



EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

2018 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

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| SUBJECT: | ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE |
| PAPER: | TWO |
| DURATION OF PAPER: | 2 ½ Hours |
| DATES OF MARKING: | 30 November – 14 December 2018 |

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

This report was compiled in consultation with markers, senior markers and the internal moderator.

Poor handwriting has increased over time. It interferes with the marking process.

The range for the majority of candidates was between L1-L4. Those candidates who managed to reach Level 7 produced exceptional answers, much to the delight of the markers. This year saw a larger number of candidates obtaining marks in the two top levels (L6-L7). It is a remarkable achievement considering that Paper 2 is a difficult paper that tests candidates on all levels. Well done to educators and learners who put in the hard work and prepared for this taxing examination. Simply reading the various genres will not suffice to pass this exam.

Many candidates are unable to respond adequately to the questions' instructions, e.g. 'comment on', 'explain', etc. This contributed to the candidates not being awarded the third mark in the contextual questions.

The very poor performance of candidates at some centres is disturbing. If candidates only achieve as high as Level 2, it leaves one with serious misgivings about the quality of teaching and commitment to learning. There were many candidates who clearly had never read the books. It is a sad reflection on the state of education in our country.



It is baffling to note that many candidates do not adhere to the instructions, e.g. they answer two contextual questions from Section B and Section C, or they answer questions

on three seen poems and leave out the unseen poem. By now, candidates should be familiar with the layout and requirements of the paper.

In the Poetry Section the essay question (Q1) proved to be surprisingly popular and well answered! A significant number of candidates chose to write the essay, a marked difference from other years. The adapted essay rubric allows well prepared candidates to earn good marks.

Most candidates opted to do Question 2, while Questions 4 and 5 proved to be the most challenging, both for candidates and markers. The unseen poem was relatable and candidates engaged with the content. This year, the questions were tweaked to suit each poem, instead of having the same wording throughout. It was a welcome change.

The averages for the two novels (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*: 60% and *Life of Pi*: 50%) could possibly indicate that some centres banked on showing the film version of *Life of Pi*, rather than studying the text. Of the two novels, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was more popular, with most candidates opting to write the essay.

Othello was the least popular drama, a significant change from previous years. *Hamlet* was the most popular choice. *Othello* scored the highest average (16/25) probably because teachers are experienced in teaching the play and there is more revision material available.

The panel must be congratulated on setting a comprehensive paper. It is a considerable feat to produce a fresh and standardised format twice a year.

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

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

QUESTION 1: FIRST DAY AFTER THE WAR

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

- The average candidate was able to score 50% quite easily because the poem is fairly accessible. Many gave articulate and in-depth responses. Good candidates were scoring 80 – 100 %. Surprisingly, a good option for weaker learners.

- For the first time, this question was answered by a significant number of candidates.
- It is clear that they have been taught well, because the marks were relatively high.
- It made for enjoyable reading and marking.
- The format of the question (imagery, tone and diction) has remained the same for some time, and this has allowed candidates to be well prepared.

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

- The most common problem encountered by markers was the candidates' use of paraphrase. They turn the poem into a story without actual reference to the text.
- A line by line analysis without reference to the question will not be rewarded.
- Structure: Normal conventions of writing must be utilized. Very often there were no paragraphs, although there was evidence of structure in terms of content. Bullets and headings are still being found. This will detract from the style mark.
- The poem is the focus. There is a tendency to move away from the poem and drift into long discussions on political and racial issues not mentioned in the poem.
- Candidates quote large portions of the poem instead of key words or phrases.
- Candidates forget about the key words in the question and thus prevent themselves from scoring full marks.
- Mere references to line numbers do not constitute an answer; explaining the line content does.

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

- Teach the poetry essay! Encourage candidates to answer this question as the guidelines provided in the question are easy hooks on which to hang their answers. The question lends itself to be answered fairly easily, and many candidates will benefit from answering this question instead of the contextual questions.
- Provide structure and encourage learners to interact with the poems and not just deal with them line by line. Use the concepts of TONE, DICTION, IMAGERY and MOOD to provide a skeleton around which they can build their response.
- Teach how to use specific references from the poems to avoid the quoting of blocks from the text.
- Encourage candidates to practise their writing skills, paying attention to structure and using quotations. Supporting ideas should be focused on a few pertinent words only, not block quotes.

