



ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATIONS

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NSC 2011 CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT	ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE
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PAPER	3
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SECTION 1:

(General overview of Learner Performance in the question paper as a whole)

This was a learner-friendly paper which was particularly relevant to the grade 12 learners and their realm of experience. They responded openly and impressively.

The topics catered for a wide range of learners – both gifted and the less able. The topics appealed to a variety of interests. There was a good balance. The topics catered for different levels of intellect, creativity and interpretation.

What was particularly pleasing this year was the absence of a dominant topic as was the case in 2010. Learners' responses covered a pleasing range of topics and they provided a variety of pleasing and interesting interpretations.

Markers commented that the calibre of responses appeared to be better in 2011 than in 2010. This was possibly due to the fact that the positive topics generated positive responses from the learners.

There were very few clichéd responses.

Most learners were able to use paragraphs effectively.

There was perhaps a lack of a clear narrative topic for weaker learners.

It is pleasing to note how many learners were awarded 100% for the entire paper or for sections of the paper. There was a marked increase in the number of "A" candidates.

Learners who did not fare well in Section A, were able to fare very well in Sections B and C.

SECTION 2:

Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

(It is expected that a comment will be provided for each question on a separate sheet).

QUESTION 1

(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

SECTION A: This section was especially well-balanced with no single topic dominating. The topics invited different essay responses: creative, discursive, narrative, etc. The topics which seemed to invite a discursive response, were sometimes answered with a narrative approach. Most learners were able to do this most effectively and creatively.

1.1 This topic generally produced work of a good to high standard. It was very relevant to grade 12. Many learners were able to relate this to their own experiences and had markers in fits of laughter. It also generated very mature responses. Even weaker learners could cope very well with this topic.

1.2 Many learners were able to use personal experiences of mobs in their writing.

1.3 Another topic to which learners responded well as it was within their frame of reference. It allowed scope for any type of response.

1.4 This topic was not always well answered, especially by weaker candidates. Even stronger learners had difficulty in making the connection with education.

1.5 This topic also invited mature responses from learners. It led to interesting and varied interpretations. Learners were also able to use a narrative essay very effectively to illustrate this topic. Stronger learners were able to provide impressive figurative interpretations of the topic.

1.6 Although fewer learners chose this topic, it also generated creative and inventive responses. Once again, this topic produced excellent narrative essays. A few learners focused too much on role models (especially mothers) and did not touch on the "wild" aspect of the topic.

1.7.1 and 1.7.2 The pictures were well chosen and resulted in good responses.

1.7.1 This topic was open to various interpretations. Learners were again able to relate personal experiences. There was a focus on history and political issues which displayed some learners' impressive general knowledge. Learners' showcased their love for South Africa but also their awareness of the issues and challenges the country faces.

1.7.2 A very good illustration which led to a variety of responses, some really excellent. The range of creative interpretation was astounding. Learners did not have to produce a figurative essay. They often concentrated on loneliness and poverty in a very real and sincere manner.

SECTION B: This section also covered a good variety of topics. Stronger and weaker learners could relate to all topics. The topics were relevant to the learners' experiences.

2.1 The letter to the editor was generally well-answered and elicited good responses. Learners argued both for and against graffiti. Learners did not only address the issue, but also provided possible solutions. A few learners did not know the meaning of "graffiti". Most learners coped very well with the format and

register and produced letters which could be published in any newspaper.

2.2 Most learners coped very well with the speech. A few focused on motivation in general without touching on academic success.

2.3 This topic was obviously very relevant to the learners and their responses were very realistic and sincere. Markers could almost visualise the scene being played out. Learners were sometimes too focused on ending on a happy note. It was pleasing to note how learners were able to cope with the register in this topic. The topic could have produced inappropriate language and impolite responses. However, learners remained controlled, yet adamant and assertive. In some cases, there was merely a discussion, but no argument. Learners achieved very high marks.

