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

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE</b>
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<b>PAPER</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>DATE OF EXAMINATION:</b>	<b>26 OCTOBER 2015</b>	<b>DURATION:</b>	<b>2 HOURS</b>
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This section of the instrument is aimed at providing valuable feedback to schools, subject advisors, teachers and learners about common errors committed 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, teacher development

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

Proficient English Home Language candidates fared extremely well in a question paper that has accessible and topical texts. However, weaker learners struggled to grasp questions that required insight and in-depth understanding. In Question One *discuss and critically comment on the effectiveness as* instruction words in 1.4, 1.6, and 1.11 are clearly overlooked and candidates merely respond on a literal level and cannot earn the full THREE marks for these higher order questions. There is a definite trend throughout the question paper where candidates are simply unable to earn the third mark as they merely describe what they see in the texts as opposed to understanding that an advertiser or cartoonist uses the visual medium to convey a message to his audience. The question, as has been the trend for the past years, that boosts learner performance is the summary (Question Two) as quoting verbatim is not heavily penalised. Surprisingly learner performance in Question 3 was the highest despite the reservations about the choice of text being biased towards an elite group. Question Four was well answered as candidates grasped the stereotyping message. Question Five revealed that clearly not enough time is spent on textual editing skills as candidates generally lost their marks here after achieving an above average performance in the first four questions. Many learners who are not at an ENGHL level are severely disadvantaged as they struggle with the subtle nuances of language and this is reflected in their overall performance.

## SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

### QUESTION 1

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

1.1 and 1.2 were well answered as candidates clearly understood the concept of "an endless list" and the "increase in profits". As entry-level questions a sense of confidence was instilled in weaker candidates as they scored marks.

The questions where candidates clearly struggled were 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9 and 1.11. It is clear from candidates' responses that *commenting critically on effectiveness in relation to structure/diction/concluding paragraphs /presentation in the advertisement* is where two marks are earned, but there is an inability to lift the answer to a level where the awarding of three marks is justified.

In 1.4 many candidates only latched on to the questions and rehashed the text i.e. **it makes you**



**think how the influence of the media has grown and how parenting has become harder.**

In 1.6 many candidates merely identified certain words like “fast-forward”/“game-changer”/“digital”. It is clear here that the weaker candidates do not do enough exercises pertaining to diction where strong/emotive words are used and highlighted to convey the (great/powerful) influence of the focus (the media) of the paragraph.

For 1.8 most candidates identified media as the “**third parent in the room**”, qualifying for the first mark. Candidates fall short of linking the ideas i.e. media is the third parent>parents are robbed of their authority, therefore parents must act now.

For 1.9 many candidates picked up on the light-hearted/positive conclusion but were unable to highlight the focus of the paragraph.

1.11 was very problematic in that the instruction to **critically comment** on the way in which the girl was presented was overlooked. Here the girl’s smile /proud look on her face was what many candidates responded with. Learners must be taught to pick up on the advertiser’s **message**: Unisex attire/dungarees include boys and girls, so Lego broadens its target market.

In 1.12 many candidates lost marks because they only referred to one text even though the mark allocation is 4 marks.

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

For 1.2 a few candidates lost marks as they quoted huge chunks of the text/the question itself: “It’s so insanely formulaic and a lot of adults are laughing all the way to the bank at the expense of our children’s self-definition.”

1.3 was problematic as candidates referred to the “**breathhtaking act of psychological vandalism**” as related to a psychologist and said that vandalism filled a clean area with filthy writing. Candidates who scored one mark here failed to include ‘damage’ caused by gender stereotyping and only focused on the “breathtaking” aspect.

Some candidates were unable to identify (**rhetorical**) **questions** in 1.4 **or** ‘It causes the reader to pause for a moment and think. It makes the article personal to the reader. It also causes the reader to want to read the article further as it is interesting’ **or** “The effectiveness of paragraph 3 is shown through the questions that are being asked by the writer in asking the readers how has the influence of the media grown and how has parenting become harder”.

1.5 was a question where candidates failed to pick up on the radical transformation of the media and quoted blindly... “Let’s go back to an era when media played a minimal role in people’s lives.” **Or** “The writer wants us to experience the way things were those days and now...”. The radical transformation of the media was not mentioned.

1.6 was poorly answered as candidates often quoted huge chunks of paragraph 6 and failed to comment on the **effectiveness** of words that conveyed the powerful impact of the



media..."untamed beast". There were candidates who quoted "saturated"/"greatest" but failed to substantiate why the words were effective. Some candidates referred to the **negative impact of the media**.

1.7 was poorly answered as candidates did not understand what was required of them. The following response clearly shows a lack of understanding: "It does not support the views presented in paragraph 7 as the paragraph does not mainly talk about the rebellion but the media" **or** some candidates related the rebellion to the children and not their parents.

1.9 was poorly answered as candidates are unsure of what makes a concluding paragraph effective.

In 1.10 weaker candidates were guilty of wholesale lifting: "Your children discover something very, very special: themselves".

1.11 was poorly answered as candidates earned marks for manner: "The girl in the advertisement is smiling and feeling proud of herself" **or** "the girl is dressed like a boy". It must be highlighted that a single comment at such a literal level can only justify one mark.

