



EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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2023 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT	ENGLISH FAL		
QUESTION PAPER			3
DURATION OF QUESTION PAPER	2 HOURS	30 MINUTES	
PROVINCE	EASTERN CAPE		
DATES OF MARKING	04-18 DECEMBER 2023		

SECTION 1: (General overview of Learners Performance in the question paper as a whole)

This cohort of candidates belonged to the group that was not often tested and examined. They took their first external exams in September 2023, which were administered from a provincial level. Many of the concerns were realised when the examination results were announced, but as is always the case, we were astonished by the students' overall success in the November 2023 NSC Examinations.

With this in mind, candidates found it really easy to respond to the question paper. English First Additional Language P3 is a "choice paper," meaning that the candidate selects the text they want to create and can answer in accordance with their cognitive ability. The marking guidelines and rubric evaluate the candidate at his writing skill level and this guarantees a fair score without penalties being applied. In this approach, the level descriptors for the different sections of the grading rubric are created to guarantee that every applicant is positioned accurately and gets the grade they merit.

The overall picture of performance in all three sections is pleasing as they were able to respond relatively well to the set questions producing moderately good texts and performing relatively well.

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

SECTION A QUESTION 1 ESSAYS MARKS: 50

1.1 Family comes first The average mark for this question was 31/50 (63%)

This was the most popular choice of candidates. Responses ranged from exceptional to banal. Many candidates failed to interpret the topic as was envisaged by the examiners. Some misinterpreted the topic and wrote about their individual ambitions, excluding family. Most wrote about the basic family unit and ended it there. From the exceptional responses many gave different interpretations to the concept of 'family'. One candidate wrote about how the pit-bull was his family, rather than the brothers, sisters and other family members he had, because the dog was treated better than he was. The topic lent itself to a myriad of interpretations, yet candidates failed to capitalise on this. Some candidates wrote heartfelt essays in which they performed well since they were writing about that which they know.

1.2 If I could design anything The average mark was for this question was 43/50 (86%)

Although this topic was included in the training scripts, very few candidates responded to this topic. It was mainly your more astute and eloquent candidates who responded to this topic. It required a great amount of reflection and recounting from the responses assessed. The reason why candidates did not respond was because they do not associate the word "design" with situations of real life, but rather relegate this concept to the fashion and construction industries. The general media are partly responsible for this limited interpretation as this concept is predominantly used in relation to these industries, hence this perception has become pervasive.

1.3 You learn new things when you listen The average mark for this question was 32/50 (66%)

Very few candidates attempted this topic. It was pitched at your more 'intellectual' candidates who have a good command of their first additional language and are able to express ideas creatively. The responses assessed were mainly in the moderate category, which leads one to conclude that candidates did not really understand the topic, though it lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and expressions in writing. The topic also lends itself to philosophical and abstract interpretations which many candidates found challenging.

1.4 Courage exists without fear
The average mark for this question was 45/50 (90%)

This topic was a rare find in the essays being assessed. They were few and far between. Again, this topic lent itself to being chosen by your more astute and eloquent candidate and those who have a fair command of their first additional language. This topic produced exceptional responses.

1.5 'If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else' – Booker T. Washington
The average mark for this question was 35/50 (71%)

Those who attempted this topic performed moderately and were often unable to interpret the topic correctly. Most were unable to understand the two concepts being addressed and only focused on the first part "lifting yourself up" and did not attempt in any way to address the second aspect. The focus on only the first aspect led to candidates performing poorly.

1.6 Picture Essay One – Image of a garden
The average mark for this question was 32/50 (66%)

This was a fairly popular choice with candidates. Many were able to write about their experience with gardening. Once again, some candidates gave responses which they were unable to link to the picture provided. There were some brilliant responses that emanated from this picture while some candidates produced very basic responses.

1.7 Picture Essay Two – Image of Girl with Marimba
The average mark for this question was 20/50 (40%)

Although the picture depicts a situation from real life and the dreams of a young girl, those who chose this topic performed poorly as they were unable to express their thoughts effectively. Although the picture is simple and relatable, one finds that these are often the most difficult to write about. Candidates failed to capitalise on a topic on which they should have been able to write and score well.

1.8 Picture Essay Three – Image of the Chain and Birds
The average for this question was 47/50 (95%)

This graphic was the most popular choice amongst the pictorial stimulus. Candidates who attempted this topic performed exceptionally well as they were able to express their thoughts and ideas creatively. Most scored exceptional marks as they were able to express themselves extremely well.

SECTION B
LONGER TRANSACTIONAL TEXTS
QUESTION 2
MARKS: 30

2.1 E-MAIL
The average for this question was 28/30 (93%)

Not many candidates attempted this transactional text. Those who chose to respond to this topic, achieved very good scores. It is noteworthy that the e-mail, which was previously a SECTION C text, has now been moved to SECTION B. This change was communicated in the Examination Guidelines 2021 (pages 20–23). The question was answered moderately well but many candidates left out the format and instead used the format of the letter as opposed to the required format of the e-mail. This text type needs to receive the attention it needs from office-based educators who are responsible for disseminating training materials and conducting workshops, province-wide and also empowering educators who do not mark.

2.2 FRIENDLY LETTER
The average for this question was 19/30 (65%)

This was by far the most popular choice of all topics in the question paper. Candidates responded moderately well but, once again, did not fully capitalise on the opportunity to do well, instead they only focused on the wasting of money aspect as opposed to remediation of the overspending/wasteful spending of the friend. Very few candidates provided good advice as they were required to do by the question.