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

The poem deals with a topic that is relevant in the country and learners engaged with this poem to the point that many referred to themselves and their situation as Africans.

QUESTION 2: REMEMBER

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

- This was the most popular choice, and there were generally well-answered responses.
- If the poem was correctly interpreted in the classroom, learners generally performed well.

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

2.1 Candidates rely on the generic term "to emphasize", but do not develop this further.

- Words such as "highlight"; "enforce" and "show" are weak synonyms.
- They did not link the idea of death to going away.
- The use of euphemisms like "silent land" are vague and do not support the fact that the writer is referring to death.

2.2 Well answered.

2.3 Candidates often did not address both of the words in question, viz "darkness" and "corruption". The marking guideline allowed for a fairly wide interpretation but failure to mention both terms was required. Many candidates believed that the loved one would suffer from 'darkness and corruption' instead of the loved one who had died.

- The use of "it" to refer to key words such as "darkness" is strongly discouraged.
- Interpretation of these terms was often limited to only one of the partners in the poem.
- "Corruption" in terms of decay of the body was not generally taught.

2.4 Tone, although seemingly being taught to a greater extent, is still not always understood. Candidates did not always link to "central idea".

- Candidates do not use the mark allocation as a guide to answer the questions. Some 3-marks answers were extremely short.

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

- Teach learners to follow up on a statement every time, in order to prove the reason for the statement or opinion made. This could enable them to gain the second and third marks in each question.
- Teach candidates not to regurgitate the question words in their answers to content-type questions, but to use the key words in questions as a springboard into the question.
- Teach learners purpose in poetry: why do poets use certain words? Why certain structure/ pattern/ sound etc.

- Recommend (and provide!) study guides with material that analyses the poems.

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

- Candidates often misinterpreted the poem as the ending of a relationship or break-up, rather than the advent of death.
- Autobiographical detail of the poet was also evident in a few answers and this can distract the candidate from a wider interpretation.

QUESTION 3: somewhere I have never travelled, gladly beyond

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

- There were many more poor responses than good ones. The poem is a challenging one, and this made it problematic for most of the candidates.
- The higher order questions flummoxed the candidates and the marking guide was prescriptive.
- Learners do not write sufficient content and ignore the mark allocation. An average of 1 mark per question was not uncommon.

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

3.1 An entry level question which was generally well answered, although candidates often stopped at "He is happy."

3.2 Candidates answer that Spring is important, yet they do not place it in context. Some just state that Spring is a proper noun.

Many interpreted this as being personification without the interpretation of the power of spring being discussed, thus losing the second mark.

3.3 Candidates understood the paradox but often did not discuss the significance of it in terms of the writer's feelings and emotions. Average learners did not score the third mark easily.

3.4 The tone was often ignored or stated as being "negative". Many candidates have not grasped the central idea of this poem.

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

- Teachers need to stick to more conservative interpretations of this poem as there were some 'strange' interpretations from certain centres. This is a complex poem and needs to be well taught rather than dealt with lightly because of a preconceived idea that it would not be accessible to learners.
- Encourage learners to read through the entire paper before making their choices. This entails reading each sub-question too as they seem to look only at the title of the poem rather than the actual questions.

- Provide learners with words that describe tone. Train them to link this to concepts in the poem.

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

- Encourage candidates to read through the questions before deciding what to answer. The poor average for this poem indicates that most candidates would have been better off answering another question.
- There were a few strange interpretations from some centres. Teachers need to stick to conservative guidelines and study guides.

