, it is concluded that paper setters have not covered 42% lessons from the Intermediate English Book One in five years which carries many useful and effective exercises.

## CONCLUSION

The study of present problem has indicated many shortfalls of the pattern of question paper of English subject grade XI that has been designed by the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi. The format of the question paper was imbalanced in the context of items of contents of the syllabus. Many key items of contents of syllabus have been completely ignored and the paper setters have never tried to include all items of contents of the syllabus. The paper setters have blindly followed the questions of previous years and they were totally unable to prepare a bank of new questions. This practice has hindered the quality education and quality assessment. The examinees get good grades by rote learning and cheating without any command of necessary language skills at the Intermediate level. Hence, it is concluded that all the items of contents of syllabus of English subject grade XI should be included in the question paper of English subject grade XI.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All the items of contents of syllabus of English subject grade XI should be included in the content of question paper of English subject grade XI.
2. The items of contents of syllabus in section 'A' should not be repeated in section 'B' of question paper of English subject grade XI.
3. All the paper setters/head examiners and examiners should be trained regularly.
4. The number of lines for short-answer questions in section 'B' should be mentioned in question paper of English subject grade XI according to the recommendations of the B.I.E Karachi.

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