

**ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS DIRECTORATE**

Bundy Park, Private Bag 4571, King William's Town, 5600

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Website: [www.ecdoe.gov.za](http://www.ecdoe.gov.za)

## **NSC 2015 CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT**

|                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>SUBJECT</b> | <b>ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE</b> |
|----------------|------------------------------|

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| <b>PAPER</b> | <b>3</b> |
|--------------|----------|

|                             |                         |                  |                 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>DATE OF EXAMINATION:</b> | <b>25 NOVEMBER 2015</b> | <b>DURATION:</b> | <b>2½ HOURS</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|

This section of the instrument is aimed at providing valuable feedback to schools, subject advisors, teachers and learners about common errors made by candidates in the answering of questions, to assist teachers and subject advisors to identify areas that need to be given special attention in the teaching and learning of the subject in 2016.

Your responses will be based on two parts:

**Section 1:** General overview of Learner performance in the question paper as a whole.

**Section 2:** Comment on candidates' performance on individual questions (Detailed explanations must be provided **per question** as follows: (You may include sub questions where necessary)).

- General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
- Why the question was poorly answered?
- Provide suggestion for improvement in relation to teaching and learning.
- Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners.
- Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors and teacher development.

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

The paper was fair and accessible. The topics were diverse and challenging, as per Home Language expectations. The topics were appealing and catered for a variety of responses. The positive aspects of the majority of the topics in Section A produced many uplifting essays.

The topics adequately covered the various cognitive and difficulty levels.

In Section A the choice was challenging, wide and allowed for creative responses. The pictures catered for the weaker learners. However, the stronger learners produced excellent creative responses. The topics catered for a wide range of candidates – both the eloquent and the less able. They also appealed to a variety of interests and encouraged personal responses.

Section B covered a fair choice of formats from the allocated categories. This allowed candidates to express themselves comfortably within formats. The topics were relevant to the candidates' frame of reference.

The topics were stated clearly and concisely and the wording was not confusing. Unfortunately, some candidates did not read the topics carefully and ignored crucial aspects.

There were no unfair questions. If a candidate was puzzled by a topic, there were many alternatives. Even within a topic, various responses were possible.

A limited number of candidates were not able to finish the paper. Most of candidates managed their time effectively.

Learners generally performed well. The candidates are to be commended on their ability to respond creatively in a short period of time under examination conditions.

Poor responses were not confined to any particular topic. Many responses were mature, perceptive and profound.

The topics were not specific to any gender or race and they were open to interpretation on various levels and in all styles of writing. The topics were not one-dimensional: responses could be creative, descriptive, reflective, narrative or discursive.

Although a figurative approach to a topic in Section A is preferable, many literal responses were satisfactory.

The topics in Section B were relevant to the candidates' experience. The topics, however, were challenging as they had more than one component which needed to be addressed.

A pleasing number of candidates were awarded 100% for the entire paper or for sections of the paper.



## 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).

|  |
|--|
| <b>QUESTION 1</b>  |
| <b>(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?</b>   |
| <b>SECTION A: ESSAYS</b>   |
| <b>1.1 There was no possibility of taking a walk that day.</b>   |
| <p>This was a very popular topic which was preferred by the weaker learners but which also elicited figurative responses from stronger candidates.</p> <p>Unfortunately, a number of candidates tried to manipulate essays to suit the topic, resulting in contrived responses which lacked credibility. A number of candidates produced implausible and exaggerated narratives.</p>   |
| <b>1.2 The past is a foreign country.</b>  |
| <p>Candidates who focused on the past and the aspect of change were credited accordingly. A good variety of political essays was produced. However, candidates who reproduced history essays remained focused on one aspect of the topic and did not address change or the concept of 'foreign'. Candidates who wrote from personal experience produced sincere essays and were duly credited. A few candidates misinterpreted the topic and focused on foreigners, xenophobia or foreign countries.</p> |
| <b>1.3 'When she transformed into a butterfly ... But she had wings.'</b>  |
| <p>The focus was on change or the desire to escape conformity.</p> <p>Learners were able to identify with this topic which was generally well answered. It provided a broad scope. Many referred to peer pressure/escaping a problem/overcoming an obstacle/being unique. This topic elicited many exceptional, mature responses. However, some candidates did not address being 'weird'.</p>  |
| <b>1.4 Gold is the dust that blinds all eyes.</b>  |
| <p>Most learners focused on materialism or a vice. Markers were impressed with the different ways in which some learners were able to interpret the topic. A few candidates did not understand the topic and wrote about dust blowing into the eyes and finding gold in the dust. A few candidates focused on mining gold. Some responses came across as lectures or speeches. Learners used too many clichés in their writing.</p>  |



**1.5 “There’s a time for daring and there’s a time for caution, and a wise man understands which is called for.”**

Candidates were expected to refer to the three aspects addressed in the topic: daring, caution and wisdom.