QUESTION 4: AN AFRICAN ELEGY

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

- The question was poorly answered, despite being accessible and seemingly enjoyed by many. Higher order questions caught out the average learner, and even the better ones were unable to score top marks.
- Not many candidates chose this poem.
- The questions were very poorly answered, partly due to the difficulty of the questions. Candidates could not engage with the demands of the questions. Markers found it challenging to mark the answers, because some answers overlapped, e.g. Q4.1 and Q4.4.
- Candidates wrote generalised answers.
- Candidates clearly enjoy the poem and appear to understand it, but somehow their answers did not reflect this.

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

4.1 Not a suitable entry level question. Candidates were unable to link with the marking guideline. Many simply provided a definition of the term.

4.2 Vocabulary limitations were responsible for the candidates not being able to explain the link between the word “bear” and the central idea of the poem.

4.3 Difficult question and led to many creative responses. The lines did not offer much in the way of concrete images. Most learners interpreted the lines literally.

4.4 A straightforward question but candidates once again did not always comment or mention tone. Much expansion on the lines themselves instead of focusing on the central idea.

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

- Encourage candidates to read through the questions before deciding what to answer. The poor average for this poem indicates that most candidates would have been better off answering another question.
- The use of past exam papers is highly recommended.

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

Background information is important when teaching this and other poems; it provides necessary context. Some candidates related the poem to Apartheid. However, candidates should guard against political diatribes – e.g. anti-colonialism – and rather focus on the intrinsic message of the poem.

QUESTION 5: AUTUMN

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

Mixed results were observed. The poem was accessible to most candidates, and an improvement on past years' choices, but the questions were rather restricting. Some candidates who scored 16 – 20 in an essay scored only average this question. However, there were candidates who scored more for this question than they did for the 'seen' poetry.

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

- 5.1 The vast majority of the candidates could not score the second mark due to the limitation of the guidelines, which required the concept of contrast.
- 5.2 This demanded a measure of technical knowledge of poetic techniques and candidates often failed to mention the fact that "hums" is a soft-sounding word, or that "long" and "noon" are drawn-out words.
- 5.3 Learners mentioned only the literal meaning of this line without much depth of argument. Learners' limited vocabulary again limited them in the explanation of connotations of words, e.g. "stab".
- 5.4 Candidates could identify the change in the attitude but few linked it to how the writer came to this revelation and so lost out on the third mark.

c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

- Teach technical terms and techniques like foregrounding methods, phonetic influences and sound patterns and how these add to meaning and mood.
- Teachers must make use of unseen poetry from the beginning of the high school phase. Learners are too reliant on what the teacher states is the meaning of poems and they cannot read or interpret for themselves.

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

Many of the weaker candidates left out this entire question, or they failed to engage with or understand what was required by the questions.

QUESTION 6: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

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

- This question was generally poorly answered as candidates often did not come to terms with what was required.
- The topic was far above the ability of a great number of the candidates who had prepared for themes such as "appearance/reality"; "good/evil" etc.
- Candidates cannot write a literary essay.
- Most answers were poorly structured; many resorted to storytelling.

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

- Many essays were poorly structured. The basic format of introduction, body and conclusion were lacking.
- Retelling of the plot was common, as was partial plot re-telling with a few accidental references to the topic.
- Use of past tense and first person pronouns still abounds.
- The essay question requires that the candidates understand the terminology used in instructions, e.g. "explain", "comment on".
- Candidates do not know the meaning of the action verbs like "comment on"; "discuss" etc.
- Candidates referred to parts of the question only, e.g. the tragic consequences but did not link to where art and reality are confused.

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

- Basic concepts relating to literature MUST be taught, preferably from GET phase. It is clearly evident that many candidates have not come to grips with these terms and are thus merely telling the story. Teach the terms as set out in the CAPS document: "glossary of terms". Include tests on these definitions in class tests and SBA, and then contextualized regularly in assignments.
- TEACH terms specific to this novel, like "hedonism, aestheticism . . ." and how to spell them.
- Practise the use of motivational references from the text and how to insert this information into the body of the essay, without telling the story.
- Provide learners with a template to be used in the preparation of their literature essays. This would have questions requiring them to analyse the question and work out exactly what is asked. A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.
- Avoid showing candidates the film version of the novel. There are too many discrepancies. Use only scenes which help to establish setting etc.
- Spend enough time on thorough teaching of the literary essay. **BOTTOM LINE!**

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

- Many responses reflected the film version of the novel with the obvious deviations from the original novel. The showing of the entire film is to be discouraged as this tends to affect the candidates' understanding of the plot. Certain scenes may be useful to form an idea of the lifestyle, setting and such, particularly for learners who would never have been exposed to this type of society.

