

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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2019 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE
PAPER:	3
DURATION OF PAPER:	2½ hours
DATES OF MARKING:	1 – 13 DECEMBER 2019

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

Although the paper was more challenging than in the past, there were still topics that catered for all learners. Learners who chose their topics wisely were able to respond very favourably to the paper. Responses varied: from excellent (some learners were awarded 100% for either a section or the entire paper) to extremely poor. The poor responses were due to a lack of understanding or a misinterpretation of the topic.

Many of the topics, especially 1.1, 1.3 and 1.6.3 encouraged personal and sincere responses. Although a figurative approach to a topic in Section A is preferable, a number of literal responses produced average to pleasing writing.

Section B covered a variety of formats from the allocated categories. Unfortunately many candidates failed to address all the requirements of the topic; this negatively affected their mark for content.

The majority of the candidates managed their time effectively. However, some candidates were pressed for time and either did not complete or rushed through the final piece. Unfortunately, some candidates who chose to start with Section B, were unable to complete the essay from Section A. This had a severe impact on the final mark.

The topics were not culturally exclusive or one-dimensional. Responses could be creative, descriptive, reflective, narrative or discursive/argumentative and therefore catered for all styles of writing.

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?		
<i>Average mark from the sample of 100:</i>		SECTION A
SUB-QUESTION	TOPIC OR ASPECT TESTED	AVERAGE % FROM SAMPLE
1.1	My inner landscape	54.8
1.2	'No bird soars too high...'	55
1.3	Breaking the code of silence	54
1.4	'Joy is greater than sorrow..'	56.2
1.5	Stolen Glimpses	66.6
1.6.1	Man and Penguins	58.9
1.6.2	Wilted roses	54.5
1.6.3	Boys playing with a ball	61.3

SECTION A		
GENERAL		
Some candidates tried to impress with their vocabulary; unfortunately, the words were often inappropriate in context and detracted from what the candidate was trying to convey. A lack of punctuation seriously affected the logical flow of the writing. Markers had to try to make sense of run-on sentences that continued for an entire paragraph. Some candidates did not understand how to use paragraphs. Introductions and conclusions were often poorly constructed or lacking. The link between the introduction and conclusion was not evident. It appeared that candidates stopped or abruptly wrapped up the essay as soon as they reached the allotted word count.		
1.1	**MY INNER LANDSCAPE**	
	Candidates who addressed the figurative aspect of the topic produced excellent, original writing. Responses were rich with imagery and introspection. Weaker candidates used the topic as a confessional to discuss self-esteem, anxiety, depression and other personal issues.	
1.2	**NO BIRD SOARS TOO HIGH IF HE SOARS WITH HIS OWN WINGS**	
	This was not a popular topic. Candidates who did choose the topic coped adequately. There were a few exceptional essays.	
1.3	**BREAKING THE CODE OF SILENCE**	

	<p>This was an extremely popular topic which produced a great variety of responses. Most candidates focused on injustice against women and children and the importance of speaking out. Many candidates who chose a narrative approach produced sincere, authentic and thought-provoking writing.</p>
1.4	<p>SOME OF YOU SAY JOY IS GREATER THAN SORROW...</p> <p>Strong candidates consistently produced essays of an evocative and figurative nature. Most candidates were able to cope with the complementary nature of joy and sorrow; few struggled to address the duality of joy and sorrow implied in the quotation.</p>
1.5	<p>STOLEN GLIMPSES</p> <p>The topic lent itself to nostalgic, whimsical or even tragic narratives. Stronger candidates produced interesting and insightful essays, while the weaker candidates misinterpreted the concept of secrecy and treated 'stolen' as literal theft. The majority of the responses were narrative and dealt with emotional issues such as lost loves, unrequited love or missed opportunities.</p>
1.6.1	<p>MAN WITH PENGUINS</p> <p>Although this was not a popular topic, those who chose it produced some creative responses. Candidates referred to leaders and followers. Literal responses included essays about actual penguins and how to care for them. Metaphorical responses were also produced.</p>
1.6.2	<p>WILTED ROSES</p> <p>This was an accessible topic which was suitable for weak and strong candidates. Even weaker candidates were able to create an analogy. Many candidates use this stimulus to write about lost love and bereavement. The very weak candidates referred to caring for flowers. A number of candidates produced brilliantly evocative responses: anorexia, dementia, body-shaming, emotional breakdown. Literal essays dealt with a lack of water/drought.</p>
1.6.3	<p>BOYS PLAYING WITH A BALL</p> <p>This topic was favoured by the weaker candidates who wrote rags-to-riches stories or the importance/benefits of sport. There were a number of nostalgic essays which referred to childhood and growing up. The candidates coped well with the topic.</p>