2.4 The letter of application was generally well handled. Most learners had a good knowledge of the requirements of the register and format. Some learners did not sell themselves enough.

SECTION C:

3.1 This topic was relevant to the learners. It was brilliantly handled by most learners and they were justly rewarded for the efforts. Learners even managed to come up with slogans and special offers. They used emotive and persuasive language extremely effectively.

3.2 The postcard produced brilliant responses. Learners conveyed their excitement. They gave details of the places they were visiting.

3.3 This led to general instructions which could be applied to high school learners, not specifically grade 8s. Some learners produced entertaining instructions, such as "Do not approach a matric – you will regret it."

(b) Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

SECTION A:

1.1 There were no problems with this topic.

1.2 Unfortunately some learners misinterpreted the topic, not understanding the meaning of "mob". They tended to focus on gang violence.

1.3 Many learners focused on one or two aspects of the topic and did not address the "forgiveness" aspect of the topic. Some went off the topic and discussed teenage problems instead. Responses became rather predictable.

1.4 Weaker candidates struggled with this topic and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones instead of their possible use in education. They remained focused on the issues of social network sites, cyber bullying, pornography and sexual predators – these are issues relating to cell phones in general, whether cell phones are used in the classroom or not. Many also concentrated on whether learners should be allowed to bring cell phones to school or not. This led to discussions on the theft of cell phones at schools. The result was that learners veered off the topic and lost focus.

1.5 Weaker candidates adopted a literal approach to trees and fruit.

1.6 A few learners focused too much on role models (especially mothers) and did not touch on the "wild" aspect of the topic. Some responses became predictable and not believable.

1.7.1 There were no major problems.

1.7.2 Some learners were too focused on a rags-to-riches tale which became clichéd and unrealistic. After a life of hardship without an education, they suddenly became

doctors, lawyers, found their parents and lived happily ever after.

SECTION B:

2.1 A few learners did not know the meaning of "graffiti". Some learners did not use the correct format, style and register. Topic sentences were far too long, some spanning three lines.

2.2 A few focused on motivation in general without touching on academic success. Some learners digressed from the topic and gave a nostalgic overview of what they had experienced in their matric year. Some learners took too long to get to the point of academic success; there was an abundance of clichés in their writing. Too many candidates referred to the audience as "you guys" or "yous guys"!

2.3 Learners were sometimes too focused on ending on a happy note, so conclusions sometimes sounded rather contrived. However, this did not negatively affect the mark. In some cases, there was merely a discussion, but no argument.

2.4 Some learners did not have knowledge of the requirements of the register and format. Some learners did not sell themselves enough. Others were simply too arrogant. A few learners did not use the information provided: they used different addresses and applied for a non-existent position.

SECTION C:

3.1 Some learners omitted to include contact details and prices. Some advertised new products, while others advertised a store! The advertisement still requires the use of full sentences.

3.2 Unfortunately learners did not always read the instructions carefully or misunderstood the purpose of a postcard. The postcards were being written either before or after the tour. Some were not even on a tour. Many simply wrote a friendly letter.

3.3 This led to general instructions which could be applied to high school learners, not specifically grade 8s.

(a) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

GENERAL

Many teachers have had questions regarding planning and formatting. The following decisions were made at the National Memo Discussion.

PLANNING: look for progression/development/organization of ideas.

- A lack of planning is not an issue and candidates will not be penalised.
- Visible planning will not influence the assessment.
Candidates could be planning and organizing their thoughts in their heads.
Stronger candidates may not need to plan.
Weaker candidates' lack of planning will show in their writing.
- The instruction on the question paper regarding planning is simply to encourage candidates to plan and organise their thoughts. It is part of the writing process.

- Discourage excessive editing of the final product. This leads to untidy work which affects the fluency.
- The "Content" mark on the rubric is thus essentially for content!

NUMBER OF WORDS: This instruction is in the National document and that is why it appears on the exam paper. It is not something to follow slavishly.