Many candidates focused on only one of the aspects and had few details to support the topic. Usually the wisdom component was ignored. In many candidates’ responses wisdom was implied.

**1.6.1 Man in the wheelchair looking at motorcycles**

A response to a picture must find its point of origin in the spirit of the picture. This was a popular topic. Responses were varied and included discussions on disabilities, emotional loss, striving, obstacles, challenges, yearning, dreams or hopelessness. Literal responses were well written.

**1.6.2 Old people and dancing shadows.**

The body language should have been referred to or implied in the essay. Responses included: celebration, dancing, optimism, hopefulness, hopelessness, nostalgia, and age vs youth.

Candidates produced reflective, creative and romantic responses. Many of these essays were exceptional. The source reference to nostalgia might have assisted some candidates. Candidates should not have focused only on old age.

**1.6.3 Circled man**

Responses could have been positive or negative and included the following: being chosen, identified or being unique. The topic was less popular yet easy to interpret.

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

Because of the nature of the topics, there were no questions which caused problems or were generally misunderstood in Section A. Problem areas have been discussed under each topic.

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

- Candidates must be encouraged to use their reading time effectively and use a highlighter to identify all the required components of the topic.
- Candidates must be aware of the time allocation per section and plan the division of their time accordingly. The time allocation is suggested in the instructions. It is strongly advised that candidates should adhere to this.



- Candidates 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.
- Candidates should number their planning **and** their final copy.
- Candidates should include a title to their essays, since this will create focus and reader expectation, enhancing the quality of writing.
- Candidates should link their essay to the topic with a good introductory and concluding paragraph.
- There is no need for the candidate to repeat the topic or state the focus of the essay as if the candidate were debating, e.g. 'In this essay I will be discussing...'; 'The topic means ...'.
- To ensure that markers are aware of where the essay begins and ends, candidates must distinguish clearly between their planning and their final product.
- It is essential that candidates start their essays at the **top** of a page and write to the **last line** of the page, since at times it appears to the marker that the essay has ended, yet there is still a paragraph or two that follow once the page has been turned.
- Candidates should be guided in responding to the graphics. They should not describe what they see in the picture, e.g. 'I see a man in a wheelchair...'
- Encourage creativity and figurative responses to the topics; however, if the candidate is average, he/she should stick to what he/she knows, instead of trying to create an out-of-the-box response.
- Encourage original metaphoric responses and avoid the use of clichés and idioms.
- Educators should focus on the importance of **content** and learners should realise that their responses must be relevant to the topic: all thoughts and ideas should link to the topic.
- Encourage the learners to use fewer words rather than too many. Overly long and cumbersome sentences detract from the essence of the writing.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Candidates should focus on varying their sentence length as this improves the style and structure of the essay.



- 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 wrong context.
- 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.
- The weaker learners, especially, should focus on being concise. A sentence is a unit of meaning. Lengthy sentences, which can almost be considered to be a paragraph, should be avoided.
- Candidates must be more attentive to punctuation. Sentences were at times long and confusing, leading to a lack of coherence.
- A particular problem is still the use of sentence fragments. Teachers should address the candidates' use of incomplete sentences.
- Comma splicing remains an ongoing problem and needs **serious** attention. It leads to long, rambling sentences. Concise sentences should be encouraged.
- The importance of sentence structure should be reinforced to create readable and effective writing.
- Discourage the repetitive use of **participial phrases** to start sentences. However, this was not such a problem this year as in previous years.
- Learners should not use semi-colons indiscriminately.
- Focus should be on using a comma after the word instead of at the beginning of the next line. For example: 'Even though the road has been long , 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.
- 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'.
- 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...'
- 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.
- The apostrophe must not be used to form plurals.
- Candidates need to learn where to place the apostrophe in cases of omission. However, this was much less of a problem this year.
- The punctuation and paragraphing of **direct speech** needs to be addressed at grade eight level and reinforced every year, as well as the correct use of tense in indirect speech.