QUESTION 7: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

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

- This question was fairly well answered when chosen. Many centres chose to do the contextual question in Section C, presumably because of the fallacy that learners must go into the exam prepared to write the novel or the dram essay before reading the questions.

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

7.1 Many candidates left this out. Lack of knowledge of the novel? Failure to understand

"place in context"? Responses of "Chapter 13" are to be ruled out.

Candidates mention events following the extract instead of leading up to the extract.

7.2 Candidates often failed to link the consequences of the "wish" as being Dorian's fault.

7.3 Generally well answered, but candidates had to deal with BOTH characters,

7.4 Failure to understand "comment on" led to a number of candidates not scoring the full 3 marks. Candidates did not point out the 'he may as well continue'. They were unable to grasp clearly Dorian Gray's state of mind.

7.5 Open question and candidates generally scored well. Responses such as "No, Basil did nothing wrong" received no mark. Candidates must elaborate. Many candidates omitted to mention that Basil introduced Lord Henry to Dorian.

7.6 Candidates rely on basic terms such as "sad" for mood. Many synonyms were accepted but only if the explanation showed an understanding of nostalgia/ regret.

7.7 Many did not know what "Victorian society" thought about life, or did not refer to this in their response at all. Hetty needed to be included in the answer because this was her view too.

Much creative writing was observed here. Candidates need to structure their answers like a mini essay with references to the text.

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

- Extensive teaching of all the basic terms as mentioned in Question 6.
- Mark allocation is a hint as to the length or detail required. Candidates often ignore and write too little. However, candidates who write more than 10 – 20 lines on a 3-mark question are also not adhering to this general convention.
- Teach candidates to 'place passages in context'. Use games quizzes etc.
- Teach candidates how to answer questions such as 'critically discuss', 'motivate your response', etc.

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

- Many responses reflected the film version of the novel with the obvious deviations from the original novel. The showing of the entire film is to be discouraged as this tends to affect the candidates' understanding of the plot. Certain scenes may be useful to form an idea of the lifestyle, setting and such, particularly for learners who would never have been exposed to this type of society.

QUESTION 8: LIFE OF PI ESSAY

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

- Candidates' responses were fair. Those who prepared for the exam obtained good marks.
- The question addressed one of the themes from the novel and should not have been challenging for the average candidate.
- Far too many essays are based on the film version of the novel. Inaccurate storytelling is the result. The candidates did not come to terms with the themes of reality and illusion.
- There is a lack of textual knowledge.
- Good essays included a range of characters and how they contributed to the two concepts.

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

- Many essays were poorly structured. The basic format of introduction, body and conclusion were lacking.
- Retelling of the plot was common, as was partial plot re-telling with a few accidental references to the topic.
- Use of past tense and first person pronouns.
- The essay question requires that the candidates understand the terminology used in instructions, e.g. "explain", "comment on" Candidates do not know the meaning of the action verbs like "comment on"; "discuss" etc.
- Candidates focused on "science" and "religion" only and failed to see that "reason" is a broader concept, as is "faith".
- Long discussions and explanations of the three religions featured without the link to faith. Many responses mentioned that Pi "prayed a lot" as the discussion on "faith".
- There were many good responses which discussed both concepts well, but then failed to mention the co-existence of the two in Pi's experience on the boat.

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

- Basic concepts relating to literature MUST be taught, preferably from GET phase. It is clearly evident that many candidates have not come to grips with these terms and are thus merely telling the story. Teach the terms as set out in the CAPS document: "glossary of terms". Include tests on these definitions in class tests and SBA, and then contextualized regularly in assignments.
- Practise the use of motivational references from the text and how to insert this information into the body of the essay, without telling the story.
- Provide learners with a template to be used in the preparation of their literature essays. This would have questions requiring them to analyse the question and work out exactly what is asked. A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.

