EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE
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2025 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

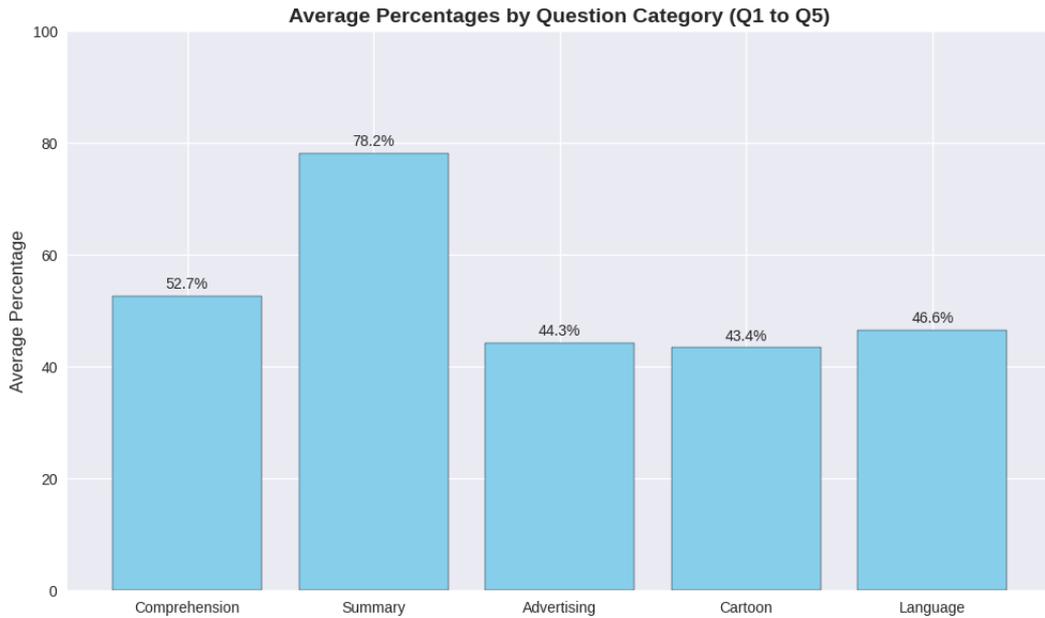|	
SUBJECT	**English Home Language**
QUESTION PAPER	1
DURATION OF QUESTION PAPER	**2 Hours**
PROVINCE	**Eastern Cape**
NAME OF THE INTERNAL MODERATOR	**Jucintha Mc Vitty Brown**
NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER	**Kerry Pocock**
DATES OF MARKING	**27 November – 13 December**
HEAD OF EXAMINATION:	**Mr E Mabona**

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

The paper was accessible and fair, allowing learners to demonstrate their abilities effectively. Learners appeared to relate well to the texts and were better equipped to answer the questions than in previous years. This suggests that teachers have taken moderator reports into account and have made productive use of past papers to prepare their learners. Encouragingly, far fewer learners relied on lifting large sections of text in their responses.

The memorandum allowed for variations in acceptable answers, enabling markers to credit learners who engaged thoughtfully with the texts and expressed their understanding in their own words. Questions 1, 2, and 5 were answered well overall, while performance in Questions 3 and 4 remained weak, indicating that visual literacy skills continue to be an area of concern.

A significant barrier to improved performance is learners' limited vocabulary, which reflects inadequate grade-appropriate literacy. Weak sentence structure further contributes to incoherent responses and, in some cases, alters the intended meaning. It is evident, however, that substantial emphasis has been placed on teaching style and language skills, and the continued inclusion of these elements in Questions 1, 3, and 4 has helped learners to obtain more marks.

We are encouraged that the final marks for this paper will be significantly better than in previous years and will provide a more accurate reflection of learners' comprehension and language abilities.

Average Percentages by Question Category (Q1 to Q5)

Category	Average Percentage
Comprehension	52.7%
Summary	78.2%
Advertising	44.3%
Cartoon	43.4%
Language	46.6%

This provides a clear visual representation of learner performance, showing that Q2 was the **best-performing question**, while Q3 and Q4 remain areas for improvement.