- Candidates must not indiscriminately use inverted commas.
- Discourage the use of **redundancies** such as: 'we as the youth / I as a person, / I as a human being / we as people / we as humans / we as individuals.' Such redundancies detract from the efficacy of the writing. It is worrisome 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; live / leave; still / steal; rich / reach; your / you are.
- Address the following words which are **misspelt**: because / in fact / at least / bullying / 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 / 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
- Correct the use of 'should of' / 'could of' / 'its' vs 'it's' / 'yous too' (used to) / 'gonna' / 'wanna'.
- Avoid the use of 'hence' / 'a couple of' / 'you guys' / 'cos' / 'cause' instead of 'because'.
- Avoid excessive use of 'whereby', 'therefore', 'however'.
- Avoid the use of brackets to explain a word or an idea.
- Avoid the use of obliques to provide options, e.g. He was fat/obese.
- Avoid the use of too many and repetitive conjunctions which lead to long sentences.
- Avoid starting a sentence with a conjunction which requires a main clause.
- If contractions are used, they need to be punctuated correctly.
- Random, irrelevant quotations to introduce or separate paragraphs should be discouraged.
- Avoid constantly starting sentences with 'because'.
- Stress the use of the auxiliary verb, e.g. 'I leaving now' should be 'I am leaving.'

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

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 in their sentences.
- It is pleasing to note that the use of sms language is steadily decreasing. However, the use of 'i' instead of 'I' remains a problem.
- Figurative aspects of topics were not always understood.
- High levels of creativity were observed and the quality of writing continues to improve.



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

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 must not:**

- 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.
- Candidates must not use multi-coloured pens to edit work. This interferes with the marking process.
- Choose topics which they do not fully understand. Topics which were poorly answered resulted from a misunderstanding and 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 a pen that is too light. Legibility is of **paramount** importance.
- Use stock phrases or clichés. Refer to the common errors listed in (c).

**SECTION B: TRANSACTIONAL WRITING**

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

**GENERAL**

It is important to remember that transactional writing has a specific purpose. Transactional formats must be adhered to.

**2.1 MAGAZINE ARTICLE**

This popular topic was generally well answered. Learners who did not identify the pun were not disadvantaged. The focus was on the youth entering employment.

Often responses were too general and referred to the future or current problems without addressing the aspects. Some learners focused on negativity without providing solutions or advice

The style and purpose of the column needs to be addressed. The register should be appropriate to the audience but slang is still not allowed.





## 2.2 OBITUARY

An obituary is a notice of death. It requires factual information about the birth, death and life of the deceased; date, time, place of memorial service/funeral.

It was a very popular topic but very few learners were aware of the exact structure! Most learners wrote a eulogy, which meant that they scored no higher than 'moderate' for the content. Far too many learners wrote a newspaper or a police report or wrote about their feelings and fears about death.

The departmental guideline is not correct. Educators need to ensure that the learners are aware of the correct format.

Requirements:

- surname, name and possibly nickname
- details of the service, cause of death and instructions regarding condolences
- euphemism ('passed away' instead of 'died')

Avoid:

- first person narration, e.g. 'I was born ...' 'I died ...'
- overly emotive language
- inappropriate content, e.g. 'He was a gangster who was involved with drugs ...'

## 2.3 LETTER TO THE PRESS

The focus was on prospective student, unprofessional treatment and tertiary institution. Candidates were required to identify the incident and how they felt about it. Candidates need to guard against writing a letter of complaint. Candidates must be aware that the purpose is for publication to raise awareness.

Candidates who were confused regarding 'prospective' were dropped within the content category. Candidates who were unfamiliar with tertiary jargon were not disadvantaged.

Avoid:

- expressing discontent using a hostile tone
- appealing to the Editor for help
- instructing/expecting the newspaper to do something about the situation
- threatening legal action

## 2.4 DIALOGUE

Relevance to the topic is important. The focus was on opposing views regarding branded clothing being used as a status symbol. Some candidates merely discussed fashion or brand vs brand and did not include a dispute.



Interaction between the two speakers is required in a dialogue.

Stage directions add spark to a dialogue. However, learners who did not use them were not disadvantaged.

Learners misinterpreted the words, 'status' and 'symbol'. They wrote about updating a status on social media. The word, 'trend' in the topic was ignored by many candidates. Candidates focused too much on the quality of branded clothing; this was not part of the topic. If a third person featured prominently in the dialogue the response was judged to be a critical oversight.

Avoid:

- the introduction of a third person
- the use of inverted commas
- slang
- long introductions to the dialogue, greetings and goodbyes
- the clichéd ending, 'Let's agree to disagree ...'

## 2.5 Speech

The visual stimulus was a guide – candidates did not have to refer to trees, but could refer to nature in general. Candidates should have focused on the gravity of the situation and the need to mobilise people.