SECTION B

<i>Average mark from the sample of 100:</i>		SECTION B:
SUB-QUESTION	TOPIC OR ASPECT TESTED	AVERAGE % FROM SAMPLE
2.1	Letter to the Editor	54.3
2.2	Book review	57.3
2.3	Interview	53.9
2.4	Magazine Article	58.5
2.5	Formal Letter	53.1
2.6	Speech	52.7

2.1 LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Candidates were able to relate to and comment on the topic. Unfortunately, far too many candidates used the incorrect format or even none at all. Many are still addressing the editor directly.

2.2 BOOK REVIEW

This was not a popular topic and was poorly answered. Very few candidates understood the function of a book review and did not cover the necessary aspects. Candidates were confused by the visual: some described the graphic while others told the story of Anne instead of reviewing her biography.

2.3 INTERVIEW

This was a very popular choice and was generally well handled and dealt with unethical practices in a variety of ways. However, the weaker candidates did not understand the concept of 'unethical' or even 'practices'. A number of candidates confused 'practice' with sport practice sessions.

2.4 MAGAZINE ARTICLE

This was a less popular choice. Many candidates dealt with modern slavery in interesting ways, e.g. addiction, social media, work, unfair labour practices. Tone, register and style of a magazine article was not always evident. Candidates who included a heading and an original sub-heading produced good and informative articles.

2.5 FORMAL LETTER

This was a popular choice and most candidates understood the idea of 'selling' themselves. Learners did not read the question properly and wrote letters of application instead. The inclusion of 'chatty' and 'interesting' in the accompanying advertisement mislead some candidates into writing informally whereas the tone and register should have been formal. Incorrect format disadvantaged their marks.

2.6 SPEECH

This was the most popular topic. Learners who adhered to the requirements of the topic were able to score high marks. However, far too many candidates ignored the instruction to address 'the changes that the current generation will have to make'. These candidates produced responses that were far too general and listed the problems facing the world. Many candidates failed to motivate the young adult audience. There were a number of surprisingly out-of-the-box responses.

(b) Why the question was poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.	
SECTION A	
1.1 MY INNER LANDSCAPE	On occasion candidates misinterpreted the concept of an 'inner landscape' and simply wrote a narrative essay. Sometimes the essay did not deal with personal introspection.
1.2 NO BIRD SOARS TOO HIGH IF HE SOARS WITH HIS OWN WINGS	Candidates were often confused by the quotation and the complex idea was sometimes not well explored or expressed.
1.3 BREAKING THE CODE OF SILENCE	Weaker candidates misinterpreted the topic and focused on literal silence or breaking rules, e.g. keeping quiet in an examination.
1.4 SOME OF YOU SAY JOY IS GREATER THAN SORROW ...	Some candidates failed to understand the subtlety of the quotation which implies the complementary nature of joy and sorrow. A few candidates mistakenly focused on the word, 'greater' and wrote about feelings of superiority.
1.5 STOLEN GLIMPSES	The weaker candidates misinterpreted the concept of secrecy and treated 'stolen' as literal theft or made reference to an overt look. Others did not understand the fleeting nature of a 'glimpse'. The analogies and metaphors in the figurative responses often lost focus and became convoluted.
1.6.1 MAN WITH PENGUINS	A few learners reproduced film plots, possibly as it was not a typically South African context or setting.
1.6.2 WILTED ROSES	Some candidates wrote about flowers in general and were not able to respond creatively to the graphic. Such responses achieved moderate results.
1.6.3 BOYS PLAYING WITH A BALL	The weaker candidates focused purely on sport and offered a one-sided, limited response. Candidates who described every detail of the picture did not achieve an interesting and cohesive piece of writing.
SECTION B	
GENERAL	
It is important to remember that transactional writing has a specific purpose and relevant formats should be adhered to. This is NOT a creative writing section. Responses need to be appropriate to the topic and purpose. Register and tone are of MAJOR importance. Candidates should not include an email address and cell phone number in the address block. Format is extremely important in Section B.	
2.1 LETTER TO THE EDITOR	Candidates lose marks when format is incorrect. Far too many candidates had a vague or no idea of the correct format. Addresses were muddled and often omitted. Incorrect salutation and signing off were used or left out entirely. The subject line/heading was usually too long or omitted; often it was far too vague