- Avoid showing candidates the film version of the novel. There are too many discrepancies. Use only scenes which help to establish setting etc.
- Spend enough time on thorough teaching of the literary essay. **BOTTOM LINE!**

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

- DO NOT SHOW THE FILM IN PLACE OF READING THE NOVEL.
- Candidates are confused as to the two parallel plots.

QUESTION 9: CONTEXTUAL – THE LIFE OF PI

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

- Many candidates did not seem to handle this question well, despite the relatively high number of lower to middle order questions.
- All the questions were answered, but not all were answered very well.
- Candidates who studied for the exam did not have problems answering the questions.
- Instructions such as 'comment on the significance', 'comment on the extent' and 'justify your response' need to be explained and practised in class. These instructions are generally used and candidates cannot afford to lose marks because they are not skilled in reading questions.

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

9.1 The action verb "explain" was too broad for the candidates in that they did not link it to how he came to be there and what his presence meant. Not enough detail was provided and candidates often did not score 3 marks.

9.2 Candidates suggested a state of mind without any textual reference or reason for this. Many candidates were unable to describe Pi's 'state of mind'. Once again, a number of synonyms were accepted, only if the explanation suggested his despair and distress.

9.3 Many responses credited the hyena with bringing Richard Parker into the open and left it there. There was a need to mention the French cook as part of the novel as a whole

9.4 Well answered.

9.5 Poorly answered. Candidates need to be able to place passages in context. Failure to engage with the text instead of the film or study guide is to blame. There is confusion at school level as to what the instruction "place in context" means. Previously, it was stated as what happens immediately before, during and after the passage. This is in opposition to the latest directive of what happened prior to the passage.

9.6 Many candidates missed the respect demanded by Pi and only mentioned the moving off to hunt behaviour of Richard Parker. Candidates missed “novel as a whole” and “implications”, many not understanding this question.

9.7 The term “foreshadow” was not understood. The poor meerkat was also morphed into all sorts of new animals ranging from “meatcat” to “moerkat”. The misspelling of a word in the passage creates a poor reflection. Some candidates did not obtain the third mark because they did not fully discuss ‘the effect on his life’, which implied his current life in Toronto.

9.8 Many candidates simply left out this question. Concepts of “reality” and “illusion” need to be taught. The question paved the way for many philosophical responses without textual references as was required by the question.

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

- See the response to Question 6.
- Provide candidates with lists of instructions commonly used in existing exam papers and spend time explaining what each means.
- Using old exam papers as preparation for all exams is invaluable.
- Spend enough time on thorough teaching of the literary essay.
- A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.

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

- This novel affords teachers and candidates an opportunity to read for enjoyment; use it.

QUESTION: ESSAY QUESTION - HAMLET

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

- Candidates performed generally worse in this essay than those who answered Question 11.
- This question generated many weak responses. Candidates' responses showed a limited focus and interpretation.
- Hardly any candidates picked up on ‘passivity’ in their responses.
- Basic essay writing skills were lacking; many candidates use a colloquial style or wrote the essay in the first person.

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

- There were many candidates who simply resorted to a mere retelling of the story, often with large chunks of irrelevant detail with reference to the topic.

- Headings, bullets and lack of proper structure detract from the mark.
- An inability to understand the words “passivity” and “manipulation” caused candidates to misinterpret the topic and go off on a tangent.
- Candidates needed to show how the women reacted to the exploitation too so that their being manipulated could be proved.
- Many pre-pared essays on various topics, characters and themes were noticed. There were centres where almost all the essays were identical, but all of them irrelevant to the topic. The result is garbled essays with unrelated quotes.
- Use of the past tense, the use of colloquial/chatty style and first person pronoun always lead to a dismal mark.
- Moralising, preaching, hypothesizing and philosophical essays do not score. The use of Biblical quotes is out of place.
- Quotes which are randomly inserted and are out of context.
- Many candidates use rhetorical questions to communicate with the examiner.