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

QUESTION 1: Reading for meaning and understanding

QUESTION 1
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
These questions were generally well answered, with an average of **52.7%** on the sampled scripts. There was a wide spread of marks according to learner ability, with stronger learners able to score 100%. **1.1** Most learners achieved full marks for this question, even though many lifted directly from the text: *"young people face a lack of formal employment opportunities."* **1.2** Most learners again achieved full marks by lifting a large section from the text and altering it only slightly: *"investigates what motivates graduate entrepreneurs to forge opportunities and futures for themselves and others."* **1.3** Performance was fair. Learners understood the stylistic function of case studies in strengthening an argument, but many did not earn the second mark because they failed to identify the argument itself. **1.4** Well answered. Many learners demonstrated understanding of the writer's point that entrepreneurship will create jobs on a continent facing high unemployment.

1.5

Well answered. The multiple-choice format supported learners by providing the necessary vocabulary to correctly identify the tone.

1.6

Fair. Much lifting of whole sentences occurred, and learners showed limited understanding of the study.

1.7

Well answered. Learners showed good understanding of the stylistic purpose of a single-sentence paragraph.

1.8

Poorly answered. Learners struggled to discuss the statistics or draw implications from them. Responses were very superficial.

1.9

Poorly answered. Most learners received 1 mark for lifting chunks of text. Very few focused on specific diction as required.

1.10

Fair. Learners tended to provide the standard response of "summarising the points in the text," essentially repeating the paragraph's information. They battled to comment on the **appropriateness** of the paragraph.

1.11

Learners struggled to answer this question adequately. Responses lacked cohesion; learners had difficulty identifying the "manner" of the woman and made little connection to the target audience.

1.12

Learners generally achieved full marks by drawing on prior knowledge of the term *"chase the bag."*

1.13

Learners found it difficult to link the two texts. Most achieved no more than 2 marks.

QUESTION 2

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

Many learners misunderstood the purpose of a study, interpreting it as a course that young people undertake to learn entrepreneurship. This misconception negatively affected their ability to answer questions referring to the HSRC and TIE studies.

Large portions of Text A were lifted directly as responses, with minimal discussion or interpretation. When learners attempted to use their own words, they often altered the intended meaning of the text, which further limited the quality of their answers.

A significant number of learners did not understand key vocabulary used in the questions—for example, "illustrates" in Question 1.6, "implication" in Question 1.8, and "manner" in Question 1.11. This lack of vocabulary made it difficult for them to respond fully and accurately.

Learners also struggled to structure their responses using a clear point–evidence–comment approach. Many repeated their point without providing meaningful comment or analysis.

Additionally, learners found it challenging to discuss a specific paragraph within the broader context of the text and its overall message. As a result, many responses were superficial and lacked depth.

QUESTION 3

Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.

➢ Teaching should prioritise helping learners understand the message of texts rather than merely identifying the topic. Learners need to incorporate this message into their responses, especially for higher-order questions.

➢ Learners must be taught to construct answers in a logical and coherent sequence: statement → reference to text → comment/interpretation.

When referencing the text, **learners** should focus on specific words or short phrases, rather than copying whole sentences.

➢ Learners should be taught to identify and explain the effect of stylistic techniques (e.g., tone, diction, sentence structure, figurative language) and how these contribute to the writer's message.

➢ Learners need exposure to a variety of styles and registers in texts so they can recognise how language changes according to purpose, audience, and context.

➢ When learners need to use parts of the text in their responses, they should be taught how to integrate those portions with their own words to create clear, meaningful, and relevant answers.

QUESTION 4

Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

1.2
Learners attempted to rephrase the sentence "provides key insights into what motivates graduate entrepreneurs" but often altered the meaning or produced incoherent responses. Many incorrectly stated that the study motivated graduates, rather than explored what motivated them.

1.3
Many learners recognised the effect of the case studies—e.g., that they provided credibility or served to motivate—but did not explain how they achieved this, namely by presenting real-life examples.