2.3 Review
The average mark for this question was 0 (0%)

Very, very few candidates responded to this question. One or two of the candidates responded to this text type but performed poorly, because they were not au fait with the layout of a review and tended to produce poor texts by only writing down the plot and leaving out the other aspects of format. Candidates would have performed reasonably well if the review was in the form of a movie review or a restaurant review.

2.4 Interview
The average for this question was 0 (0%)

Very few candidates responded to this text type. This was because candidates failed to understand that an interview is also a dialogue and differs in context from a conversation with the asking of questions to the interviewee by the interviewer where questions are asked instead of normal conversation. This is where many candidates failed to answer the question correctly because they produced a mundane conversation as opposed to an interview as required.

SECTION C
SHORTER TRANSACTIONAL TEXTS
QUESTION 3

3.1 FLYER
The average for this question was 0/20 (0%)

Very few candidates attempted this question and from those texts assessed one got the impression that although the question was quite clear, candidates failed to respond as expected. Although there is no prescribed format for the flyer, one would have expected them to at least comply with the basic requirements of constructing a text of this nature. Most wrote rambling sentences, failing to understand what was required of them. It is felt that this question was pitched towards your more urban, articulate candidate who would understand the dynamics of waste peddling (selling and buying of waste materials).

3.2 DIARY ENTRIES
The average for this question was 12/20 (63%)

This was by the far the most popular of the texts chosen in Section C. There is just some magic when it comes to writing about babies, all and sundry will respond which was the case in this instance. Most who chose this text performed moderately well with weird and wonderful interpretations. Many, in some instances, failed to respond amicably in the "after-second entry" and made it difficult to come to a reasonable assessment of what candidates were trying to say. Some candidates misinterpreted "the spending of the night at home" with the baby as giving birth and not physically spending it interacting with the baby itself and failed to conclude what the outcome of the experience with the baby was, albeit positive or negative.

3.3 DIRECTIONS
The average for this question was 11/20 (54%)

The responses to this question were challenging. Marking this question was made difficult for the marker because of the problems encountered as a result of the visual stimulus that was compulsory to use in the text construction. Most candidates found it difficult to arrive at a reasonable score, although marking guidelines were clearly communicated to markers as decided during the MSM. Most were able to score candidates moderately on the marking rubric where they were clearly able to recognise concise and clear directions. Many just wrote confusing and inconsequential directions with unrealistic distances with some never having arrived at their destination. The addition of the visual stimulus for directions is a welcome addition to this question, but as language teachers we need to consult with people who have an understanding of maps, especially those that indicate streets and landmarks, for example, the local traffic department who are experts when it comes to maps that indicate directions.

CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT RECOMMENDATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Educators need to revert to the *CAPS document* AND the *Examination Guidelines (2021)* to prepare their learners adequately for Paper 3.

Issues such as the following need to be addressed:

- (a) The structure of the exam and the need to respond to ONE question in each section. Some candidates only do one question in SECTION B but none in SECTION C.
 - (b) Different essay types. Encourage learners to focus on the narrative and reflective essay types, as these are the types in which learners generally perform well.
 - (c) Formats of ALL types of transactional writing MUST be taught. Educators should avoid emphasising a few types of transactional pieces at the expense of others.
 - (d) Required length of responses should be strictly adhered to. Learners should be drilled on adhering to the required word count per creative writing piece.
2. Workshops to be arranged in districts to address the use of rubrics when marking creative writing pieces at schools.
Subject advisors should engage with teachers to ensure that educators are using the rubrics when marking creative writing pieces.
Rubrics should be given/shown to learners so that they understand the expectations they need to meet to achieve a particular mark for each of the sections in P3.
 3. While the focus is on the FET phase, it is important that vocabulary and writing skills be developed and fostered in the GET phase as well as in primary schools. Starting in Grade 10 is already starting too late.
 4. Process writing (as prescribed by CAPS) needs to receive attention. The final product is overly emphasised when the PROCESS is most vital to the development of valuable skills and ultimately, the product. P3 counts 100 marks but often receives far less focus than Paper 1 and 2 (80 and 70 marks respectively). The process of planning, editing and finalising the creative writing pieces, needs to be implemented and practised in class. Encouraging learners to exchange their drafts with their peers and to edit each other's work has proven to be quite effective.
Learners start to look at their work from a different perspective, leading to improved writing.

5. Educators are expected to indicate most, if not all errors committed by learners in their writing pieces. It became clear during the marking of NSC Paper 3 in 2023 that in most instances, this is sadly not the case. This unacceptable practice of not indicating candidates' errors was also picked up by the Umalusi external moderator. Therefore, we plead with departmental heads at schools and subject advisors to ensure that creative writing pieces are marked accurately and constructive feedback is given to learners. Remediation (corrections) should be done to ensure that the same mistakes are not simply repeated by learners.
6. Reading goes hand in hand with writing. Reading policies and programmes need to be designed and implemented starting at primary school, to encourage learners to read with understanding.
Reading will effectively assist learners in P3 in several ways:
 - (a) Understanding the questions and requirements
 - (b) Good sentence and paragraph structure
 - (c) Good vocabulary and knowledge of plot and story development.
7. A challenge at the marking centre is often the inability of some markers to recognise exceptional and abstract writing. Some markers do not have an extensive vocabulary and end up penalising candidates who use words outside the markers' experiential field. They end up indicating excellent words as errors.
Therefore, educators themselves should be encouraged to read. For example, subject advisors could launch district book clubs for educators. This would increase educators' abilities to recognise and correctly award marks to candidates who demonstrate exceptional writing ability.
8. Expose learners to examples of poor writing and excellent writing. Learners must be guided to recognise why certain pieces are classified as poor or excellent. This in turn will lead them to develop certain critical writing skills, such as reflection and editing of a piece of writing.