

SOM Examiners Report N2022 Final

Reading past reports of examiners in SOM and other subjects means that a candidate can have some familiarity with the exam and what is required to pass it. It seems that some candidates are still failing to do this. Other have, and with some good results. Looking back at the past examiners reports in many of the subjects the poor standard of maritime geography demonstrated by many candidates has been a consistent worry. You must demonstrate a reasonable understanding of this. Shipping has always been a worldwide business and a good knowledge of that world is essential.

A map should always show relevant ports, routes and geographical features on that route such as canals, capes, seas, oceans, and special areas affected by weather, currents or hazards. Do not waste time naming irrelevant details such as distant seas and countries as these get no extra marks. (See the remarks in question 7)

Q1. Once again this is consistently the most popular question in this exam, and all those candidates who passed generally got good marks in this question. Candidates should know that a cross section drawing is a look at the vessel from the bow, not a plan which is a bird's eye view. Don't draw a plan view unless you are asked to do so, it wastes precious time. A large drawing allows you to show detail which with good labelling of the parts of the vessel shows your knowledge and gets marks. Several drawings were too small, lacking detail and limiting labelling thus missing marks. Candidates should show familiarity with the important areas of the vessel such as the bow and stern arrangement, and the important features there. Most now are arriving properly equipped to do a drawing so well done as this question will come up in a number of exams and practice brings proficiency. The characteristics of the vessel are also asked for and it is not sufficient merely just to give the dwt, draught, loa, beam, gear and engine power. You should be giving an accurate description of the vessel that shows the examiner you are familiar with this type.

Many candidates saved their best efforts for the description of the trade. With four parts to the question all parts carry similar marks. Some of those for part (d) are allocated to the map so make sure you do this properly and keep in mind that the actual description of the trade will only be worth about 2-3 marks at best.

If you are going to learn a route ensure that the one you choose is appropriate for the vessel, the cargo and the ports concerned and be VERY SURE you know where these ports are located.

Q2. This was a standard three-part question about the registration of a ship with an open Registry and was another popular choice. Part (a) asked for the advantages and disadvantages of this and most did this quite well but rather concentrating on cheap crews and more rigorous Port State inspections. Those who had studied this did better and got good marks.

Part(b) asked for three specific certificates that will always be issued by Flag. This generally was done well but some candidates seemed to get rather confused about Codes and conventions that had been agreed by the Flag such as CLC International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage and naming this as a Certificate issued by the Flag. It may be but is part of the P&I cover of the ship normally expiring in February and valid for one year. Major certificates issued by the Flag are the Cert of Registry, Radio Licence, International Tonnage Certificate and Minimum Manning Certificate. The first three are valid until the vessel is sold, the last is valid as long as the Cert of Registry unless the vessel changed equipment, operating area or construction.

Part(c) Asked for details of Five other Certificates issued by Flag or on its authority, their validity which means for how long and how often inspected and what they signify. Most did quite well with

naming the certificate but some then failed to follow up with either validity or what they signified or both. Overall, this was an easy question to get good marks and most candidates did so.

Q3. This was quite a popular question with almost all the candidates, a notable exception being one of the largest centres. In the current world of shipping there are numerous computer programmes that will do a Voyage calculation in a few minutes using accurate and up to date information on costs but the ability to do this without that electronic support is still necessary to prove you know what you are doing. Those who attempted it generally did quite well as it was a simple calculation to find the quantity of cargo and the choice of bunker ports straightforward. Three candidates got full marks and several others were close to this. It was relatively easy to work out the daily net profit. Some candidates used the wrong fuel at the port of Genoa in Italy. This port is in the EU and therefore LSGO 0.1% would be mandatory and candidates for this exam should know that as it has been in force for Twelve Years. Candidates need to show their working and it should be clearly laid out with their answers easy to find. Examiners will not unduly penalise a candidate who makes a simple calculation mistake if it is easy to find what that is. It is therefore possible to make allowance for that in deciding what marks to give for a correct calculation method, albeit using flawed data.

Q4. This was as usual a very popular question and once again several candidates failed to note that they were asked in part (a) to explain the DIFFERENCE between the various costs and why you expect costs to be divided this way. It is important to Read the question. Several instead merged their answer in part (b) describing the different cost items which did not properly answer the question about the difference. However, some did explain the difference and why it made sense to split them this way and got good marks.

If as in part (b) you are asked to describe as fully as possible the different cost items it is not enough to merely list for example Crew, Maintenance, Admin, Insurance and Stores or Port Costs and Bunkers without going into more detail about these. The cost question is an important source of marks and relatively easy so you have to work and study for these. Those who did fully describe the different items in each were rewarded with better marks.