1.6

Many learners misinterpreted the study as a programme that taught entrepreneurs to value finding solutions. They focused on what Thandi had been taught by the study rather than on her approach to entrepreneurship. Few responses made the required comparison between Thandi and the study's respondents. Many simply lifted full sentences from the text without connecting them to the question.

1.7
Many responses overlooked the stylistic focus of the question and discussed only the content of the paragraph. Although most identified the main point of the study, they did not mention that the point was reiterated or highlighted through the use of a single-sentence paragraph.

1.8
Learners struggled with the wording of the question. Most did not discuss an implication of the statistics. Instead, they paraphrased the figures with minimal or no commentary, resulting in superficial answers.

1.9
Learners did not address specific diction. Instead, they lifted long sentences to discuss the writer's argument, adding little meaningful discussion. This suggested limited understanding of the paragraph.

1.10
Many learners paraphrased the text without demonstrating understanding of the question beyond stating, "it summarises the ideas in the text." They did not address the appropriateness of the paragraph.

1.11
The word "demeanour" proved difficult for learners to interpret. Most focused on the woman's age rather than on the fact that she is an entrepreneur, and they struggled to link this to the target audience.

1.12
Most responses did not connect the image of the bag to the advertisement's overall message. Many associated it only with the common phrase "chase the bag," referring to making money or shopping, without linking it to the intended meaning in context.

1.13
Most learners struggled to link Text B to the specific word "propel" (entrepreneurial ambitions). Many responses discussed only Text B or focused broadly on entrepreneurship, without addressing how the two texts relate in terms of propelling entrepreneurial ambitions.

QUESTION 2: Summarising in your own words

QUESTION 1
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
This question was very well answered, with an average mark of **78%** on the scripts sampled. Many learners achieved full marks, and only a very small number of those who attempted the question scored 0. These low-scoring responses were personal reflections that bore no relation to the original text. The text was highly relatable for learners, which meant that those who attempted to write in their own words were generally able to do so without altering the original meaning. However, some learners embellished their responses with additional details based on personal understanding, which caused them to stray from the main point.

QUESTION 2
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Many learners did not use the full word count, producing summaries as short as **50 words**. Such brief responses typically indicated that they had not captured the required **seven accurate points**. A number of sentences in the summaries were repetitive and omitted essential elements of the points. For example, learners wrote "fans are emotionally invested in games" (point 8) but failed to include the crucial aspect relating to the **structure of the game**. Some points in the marking guidelines combined ideas from more than one sentence in the text. Learners often misinterpreted these as two separate points. For instance, *"the waiting for games enhances anticipation and expectations of the game make it more rewarding"* was treated as two ideas rather than one. Similarly, *"identifying with"* and *"loyalty to"* a team were incorrectly split and used as separate points. Many learners lack effective summarising skills and wrote **far beyond the word count**, which wasted valuable exam time. Others wasted time by copying all relevant quotes into a table format and then rewriting them into a paragraph. This suggests they are trying to imitate the structure of the marking guidelines from past papers rather than applying summarising techniques. A small number of learners left the summary question until the end of the paper and therefore did not complete it, or produced rushed and incomplete summaries.

QUESTION 3

Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.

➢ **Summarising skills need to be practised regularly** so that learners become confident in identifying and condensing key ideas.

➢ Learners should be taught to write **paragraph-form summaries**, as these typically earn better marks; learners tend to include more points naturally in a coherent paragraph than when listing seven separate points.

➢ Learners must be taught to **use the full word count** and to include more than seven points where possible. This increases the likelihood of identifying and capturing the maximum number of accurate points.

➢ Learners should be encouraged to **answer the summary question first**, as many are capable of achieving very good marks here when they allocate sufficient time and focus.

QUESTION 4

Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

The learners who performed best were those who were able to **extract key sentences from the text and adapt them slightly** to form accurate summary points. This approach enabled them to retain the original meaning while meeting the requirements of the task.

In contrast, learners who attempted to use their **own words entirely** often changed or lost the meaning of the text, resulting in invalid or incomplete points.

Learners also struggled to identify the **essential components** of a point, frequently producing responses that included only half of the required idea.