and did not provide direction. Candidates need to refrain from addressing the editor. The tone and register were inappropriate.

The following problems were noted:

- addresses were omitted
- street addresses and P O Box numbers were used together in the same address
- addresses were written in the incorrect order
- postal codes and dates were omitted
- the date was also included in the business address
- the date was not written in full
- the salutation referred to 'To whom it may concern'
- candidates wrote 'Dear Editor' instead of Sir/Madam
- subject headings were omitted
- subject headings were far too long, or vague or not pertinent
- opening paragraphs did not specify the nature of the matter
- the body of the letter consisted of one long paragraph
- incorrect signing off was used
- candidates signed off simply with their first names
- signatures were omitted
- candidates wrote: 'I would really like for you to ...'
- tone and register were problematic
- requests were made to the editor to investigate and expose the issues
- candidates who used *nom de plumes* did not write their names

2.2 BOOK REVIEW

Very few candidates understood the function of a book review and did not cover the necessary aspects. Some described the graphic while others told the story of Anne instead of reviewing her biography.

2.3 INTERVIEW

Many candidates did not understand the concept of 'unethical' or even 'practices'. A number of candidates confused 'practice' with sport practice sessions. Far too much time was spent welcoming the guest and exchanging unnecessary pleasantries. Some lacked appropriate interaction: often the interviewee was in control of the interview.

2.4 MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Style, register and tone were often inappropriate. Candidates omitted a title and a creative sub-title. The audience of young adults was not always considered. The lack of paragraphing affected the impact of the article.

2.5 FORMAL LETTER

Candidates did not read the question carefully and wrote a letter of application instead, while others assumed they had already been appointed. Some candidates used an arrogant and or flippant tone which is highly inappropriate in any formal letter. The usual format errors were evident.

2.6 SPEECH

Many candidates failed to acknowledge the audience. The use of 'standing here before you is' and 'greetings to the floor at large' needs to be avoided! Candidates resorted to sermonising or scolding the audience instead of motivating. Too much time was spent listing the problems, while suggesting 'changes' as an afterthought. Often changes were not mentioned at all. Register was often inappropriate to a formal audience, e.g. audience addressed as 'You guys'. The expression: a 'speech should be as short as a mini-skirt' is utterly inappropriate in this context.