SECTION A: GENERAL

- Candidates misinterpreted some of the topics. Candidates should be taught to underline key words in the topic so that they can remain focused on what is required.
- The opening paragraph should not repeat the topic or state the focus of the essay as if the learner were debating.
- Learners should focus on linking their essay to the topic with a good introductory and concluding paragraph.
- Learners must not do planning after the essay merely to fulfil the instruction regarding planning.
- Learners must be more attentive when it comes to punctuation. Sentences were long and confusing, leading to a lack of coherence.
- Learners should focus on varying their sentence length as this improves the style and structure of the essay.
- Incorrect use of the pronoun needs to be addressed, e.g. "One should do their work" instead of "One should do one's work." "Everybody must do their work" instead of his/her work.
- Sequence of tense: candidates change tense in mid-sentence and within the paragraph.
- There were fewer clichés, which is commendable.
- Learners should be more aware of the correct use of the apostrophe.
- Apostrophe must not be used to form plurals.
- Learners need to learn where to place the apostrophe in cases of omission.
- The excessive use of the exclamation mark must be discouraged, especially when learners use three or more to end a sentence.
- The punctuation and paragraphing of direct speech needs to be addressed.
- Redundancy needs to be addressed (we, as the youth, I, as a person, / as a human being)
- Learners need to focus on topics they can relate to so that they produce sincere and honest responses. They should avoid responses that are simply way over the top and completely unrealistic
- Teachers should address commonly confused words: there / their; his / he's; where / were; every day / everyday; apart / a apart; live / leave; still / steal.
- The following spelling errors are still a problem ("alot"/ Iam" / "aswell" / "definitely" / "everytime" / "incase"/ "recieve" / "seperate" / "inlove" / untill / inspite off / infront / infact / ect / for ex
- Learners are still saying "Could of" instead of "could have"
- Teachers should address the learners' use of incomplete sentences and sentence fragments.
- Far too many learners were simply using "and then" to join sentences which ran into paragraphs.
- Focus should be on using a comma after the word instead of at the beginning of

- the next line. For example: Although the dog really did eat my homework
- , the teacher did not accept my excuse.
- Comma splicing remains a problem and leads to confusion.
- The use of slang has definitely improved. The following examples are still frequently used: (“stuff” / “guys” / “things” / “cause”).
- Profanity and vulgarity are unacceptable and inappropriate!
- Learners need to be made aware of the inappropriateness of sexual imagery and description, as well as immoral behaviour.
- Learners should not provide the marker with a selection of words to choose from, e.g. Learners should listen/concentrate in class. They need to make up their own minds.

SECTIONS B AND C: GENERAL

FORMAT

- Focus first on content.
- If there are major problems with format – drop slightly in “Content” category.
- Not including names / addresses is regarded as a “critical oversight” and will lead to drop in the mark awarded in the content category.
- What the candidate says is more important than the format.

SECTION B

- Formal letter: Topic sentences were far too long or not included.
- Candidates should not expect the editor to do something about the problem. They must realise that the newspaper or magazine is merely a forum where they can express an opinion.

The following critical aspects of the formal letter must be taught:

- ✓ The sender’s address must appear on the top right hand side of the page.
- ✓ An address must have the number of the house, the name of the street, the suburb, the city or town and the postal code.
- ✓ The date must be written out in full immediately below the postal code.
- ✓ Leave a line open before writing “The Editor” on the left-hand side.
- ✓ The institution’s name must appear below the person’s title.
- ✓ The name of the magazine / newspaper must be in inverted commas or be underlined: “The Weekly Report” or The Weekly Report
- ✓ The date must not be repeated under the recipient’s address.
- ✓ Leave a line open before writing the salutation.
- ✓ The salutation should be “Sir/Madam” or Editor.
- ✓ The use of “Dear: Sir ” is incorrect.
- ✓ A **brief** topic sentence, outlining the purpose of the letter, must follow two lines after the salutation (no “RE” to precede the topic sentence). This sentence must start **next to the margin** and not in the middle of the page. The topic sentence must not be “Letter to the Editor”
- ✓ The letter should end with “Yours faithfully” (not “Yours sincerely” or any other informal ending).
- ✓ The sender’s signature should appear on the next line after “Yours faithfully”
- ✓ The sender’s title, their initials and surname must appear on the line after the signature.