QUESTION 3: Analysing Advertising

QUESTION 1
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
The texts were highly accessible, with minimal wording and engaging images. Learners with strong advertising-analysis skills performed very well; however, a significant number struggled either to identify the **intention** of the advertisements or to distinguish effectively between **textual** and **visual** elements. Performance tended to be polarised: many learners scored between **8–10 marks**, while others achieved only **0–3 marks**, with very few results falling in the middle range. For weaker learners, the language-based questions—particularly **3.4** and the technique-focused **3.3**—provided opportunities to earn marks even without a full understanding of the advertisements.

QUESTION 2
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Learners frequently provided **generic responses** without considering the **context of the text**. For example, in Question 3.1, many simply stated that the exclamation mark was used for emphasis, without explaining the **purpose** of that emphasis within the advertisement. The overall purpose of the advertisements—to **promote recycling**—was not understood by most learners. Many learners **misread questions** and confused text and image elements in Questions 3.3 and 3.5. In Question 3.3, learners often did not account for the **mark allocation**, providing only two components of the answer (either technique and effect or example and effect) rather than all required aspects.

QUESTION 3
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Past paper practice is essential to prepare learners for the style and focus of questions.   - Emphasis should be placed on helping learners **identify the purpose of the advertisement**, such as promoting a product, service, or message (e.g. recycling).   - Learners must be able to **distinguish between visual and textual elements** and understand how they interact.   - Teach learners to **link the image to the text and the overall message**, ensuring they can explain how the visual reinforces the textual content.

> - **Advertising techniques** should be taught systematically. Learners should answer in **three parts**:

  1. Identify the technique.
  2. Provide a specific example from the text.
  3. Explain its effectiveness in engaging the reader or promoting the advertisement's message.

QUESTION 4

Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

3.1
Many learners focused on the **generic function** of the exclamation mark, stating, for example, "makes the word stand out," without considering the **context of the advertisement's message**.

3.2
Learners showed a lack of understanding of **root words**, often including prefixes and/or suffixes in their responses.

3.3
Most answers **only partially addressed the question**. Many learners included visual techniques instead of focusing on advertising techniques. Limited vocabulary for advertising meant that learners often resorted to **explaining the technique** rather than naming it accurately.

3.5
This question was extremely poorly answered. Learners struggled to **differentiate between visual and verbal elements**, with most responses referring only to the text. Answers were often vague—for example, "the visuals in Text E relate to the message well"—without providing **specific evidence from the text** or clearly identifying the **message**.

QUESTION 4: Understanding other aspects of the media

QUESTION 1

General comment n the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

The performance on Question 4, with an average of **43.4%**, was very similar to that of Question 3 (**44.3%**). Scores ranged widely, from very poor (0/10) to excellent (10/10).

Learners generally engaged with the text **superficially** and most failed to grasp the **irony in the humour**. Many focused only on the **characters' speech**, without interpreting the images, and most did not consider the cartoon as a whole, instead analysing each frame in isolation.

The **marking guidelines** for this question were broad, allowing learners to earn marks even if their engagement with the text was minimal.

QUESTION 2

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

➤ Learners struggled to **interpret body language and attitude**, and their vocabulary for describing these elements was limited.
➤ There was a general lack of understanding of **irony**, which affected their ability to analyse the humour effectively.
➤ Many learners failed to interpret the cartoon **holistically**, instead focusing on individual frames. For example, in Question 4.1, Jeremy's attitude was often described as "nonchalant" or "neutral" because learners did not consider the **motive** behind him giving the gift.
➤ Correct terminology for the **function of the apostrophe** was often unknown. Learners tended to describe its function rather than naming it.
➤ The presence of the mother caused confusion, with many learners incorrectly including her in their answers about irony.

QUESTION 3

Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.