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

- Refer to the response to Question 6.
- Practise reading and comprehension skills early and often.
- Drill candidates in methods of analyzing key concepts and words in essay questions.
- Teach candidates how to write a generic essay in class. Encourage peer marking or any other collaborative process to allow candidates a practical experience of the process.
- A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.

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

- Candidates need to sharpen up on their expression, e.g. Ophelia is not “the love of his life” when referring to her character; Gertrude is not Hamlet’s “mom”.
- Teachers should refrain from suggesting to candidates that any essay would earn them some marks. This has the unfortunate outcome that candidates rote learn an essay which they submit in the misguided belief that they would be awarded marks.

QUESTION 11: CONTEXTUAL QUESTION - HAMLET

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

- This was better answered than the essay on this drama. Most candidates could answer

all the questions, which were fair and accessible. However, the aspects of drama like body language and tone were not adequately understood. It appears too often that dramas are not perceived to be different to novels.

- A number of candidates scored high marks.
- Some candidates misinterpreted the questions.
- Candidates do not provide enough information to earn a third mark.
- Candidates cannot answer the question on stage directions (Q11.7), a question that is often asked and an integral part of teaching any play.

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

11.1 Candidates omitted to establish that the friendship between Hamlet and the two characters was one of the reasons for their being chosen.

11.2 Candidates state that Hamlet went "crazy", "Loony". Generally well answered.

11.3 "Polonius" (and all characters' names were badly spelt). Teach this. Candidates stopped at saying that he was loyal and did not develop the idea to show his self-serving character trait. They did not focus on the information contained in the specific line references.

11.4 Many did not mention Hamlet's already negative opinion of women which was caused by his mother's behaviour and marriage to Claudius.

11.5 Candidates do not explain 'irony' thoroughly enough to earn full marks. In many centres, this question was left out completely.

11.6 Candidates did not mention his non-commitment to repent but merely what he had done wrong.

11.7 The play is often not seen as drama and the staging aspects are not understood. Tone is not properly understood and many left it out of their response. Full marks demanded that both concepts be dealt with. The reason behind the choice of body language and tone is vital as most candidates score for the body language /tone but do not give the underlying reason. Many did not focus on the instruction and had Hamlet brandishing his sword.

11.8 Most candidates scored 3-4 marks. They usually did not provide enough justification to earn the final mark

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

- Teachers need to teach 'Hamlet' as a play. Candidates must know the basic techniques involved in the production of a play. This would include aspects such as 'tone' and 'body language'.
- Teach 'irony' and 'dramatic irony' in context. Explain how these terms have to be

answered.

- Pay more attention to the development of Gertrude's and Ophelia's characters. Secondary characters do have an impact on the main characters and the plot and are often neglected.
- Do not focus on model answers but rather let learners work through past papers.

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

- If teachers decide to show a film version of the play, choose a version of a stage play.
- If possible, allow candidates an opportunity to act out parts of the play, as it gives them an understanding of Shakespeare's writing skills and the significance of aspects such as body language. Besides, it is fun!

QUESTION 12: ESSAY QUESTION - OTHELLO

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

- This year did not produce as many responses as in previous years.
- The responses ranged from really weak to some truly competent and mature answers. Many candidates had clearly not read or engaged with the play at all.
- The usual problems concerning poor essay writing were in evidence.

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

- Many candidates misunderstood terms such as "contradict", "submissive" and "immoral". The topic was too much for many to cope with.
- Some responses supplied very little evidence to substantiate their arguments.
- Prepared essays dealing with known themes, character analysis and issues outside the topic were offered in place of topic-specific answers.

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

- Refer to the response to Question 6.
- Candidates should be taught that they can agree on some aspects and disagree on others. They should be taught how to structure such a reply. (Some were under the impression that they should take only one route.)
- Spend enough time on thorough teaching of the literary essay.
- A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.

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

that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

- Teach pronouns. The incorrect use of pronouns can lead to unnecessary confusion. Use character names where possible.
- 'Othello' is set in Venice, not in Vietnam.
- Emilia was unaware of Iago's plot.
- Poor handwriting has increased over time. It interferes with the marking process.