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

- The June and September examinations provide candidates with knowledge and experience of the demands of the paper. Teachers should give thorough feedback to make candidates aware of the necessity of time management and choosing topics that play to their strengths.
- Candidates must be aware of the time allocation per section suggested in the instructions and plan the division of their time accordingly. It is strongly advised that candidates should adhere to this suggested time allocation. There were a number of candidates who did not write the second piece in Section B or who were unable to finish. It is hoped that the time allocation for the paper will be increased to three hours, which should alleviate the problem.
- A number of candidates, who answered Section B first, were unable to devote enough time to complete the essay in Section A. Candidates should be advised to answer the paper in the order in which it is set.
- Candidates should be guided in responding to the graphics. They must **not** describe what they see in the graphic, which is meant as a stimulus. Candidates should not write: 'In this picture I see ...'.
- Candidates must not write rap song or poems instead of essays.
- Candidates should not write: 'I have chosen this topic because ...'.
- Candidates should be discouraged from preparing essays which they then try to manipulate into one of the topics. This leads to contrived and inauthentic responses.
- Candidates should not address the reader, for example: 'So you should think about what you have said to people.'
- Section A in Paper 3 assesses candidates' abilities to respond originally and creatively. For this reason, they should not simply rehash films or books.
- Verbosity needs to be discouraged. Weaker candidates tend to use convoluted sentences and inappropriate vocabulary which compromises the coherence of their writing.
- Candidates must be encouraged to do some form of planning. They should plan essays to maintain focus, yet they should **refrain from overly long planning**. The writing of a draft should be **limited to the essentials** to allow time for writing and editing.
- Centres must ensure that they provide learners with the correct format and requirements of Section B.
- Candidates need to be reminded that **TWO** pieces of writing are required in Section B and they should manage their time accordingly.
- Section B lacked paragraphing.
- The writing in Section B was often too short; this resulted in writing which lacked elaboration and substance.
- Candidates should not cross out their rough draft before having completed the final piece of writing.
- Focus on the importance of using correct transactional formats to score top marks.
- Candidates should be made aware of the descriptors on the rubrics to equip them to respond to the paper as expected and to improve on their writing. Being exposed to the rubric will create an understanding of the requirements of the topics.
- Educators should condition learners to answer to their strengths.
- Candidates need to be taught to analyse a topic and highlight the key aspects.
- Learners should select topics to which they can relate and to which they can respond with confidence and knowledge.
- Register and tone must be appropriate to the purpose of the writing.

- Candidates must avoid flippant responses to the topic and must bear in mind that this section has a definite function. Silly and inappropriate jokes in, for example, the obituary or speech will affect the mark awarded.
- Inappropriate information should not be included, especially in the obituary.
- Expose candidates to actual letters to the editor and obituaries in newspapers in order to acquaint them with the requirements of these genres.
- Paragraphing, structure, register and tone are important.
- Concise writing must be practised since learners need to give as much relevant detail as possible.
- Details need elaboration to achieve the purpose of the writing. This will prevent general responses. Candidates should avoid needless repetition to make the point.
- Candidates must avoid redundancies, e.g. We are going to look/see; We were searching/looking for.
- Candidates must focus on proper conclusions. Transactional writing, especially, cannot be left hanging.
- If *nom de plumes* are used, the writer's name must still appear.
- The dates should be written in full and numerals should be used for the day and year.
- Numbers used in a sentence must be written in full, e.g. He was five years old.
- & should not be used instead of 'and'.
- Candidates should refrain from using correction fluid.
- Candidates should not write the word count on every word throughout the essay.
- To ensure that markers are aware of where the essay begins and ends, candidates must distinguish clearly between their planning and their final product. Candidates must please draw a line through their rough drafts.
- Candidates should number their planning **and** their final copy clearly at the start of the essay.
- Candidates who plan in pencil must not write over the pencil in ink for the final copy.
- Candidates need to proofread and edit their work. There were many examples of where words were carelessly omitted.
- Candidates should include a title for their essays, especially when they have chosen one of the pictures, since this will create focus and reader expectation, as well as enhance the quality of writing.
- Candidates must be encouraged to use their reading time effectively to identify **all** the required components of a topic.
- Candidates should spend enough time choosing a topic to which they can relate and which suits their style of writing. If there is a word in the topic which they do not understand, they should avoid that topic as there are other options.
- Candidates should not leave pages open between pieces of writing.
- Candidates should start each new piece of writing on a new page.
- Candidates must not tear pages from their booklets.
- Candidates have an entire booklet in which to write. They should avoid cramming the writing onto as few pages as possible.
- It is essential that candidates start their essays at the **top** of a page and write to the **last line** of the page, as at times it appears to the marker that the essay has ended, yet there is still a paragraph that follows once the page has been turned.
- There is no need for the candidate to repeat the topic or state the focus of the essay as if he/she were debating, e.g. 'In this essay I will be discussing...' or 'The topic means ...'.
- Encourage creativity and figurative responses to the topics. However, if the candidate is average, he/she should stick to what he/she knows.