➤ **Past paper practice** is essential to familiarise learners with the style and focus of cartoon-based questions.
➤ Emphasis should be placed on **identifying the message of the cartoon** and ensuring that answers are explicitly linked to that message.
➤ Learners must understand the difference between **body language/facial expression** and **speech**, and be able to relate the two when interpreting characters' attitudes and intentions.
➤ Teach **vocabulary** for describing body language, facial expressions, tone, and attitude to strengthen learners' responses.
➤ Encourage learners to **consider the cartoon as a whole**, taking context into account when answering questions.
➤ Teach learners to recognise and analyse different **types of humour**, including:

- Irony
- Pun
- Satire
- Innuendo
- Anti-climax

QUESTION 4

Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

4.1
Learners who did not consider the **context** often described Jeremy's attitude as "neutral" or "nonchalant" based solely on his lack of facial expression. Others focused on his speech and interpreted his attitude as "celebratory," "congratulatory," or "loving."

4.2
Many responses were **vague**, for example, stating that the parents are "close" because they are "sitting close together." While some learners identified the type of relationship (e.g., married or a couple), they struggled to describe the **quality of the relationship** (e.g., affectionate or loving). Some misinterpreted the question to refer to the parents' relationship with Jeremy rather than to each other.

4.3
Most learners interpreted the question as referring to what Jeremy **says** rather than the **technique** of extending his speech. Few linked it to the creation of **anticipation or climax**. Common incorrect responses included: "illustrates how Jeremy speaks slowly" or "shows Jeremy is scared of his father's reaction."

4.4
The discussion of **irony** was generally poor. While most learners could identify the **contrast** in the father's reaction, they could not explain the reason behind it. Some completely misinterpreted the cartoon, believing that Jeremy was exaggerating the gift he gave.

4.5
Most learners did not use the correct **terminology** for the function of the apostrophe. Common responses included "to show belonging" or "to join words." Many were still awarded marks. Some incorrectly stated that the apostrophe in frame one indicated a **plural**.

QUESTION 5: Using Language Correctly

QUESTION 1

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

Performance in this question has been **improving steadily** each year. Learners appear to be practising language-based questions more frequently, and a far greater number are attempting this question. The question includes a **range of items with varying difficulty**, which allows most learners to score marks. The **average mark** for this question was **46.6%**, higher than the averages for Questions 3 and 4.

QUESTION 2

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

While learners generally demonstrated an understanding of the rules being tested, they often **lacked the vocabulary** needed to answer questions correctly.

- Many learners **confused antonyms with synonyms**, and the antonyms they provided were frequently **not appropriate in context**.
- Parts of speech were often confused with **figures of speech**.
- Tense errors were common in Questions 5.3 and 5.4, leading to incorrect answers, although tense was applied correctly in 5.5.
- A number of learners did not understand the term **"homophone"**, which affected their responses.

QUESTION 3

Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.

- ➢ **Frequent past paper practice** is essential, as this question can assess a **wide range of language rules**, and it is difficult to predict which rules will be tested.
- ➢ **Revision of terminology** and consistent **practice exercises** should be embedded throughout the GET and FET phases. Key areas include:

  - o Colloquialism, slang, and jargon
  - o Concord in varied contexts
  - o Punctuation
  - o Comma splice errors
  - o Active and passive voice
  - o Antonyms, synonyms, and homophones
  - o Redundancy and tautology
  - o Malapropism
  - o Direct and indirect speech
  - o Parts of speech
  - o Adverbial and adjectival clauses
  - o Misrelated and dangling participles
  - o Split infinitives
  - o Ambiguity
  - o Prefixes and suffixes
  - o Spelling rules
  - o Sentence structure

QUESTION 4

Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

5.1
The answer "same" was frequently given, showing that learners did not take the **context** of the sentence into account.

5.2
Learners often answered "simile" or "metaphor," confusing **figures of speech** with **parts of speech**.

5.3
Many sentences were incorrectly joined with "and." When learners attempted to use the correct conjunction, the resulting sentence was often **distorted**, causing the meaning to be lost.

5.4
Most learners understood that a **change in structure** was required for direct speech, but many still used "Grandpa said that" or failed to **correct the verbs**, resulting in errors.

5.7
When learners replaced a comma with an exclamation mark / full stop, they often **neglected to capitalise** the following word.

5.8
Some learners attempted to name a specific language (e.g., French, Italian, Old English) rather than giving the correct general answer: **"a foreign language."**