Requirements:

- a concise and effective introduction and conclusion
- convincing and persuasive
- formal register as important guests were being addressed

Many candidates wrote about agriculture or nature in general and ignored the conservation aspect of the topic. Often candidates ignored the 'gravity' aspect of the topic and focused instead on projects which had been undertaken. Some candidates misunderstood the word, 'gravity' in the context of the topic.

Some candidates did not focus on the topic right from the start of the speech and simply included a sentence in their conclusion in a late attempt to address the topic.

Avoid:

- the use of 'protocol observed'
- long introductions to the topic
- concluding with a long invitation to refreshments, reducing the impact of the speech and wasting words
- debating structure and protocol
- the use of the article when referring to nature, e.g. 'The nature ...'



## 2.6 Formal Report

The key words in this topic were: serious incident, recent sports event and captain. Very few candidates who attempted this topic knew the structure and were able to deal with the requirements

Requirements:

- strict adherence to format/structure
- order and organisation of points
- formal register
- factual not emotive language
- the nature of the incident must be identified
- use of third person pronouns

Headings for the report should include the following:

- person addressed
- title of the report
- terms of reference
- procedure
- findings
- conclusion
- recommendations
- date and location
- signature

This topic was very poorly answered. Candidates were unaware of the strict format and purpose of the formal report. Many candidates wrote letters or speeches instead of reports.

Candidates should guard against writing only the facts of the incident without addressing the rest of the required structure of the formal report.

Often candidates failed to identify the nature of the incident.

Most of the responses were in the style of police or newspaper reports..

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

Candidates did not understand the purpose or structure of transactional writing. They were also unaware of the correct format. Problem areas have been discussed under each topic.

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

- Candidates need to be reminded that TWO pieces of writing are required in Section B and they should manage their time accordingly.
- Educators should give detailed feedback after the June and Trial examinations in order to improve the quality of writing and to make learners aware of issues they need to address.
- Candidates need to be taught to analyse a topic and highlight the key aspects.
- Educators should condition learners to answer to their strengths.
- Learners should select topics to which they can relate and to which they can respond with confidence and knowledge.
- 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, speech, formal report and letter to the press affected the mark awarded.
- Functional writing can be learnt; learners should be exposed to as many examples of transactional writing as possible.
- Expose candidates to actual letters to the editor and obituaries in newspapers in order to acquaint them with the requirements of these genres.
- Candidates should be taught that transactional writing is writing with a purpose and the response should fulfil that purpose.
- Focus on the importance of using correct transactional formats in order to score top marks.
- Paragraphing, structure and register are important.
- Concise writing must be practised since learners need to give as much relevant detail as possible.
- Learners must not announce their names at the beginning of letters, e.g. 'My name is Anne and I am writing this letter because ....'

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

Far too many candidates did not know the appropriate formats for the transactional writing nor did they understand the purpose, especially with regards to the letter to the press, obituary and the formal report. The following problems were noted in the letter to the press:

- addresses were omitted
- street addresses and P.O. Box numbers were used together in the same address
- addresses were written in the incorrect order
- codes and dates were omitted
- the date was also included in the business address
- the date was not written in full
- the name of the newspaper or the addressee (The Editor) was omitted
- the name of the newspaper was not underlined or put in inverted commas
- the salutation referred to 'To whom it may concern' or 'Dear Manager'
- reference to 'Dear Editor' instead of 'Sir/Madam'
- candidates used a colon after 'Dear', as in 'Dear: Editor'



- 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
- at times the body of the letter was in the form of a narrative
- in the body, far too much irrelevant background detail was provided
- the body of the letter consisted of one long paragraph
- incorrect signing off was used
- candidates wrote: 'I would really like for you to ...'

Refer to the report on each topic in Section B for areas that need attention in the other forms of transactional writing.

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

Learners must choose topics they understand and formats with which they are familiar. Sincere, authentic, mature and appropriate responses are awarded good marks.

Candidates should avoid responses that are too general or vague.

Educators should stress the importance of appropriate register.

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 not essential and candidates will not be penalised for not producing a draft. Markers understand that candidates could be planning and organising their thoughts in their heads. Stronger candidates may not need to plan. Weaker candidates' lack of planning will show in their writing.
- The instruction on the question paper regarding planning is simply to encourage candidates to 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 realms 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 a too narrow focus.
- Candidates should avoid responses that are simply over-the-top and completely unrealistic.



## 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 code 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, do not be swayed by only one descriptor.
- Select the category in which **most** of the descriptors apply.

## SECTION B: GENERAL

### FORMAT

- When marking, first focus on content.
- If there are major problems with format – drop slightly in the category decided on for content or award a mark from the next category down. The drop depends on the severity of the format problem.
- What the candidate says is more important than the format.

---

NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER:

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