- Educators should focus on the importance of **content** and learners should realise that their responses must be relevant to the topic.
- Candidates need to practise introductory and concluding paragraphs to ensure that the conclusion follows logically from the introduction. Educators should stress the importance of the impact of effective introductions and conclusions, as well as the need to establish the link between the introduction and conclusion.
- Candidates **must not use headings** like, 'Introduction', 'Body' and 'Conclusion'.
- The importance of **structure** needs to be emphasised: the development of an essay is greatly enhanced by correct, logical paragraphing and the use of topic sentences. Candidates could use words like, "however", "although" "furthermore" to improve the link of ideas from one paragraph to the next.
- Candidates who develop their ideas and provide detail are able to score high marks for structure.
- Paragraphs need to be varied! Some candidates are under the impression that an essay consists of three paragraphs only: an introduction, a body and conclusion.
- Candidates need to be reminded that a new paragraph means leaving a line open. This is also very important when direct speech is used in the writing.
- Teach learners how to construct a paragraph: topic sentence plus elaboration. One paragraph should contain one idea. Learners also tend to string together topic sentences without elaboration.
- The importance of sentence structure should be reinforced to create readable and effective writing.
- Candidates should focus on varying their sentence length as this improves the style and structure of the essay.
- The weaker learners, especially, should focus on being concise. A sentence is a unit of meaning. Lengthy sentences, which could almost be considered to be a paragraph, should be avoided. Overly long and cumbersome sentences detract from the essence and impact of the writing.
- However, candidates should avoid constructing a string of simple sentences.
- Discourage the repetitive use of **participial phrases** to start sentences.
- The use of **sentence fragments** is still a problem. Teachers should address the candidates' use of incomplete sentences.
- While good vocabulary is rewarded, inappropriate use of excessive pre-learnt or pre-taught **vocabulary** should be discouraged. Invariably candidates use these words in the incorrect context, producing incoherent responses.
- Encourage original metaphoric responses and avoid the use of clichés and idioms.
- Teachers should **not** encourage learners to learn lists of clichés, quotations and platitudes which are then used excessively in their writing. These come across as "forced" and produce writing which is not cohesive; instead the writing is insincere, disjointed and lacks meaning.
- Teach candidates how to use rhetorical questions and devices effectively.
- Candidates must be more attentive to **punctuation**. Sentences were at times long and confusing, leading to a lack of coherence.
- **Comma splicing** remains an ongoing problem and needs **SERIOUS** attention. A lack of punctuation leads to long, rambling sentences. This is a problem which is on the increase and has a detrimental effect on the mark for language and structure. There were some centres where the majority of the candidates wrote paragraphs consisting of a single, confusing sentence.
- The correct format for listing is a comma between each item, with the last item in the list preceded by 'and'.
- Learners should not use semi-colons indiscriminately.
- The focus should be on using a comma after the word instead of at the beginning of the next line.

The following is incorrect: 'Even though matric was hard work

, it was worth the effort.'

