

Errors committed by candidates that make examiners fatigue

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The study was initiated to examine common errors committed by candidates that make examiners fatigue. Fatigue results in unhappiness among the examiners in engaging paper corrections. Two hundred answer scripts of a recruitment examination of Extension Officers for the Department of Export Agriculture were reviewed. Author acted as an examiner in this study. Views of two examiners involved in paper-marking of the same examination were also obtained. Common mistakes made by the candidates that create unhappiness of examiners' were identified and prioritized.

Common errors found to be in priority order are: illegibility of handwriting (43%), writing of irrelevant descriptions (40%), writing guessed answers and wrong answers (36%), incorrect question numbers and poor readability (26%), attachment of answer script incorrectly (14%), writing of contradictory answers (10%) and mixing up of languages (7%).

Identified common errors can be avoided. The study recommends specific instructions to be given to orient candidates for examinations. Reading the question paper patiently and carefully and choosing the required number of questions from different sections is important at the beginning of the examination to avoid most errors committed when answering questions.

It is also important to use separate booklets for each answer and writing reasonably large letters giving sufficient space between words, paragraphs and sections. Using separate booklets enables a candidate to answer difficult sections later without mixing-up the answers. It is also advisable to refrain from answering uncertain questions since it would bring negative results. Writing question numbers large enough to read and clearly is also important.

Since marks are given to correct points, they have to be aligned in a logical order in short sentences for easy reading, understanding and saving of time.

Numbering of separate answer books in the order of answering will make attachment of answer scripts easy. It is suggested that practicing for examinations beforehand can avoid most weaknesses committed at the examinations.