- ✓ Learners must “get to the point” instead of writing about irrelevant details that do not comply with the requirements of the text, such as: “My name is ...”
- Even if the situation is informal, learners may not use slang.
- The dialogue does not require inverted commas. A line should be left open between each speaker.
- Content can be improved by the use of bracketed information to convey emotion.

SECTION C: GENERAL

Candidates who understood the requirements of the texts in this Section and who were able to use the appropriate language and style achieved outstanding levels. However, as was the case in the other Sections, basic vocabulary and knowledge of transactional writing was lacking amongst weaker candidates. It seemed that a few learners did not know how to respond to their chosen topic, resulting in some of the responses being far too short. Others padded their responses.

Learners should be advised to respond to a topic that they can relate to.

- The advertisement requires emotive and persuasive language.
- With the advertisement, learners should also focus on including:
 - heading
 - price
 - contact details
 - product details
 - slogan
- The format and style of the postcard needs to be addressed. Learners did not say who the postcard was from or to whom it was addressed.
- Some, not all, sentences can be short, e.g. “Wish you were here. Missing you.” However, this must be kept to a minimum.
- Learners must not write “Dear: Friend”
- Instructions should be done in point-form. Bullets are acceptable.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners

Learners used less sms language in their writing.

There were not as many references to violence and sexual abuse.

It some cases it was clear that some candidates lacked a **basic language foundation**. They were unable to express themselves clearly and struggled to construct a coherent sentence. These candidates displayed no knowledge of the requirements of certain texts, particularly in Sections B and C in terms of format, style, tone and register. This in turn points to a severe lack of subject knowledge and content.

As was reported last year, these serious language barriers should be addressed **before** the candidate reaches Grade 12. Reports generated from the final examinations should not be scrutinized by Grade 12 teachers only; these problems must be brought to the attention of other teachers so that they can be addressed. Furthermore, many candidates were not able to achieve the outcomes at a Home Language level.

e) Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

- Paper 3 carries the most weight, yet it is usually given the least teaching time. Candidates need to be well instructed and coached in the writing of this paper as it is the one paper where they can score really well.
- Teachers should not assume that certain formats will not be tested. The inclusion of the postcard was criticised, yet it led to superb responses which were awarded very high marks.
- Creativity and originality are rewarded and candidates must be given more opportunities to develop and improve their writing skills.
- Teachers need to focus on eliminating common errors which detract from the fluency of the writing.
- A focus on correct format, style and register for Sections A and B will be to the candidates' advantage.
- Unless candidates are particularly good at expressing themselves formally, they should be advised to avoid the formal letter.
- If candidates do not understand a word or words in the topic, they should not attempt that topic to avoid misinterpretation.
- Do not use sub-titles in the essay, e.g. "Introduction", "Body", and "Conclusion".
- Under no circumstances should candidates remove pages from their answer books, not even their rough work, as this can be regarded as an "Irregularity".
- Handwriting which is difficult to read leads to words which cannot be deciphered being marked as errors.
- Candidates must be made aware of certain topics which require a figurative response for the writing to be successful and original.
- Weaker candidates should not use Direct Speech in their writing as they are unable to punctuate correctly, which leads to confusion.
- It appears that some learners have been taught vocabulary and they use these words in the wrong context or in excess. They should be reminded that "flowery" language is not good style.
- Learners must be taught concord.
- Learners should avoid using "e.g." or "etc." or "i.e" throughout their writing. If they do use these, they should abbreviate them properly.

SIGNATURE OF CHIEF MARKER: _____



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