QUESTION 13: CONTEXTUAL QUESTION - OTHELLO

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

- There was a mix of excellent and inadequate answers.
- Many candidates failed to obtain full marks for uncomplicated answers. They did not know what is required for 3-4 marks answers. There are often questions where a well explained answer is awarded the third mark, so poorly expressed ideas penalize themselves.
- In some centres it was evident that the candidates had not studied the play.

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

- Candidates could answer most of the questions.
- 13.1 Candidates stated why Brabantio does this but fail to say what he wants from the Duke.
- 13.2 Generally well answered.
- 13.3 Many candidates did not focus on Brabantio's perception. Instead, they gave a general overview of Desdemona's character. Many did not understand the meaning of 'perception'.
- 13.4 Many did not understand 'compromises' and answered the question incorrectly.
- 13.5 Many candidates focused on why the handkerchief, but not on "at this point in the play".
- 13.6 Candidates struggled to obtain full marks. They ignored either 'tone' or 'motivate'. The reason for the choice of body language and tone is vital, otherwise any movement could be used.
- 13.7 Too many candidates failed to give an adequate explanation of 'irony' in context.
- 13.8 Most candidates answered this question well enough to earn 3-4 marks.

© Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

- Teachers need to teach 'Othello' as a play. Candidates must know the basic techniques involved in the production of a play. This would include aspects such as 'tone' and 'body language'.
- Teach 'irony' and 'dramatic irony' in context. Explain how these terms have to be answered.
- Explain the instruction implied in 'comment critically on', 'account for', 'in the light of

later events'.

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

- Candidates have a limited vocabulary. Teachers should compile a glossary of appropriate words for candidates to use.
- If teachers decide to show a film version of the play, choose a version of a stage play.

QUESTION 14: ESSAY QUESTION – THE CRUCIBLE

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

- The question was poorly answered, probably because the phrasing of the question was problematic. Many did not understand what the 'view' required.
- Poorly written essays hampered the marking process.
- Issues around style (too colloquial) and language (spelling and the use of pronouns) were in evidence.
- The structure also proved problematic – some candidates restate the topic as their introduction and conclusion.

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

- As in other essay questions, candidates lacked basic writing skills and were unable to express themselves clearly.
- The question was phrased in a complicated way. Little guidance was given.
- Candidates did not understand how to respond to the 'view'.
- Many candidates rephrased the question and discussed the role of women in society rather than what the question stipulated.
- Pre-prepared essays on various themes were observed.

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

- See the response to Question 6.
- Spend enough time on thorough teaching of the literary essay.
- A helpful aid is the PEE method: make a point, provide an example and explain.
- Provide examples of good essays and essays that are only telling stories and teach the difference.

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

- Discourage candidates from writing diatribes about witchery, children's rights, satanism and Abigail's evil spirit.

QUESTION 15: CONTEXTUAL QUESTION – THE CRUCIBLE

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

- Very few candidates scored more than 20 marks.
- Candidates lack an understanding of basic question and answering techniques.

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

15.1 Well answered.

15.2 Candidates struggled to earn the third mark. They had a poor grasp of Parris's character and did not understand the nature of 'contradiction'.

15.3 Candidates did not know the meaning of 'dissembling'.

15.4 Few understood the historical context and what 'Salem society' means.

15.5 Candidates could not accurately 'place the extract in context'. Action leading up to the extract is to be included, and not what follows.

15.6 Many candidates struggled to answer 'tone' and 'motivate' well enough to obtain the third mark. Some suggested changes to the dialogue. The reason for the choice of body language and tone is vital.

15.8 The marking guideline offered relatively few points for 4 marks.

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

- Provide candidates with reliable study material.
- Teach the rudimentaries of a stage play. Candidates should get full marks for questions based on stage directions.
- Study previous exam papers as they are the best available form of exam preparation.

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

- If possible, allow candidates an opportunity to act out parts of the play, as it gives them an understanding of the characters and the significance of aspects such as body language.