- A hyphen must be used at the end of a syllable when a word is continued on the next line. If candidates are unsure where to use the hyphen, they should rather place the entire word on the next line.
- Candidates should avoid using 'e.g.' or 'etc.' or 'i.e.' in their writing. If they do insist on using these, they should abbreviate them properly and use them correctly.
- Instead of using 'reason being', candidates should use 'because'.
- Inconsistent use of the **pronoun** needs to be addressed, e.g. Candidates write, 'One should do their work' instead of 'One should do one's work' or 'Everybody must do their work' instead of 'his/her work'; 'A person should do their work' instead of 'A person should do his or her work'.
- Candidates should apply the rule that a pronoun replaces the name of the person or thing and should avoid writing: 'This letter it is ...' / 'Anne, she is a bully...' / 'some situations that we face they are difficult' / 'some problems we tend to solve them'.
- Remind candidates of the correct use of pronouns, e.g. 'Am leaving tomorrow' should be 'I am leaving tomorrow'.
- It is correct to say: 'My friend and I went to town', not 'My friend and me...'
- Avoid using two conjunctions next to each other, e.g. 'I should not do it but yet I do.'
- Avoid the use of too many and repetitive conjunctions which lead to long sentences.
- Avoid starting a sentence with a conjunction and not including the main clause, e.g. Because women being the workers in the home.
- It is correct to say 'Congratulations on'. 'Congratulations with'/'Congratulations for' are both incorrect.
- It is incorrect to write: "By these words I hope..."
- Educators should address sequence of tense. Candidates change tense in mid-sentence and within the paragraph. There is a tendency to use the continuous tense when the simple or perfect tense would be more appropriate.
- Candidates misinterpreted 'taking people for granted' to mean that you do not understand them.
- Candidates misinterpreted 'laughing stock' to mean someone of a lower status.
- The apostrophe must not be used to form plurals.
- Candidates need to learn where to place the apostrophe in cases of omission.
- If contractions are used, they need to be punctuated correctly.
- The punctuation and paragraphing of **direct speech** needs to be addressed at Grade eight level and reinforced every year. The use of a comma or a fullstop after a question mark or exclamation mark is incorrect.
- Address the use of the correct use of tense in indirect speech.
- Candidates must not use inverted commas indiscriminately.
- Discourage the use of **redundancies** such as: 'in this world we live in' / 'we as the youth / I as a person, / I as a human being / we as people / we as humans / we as individuals / us as mankind / discuss about / return back / the saying that is / it is very much appreciated.
- 'Such redundancies detract from the efficacy of the writing. It is worrisome that these redundancies are on the increase.
- Teachers should address **commonly confused words**: advice / advise; everyday and every day; they're / there / their; his / he's; where / were / wear; apart / a part; life / live / leave; still / steal; rich / reach; your / you are / peace / piece.
- Candidates should be made aware of the following words which are constantly **misspelt**: because / in fact / at least / wonderful / occasion / referred / occurred / diligently / tomorrow / challenges / powerful / grateful /

truly / careful / beginning / develop / occasionally / a lot of / I am / as well / of course / definitely / every time / in case / receive / deceit / separate / desperate / favourite / writing / until / till / in spite of / in front / in fact / disappear / disappoint / guarantee / the use of sayed instead of said / payed instead of paid / cannot / happened / each other.

- Correct the use of 'should of' (should have) / 'could of' (could have) / 'its' vs 'it's' / 'yous too' (used to) / 'gonna' (going to) / 'wanna' (want to).
- Avoid the use of 'hence' / 'a couple of' / 'you guys' / 'cos' / 'cause' instead of 'because' / 'intends to' instead of 'tends to' / 'towards' instead of 'to'.
- Avoid excessive use of 'whereby' / 'therefore' / 'thus' / 'however'.
- Avoid 'by all means' as in 'I tried by all means to avoid him' instead of 'I tried hard to avoid him'.
- Avoid the archaic expressions: I have come forth ... / unto
- Avoid the use of brackets to explain a word or an idea.
- Avoid the use of the oblique to provide options which create redundancies, e.g. He was fat/obese.
- Avoid constantly starting sentences with 'because'.
- Random, irrelevant quotations should be discouraged.
- Stress the use of the auxiliary verb, e.g. 'I leaving now' should be 'I am leaving now.' / 'Where you going?' should be 'Where are you going?'
- Remind candidates of the use of the article, e.g. 'Majority of learners' should be replaced with 'The majority of learners'.
- Avoid offensive and inappropriate content (overly religious, political, sexual, irreligious, gruesome, profanities, drug and alcohol abuse).
- Far too many candidates do not use capital letters at the start of sentences and for proper nouns, especially 'I'.
- The tone and register should not be informal, unless it is appropriate to the context. Slang is to be avoided.