Q5. This was the least popular question and generally was not done as well as might be expected if candidates had fully answered both parts of the question. You are in a river, tying up to a jetty with tugs alongside and have some unspecified damage and injuries. The action taken on board the vessel immediately after the incident must be geared towards making sure the vessel is safe, checking on injuries and minimising any harm to others while assessing the extent of the damage and recording as clearly as possible what has happened. This is not a major catastrophe; get the ship onto the berth and make fast. Then investigate its extent, check for damage and deal with it. But far too many candidates seem to have been obsessed with the injured crewman and linesman. Some indeed thought that the only action that should be undertaken was to treat the injured and get them to hospital. The insurances available should be well known to all candidates and those who identified these and additionally included specific insurances such as FFO and Loss of Hire etc did well.

When the situation is fully understood and under control then contact your owner/manager and alert the DPA or emergency team. The resources available in your management office should be fully utilised to deal with communicating to interested parties and providing help to the vessel. Local help is also available for your agents together with the port authorities who should be informed promptly. In time, Class, Flag, your P&I insurers and H&M Insurers will also be involved. Candidates

who mentioned investigating why the engine suffered a loss of power as part of the answer got extra marks.

Some candidates made mention of General Average but this was not really an issue. Was the ship in peril? Not really with tugs connected and the berth ready. Was there a sacrifice? Not at this stage and not likely in the future. Some others mentioned SMFF. Was there a Fire or the likelihood of Salvage? No.

Q6. This was a quite simple question about a vessel due to load a cargo of Grain in Buenos Aires for discharge in Amsterdam. But the question was looking for a broad answer that addressed the general aspects of planning a voyage as well as the specific ones relating to the carriage of Grain. There are certain important factors that should be taken into consideration whatever the voyage and the cargo. These would cover planning the voyage, the CP requirements agents, ETAs and others such as the cleanliness of the vessel, the draft at the load and discharge port and the care of the cargo during the voyage from a hot summer to a cold winter. Other considerations might be bunkers, stability and precautions to avoid shifting of the cargo.

Several candidates made mention of the requirements of the IMSBC and the TML (Transportable Moisture Limit) of the cargo which while it showed knowledge of this important Code was not actually relevant and wasted their time. Grain is not one of the cargoes considered dangerous under this code, it is covered under the International Grain Code of 1991.

There were some good answers with candidates noting the change in temperature during the voyage, likely weather that would be experienced, ventilation and fumigation. Some wrote about preparation of the bilges and watertight testing of the hatches showing real experience but few mentioned a draft survey

Q7. This less popular question was in three-parts and part **(a)** required you to show your knowledge of the likely weather an MR tanker would experience in July on a voyage from loading in the Red Sea for discharge in Melbourne, Australia. Most candidates were able to identify the Red Sea and that it would be hot weather but generally calm. Coming out across the Indian Ocean brought the likelihood of the SW monsoon with associated wind, rain, rough sea and swell. Some mentioned the chance of cyclones but as the vessel was moving into the Southern Hemisphere and winter this would be less of a problem. Very few seemed aware that bad weather might occur from the strong westerly winds in the higher southern latitudes and that fog on the coast could be an issue. All students should be aware that all winds are named from the direction FROM WHICH THEY COME.

Most students routed the vessel via the south of Australia, except for those uncertain of the location of Melbourne (see below). A couple decided to go via Torres Strait which is an alternative but with at least two disadvantages, the limited draft in the Strait, and the extra distance of 2000 NM.

Part **(b)** was done well as this was about the benefits of weather routeing and there were some excellent answers. Part **(c)** was about piracy and what measures would you expect your vessel to take to reduce the risk to the ship and crew and most candidates showed familiarity with these.

You were told to use the world map to support your answer. The examiner would expect a basic answer to at least show the information provided in the question which was the route, the Red Sea, Melbourne and Piracy. Some identified the Red Sea correctly but out of the 38 candidates less than 10% correctly identified the position of Melbourne on the southern coast near Tasmania. Some vaguely put a line going from the Red Sea towards Australia, partly over land with no identification

of anything. Some wrote about the monsoon in the Indian Ocean but put no indication of it or the Ocean on the map.

Q8. Quite a popular question with overall the highest average marks for those who attempted to define and explain five abbreviations out of a choice of ten. IOPP proved the most popular with CSR running a close second. With the latter most went for the Continuous Synopsis Record, but some others chose Common Structural Rules and one went with Corporate Social Responsibility both of which were acceptable. The least popular was NDFFCAPMQS which may be because this is common in the Tanker markets but not so in the Dry cargo world. Another popular choice was NAABSA which is definitely more a Dry term.