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

- Teachers should expose learners to various topics and encourage them to brainstorm in groups.
- Learners should be provided with the rubric and should be encouraged to use it in peer marking during class exercises.
- Learners were able to respond in any style to the topics. Candidates who prefer narrative essays were able to adapt the topics to suit their writing.
- Some candidates were unable to organise their thoughts, resulting in haphazard and muddled writing. Some form of **planning** is essential.
- Learners should ensure neatness and legibility.
- There are a number of learners who insert capital letters randomly into their sentences.
- It is a matter of concern that Whatsapp language is still on the rise. The use of 'i' instead of 'I' remains a problem.
- The introduction in creative writing should not be a statement of intent. Far too many learners repeated the topic in their essays, explained the meaning of the topic or informed the marker what they were going to discuss in their essays.
- Candidates should be guided by the word limitations and time allocations.
- Candidates should avoid responses that are too general or vague.
- Educators should stress the importance of appropriate register and tone. Slang and swearing are never acceptable.

PLANNING:

- Candidates need to show progression/development/organisation of ideas in their writing.
- Visible evidence of planning (rough work) is a recommendation.
- The instruction on the question paper regarding planning is to encourage candidates to organise their thoughts. It is part of the writing process.

SECTION A: CHOICE OF TOPIC

- Candidates should be **encouraged to choose topics they understand** or which are familiar to them. Too many candidates choose a topic which they misinterpret or which is totally foreign to their realm of experience.
- By choosing a topic to which they can relate, candidates are able to produce sincere and honest responses which are credited accordingly.
- Candidates should be taught to underline keywords in the topic so that they can remain focused on what is required. This will help to avoid a misinterpretation of the topic or too narrow a focus.
- Candidates should avoid responses that are simply over-the-top, completely unrealistic, or 'It was all a dream...'.
- Candidates should be discouraged from 'after-death' writing.
- Candidates should not leave the reader hanging. This is sometimes done for effect, but usually the candidates have no idea of a suitable conclusion or they have reached the allocated number of words and bring the essay to an abrupt end.

LANGUAGE VS CONTENT MARK

- If a candidate's response is off the topic or a misinterpretation of the topic, the content mark will fall into the "Elementary" or "Moderate" category, depending on the severity of the problem. In such a case, the language mark **cannot be more than ONE category higher than the content mark**.
- This rule does not work in reverse: a candidate can be awarded a 'Skilful' mark for content and a "Moderate" or "Elementary" mark for language.

RUBRIC

- When deciding on a category on the rubric, markers are not influenced by one descriptor only.
- The category in which **most** of the descriptors apply is selected.

SECTION B: GENERAL

FORMAT

- Markers first focus on the content.
- If there are major problems with format, the mark will be dropped slightly in the category decided on for content; or a mark will be awarded from the next category down. The drop in category depends on the severity of the format problem.

What the candidate says is therefore more important than the format.

Candidates **MUST NOT**:

- Correct their work in pencil.
- Use correcting fluid.
- Use different handwritings in their responses. Unfortunately this is on the increase and candidates have to be cautioned. These cases have to be investigated as "irregularities" and could have unfortunate consequences for the learners.
- Use multi-coloured pens to edit work. This interferes with the marking process.
- Use a pen that is too light. Legibility is of **paramount** importance.

- Choose topics which they do not fully understand. Topics which were poorly answered resulted from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the topic.
 - **Tear pages** from their answer books. Planning must be left in the answer book.
 - Use 'In conclusion' or 'I conclude with' to end their essays.
 - Write: 'I quote' as an introduction to a quotation.
 - Prepare essays then attempt to manipulate the topic.
 - Address more than one topic in their responses.
 - Use phrases from other topics in their writing: this detracts from originality
 - Use incorrect prepositions. Candidates use 'on' as a preposition when others are correct and more appropriate. For example, 'I am good on football.'; 'all the best on your future'; 'keep track on my life'.
 - Use clichés, stock or flowery phrases as these do not enhance the writing and lead to confusion. Refer to the common errors listed in (c).
 - Try to impress the marker by being verbose.
-
- Write religious essays that sermonise and threaten the reader with damnation. Avoid offending the audience.