1.12 was poorly answered as sometimes there was only reference to one text or if there was a reference to both texts there was not enough substance for two marks: "No, text A / paragraph two says that boys and girls need different things that will suit their gender but Text B indicates that boys and girls can buy the Lego set and still enjoy themselves."

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

- Learners must be exposed to current /topical passages that have questions covering the different cognitive levels.
- Corrections must be done where special attention is paid to instructions/key words: Account/mark allocation.
- Open-ended questions must be highlighted and the tiered-approach must be taught. Yes/No....I agree because of ...and further elaboration must take place to justify a 3-mark answer.
- Learners must be taught to focus on the whole question **and** on specific words. It is also important to see how words are used in context. Teach learners how to paraphrase and sift without adding their own information.
- The progression of higher-order questions must be highlighted practically, e.g. 1.1-1.3 had a two-mark allocation so the answer to 1.4 would require more detail as it is a 3-mark question. 1.12 would require you to go one step further as the mark allocation is four marks.

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



1.6 Candidates referred to the impact of the media in paragraph 6 as “negative”/”bad”. This must be discouraged as these words are too vague.

In 1.12 candidates failed to differentiate between the two texts. Candidates must be taught to specifically state that e.g. “Text B supports the writer’s view because in text A it is mentioned that media is ‘guilty of a breathtaking act of psychological vandalism’. Text B similarly supports this viewpoint because of the following example...” . Rambling on and not differentiating between the two texts almost certainly will result in a lack of clarity in the answer.

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

- Questions must not be rewritten as answers.
- Do not waffle. Get to the point.
- Use full sentences when answering.
- Avoid blind lifting from the texts.
- Leave a line between each answer and the next.
- The concept of **diction** must be taught as this is tested in Paper One and Paper Two.
- “Comment critically on the **effectiveness**” features often in an ENGHL, so this must be highlighted and taught.
- Be mindful of key words such as “**Account for**”, “**Discuss**”, “**Suggest**”, “**Comment on**”, “**Justify**”, “**Substantiate**” because they crop up all the time in comprehension questions.
- Vocabulary lists must be incorporated into teaching practices as this is a gaping inadequacy that has a ripple effect on candidates’ ability to perform.
- Terminology used that will have to be taught in order for learners to achieve better marks:
  - **Account for**: Give reasons for
  - **Explain**: Say why
  - **Suggest why**: Say why
  - **Discuss**: Present an argument, express an opinion
  - **Effectiveness**: Why is it considered a good example of...
  - **Comment on**: Express an opinion based on the information given.
  - **Does the statement/message of ... support the (writer’s view) as expressed/stated in...** : Yes/No – give reasons why you would agree or disagree.
  - **Substantiate**: Give reasons for your response
  - **Tone**: The emotion behind the “voice”/expression/words
  - **Attitude**: How the writer feels about the subject at hand

## QUESTION 2



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

Generally candidates fared well when they followed the instruction and included points related to the **benefits** of peer pressure. Most candidates were able to quote 5 relevant points from the passage if they grasped the idea that peer pressure can be beneficial. Despite a limited vocabulary and poor comprehension skills it is clear that summarising skills are being taught and it is commendable.

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

Too many learners see this as an outlet for their own negative experiences on peer pressure rather than following the instruction.

A candidate who did not understand the beneficial aspect referred to “**People who gave into peer pressure** learn to accommodate others”.

Limited vocabulary led to learners changing “adept” to “adapted”/“adopted”.

Many candidates listed the following two points:

- “According to every popular theory of adolescence, peer pressure is peril; being able to resist it is considered a sign of character strength.”
- “Children who learn a positive conflict style from interactions with their parents are positioned to use skillful negotiation tactics when dealing with peer pressure.”

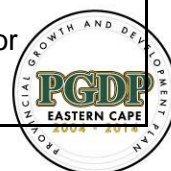
(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.

- Instructions must be followed: a fluent paragraph is required and not point form, yet this instruction is overlooked. If candidates’ responses are in point form, they penalise themselves as only one fact per point is credited.
- Guide candidates on how to do paragraph summaries within the stipulated word limit.
- Learners must be taught to highlight/bracket salient points in the passage and work from there.
- All rough work must be cancelled.

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

When a candidate attempted the use of own words in the summary, it led to the meaning being changed because of a single word :

- “attuned to the subtle changes in others’ **moods**”: One becomes aware of minor changes to other people’s **personalities**.



- "Having gotten used to different **characters** improves their socializing skills".

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

- Teach learners to read and follow all instructions precisely.
- Use connecting words to link ideas: e.g. **therefore, however, so**.
- The summary must be in the **third person** (he, she, it, they) even if the original passage is in the first person (I, we). They are not writing about themselves.
- Repetition, listing examples and padding are to be avoided.
- Where the topic appears to be complicated, learners need to re-read it before they start, so that they have a proper grasp of the content.
- Learners must be encouraged to use full sentences and to start a sentence with a capital letter.

### QUESTION 3

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

This question was generally well answered despite initial concerns related to the accessibility of the advertisement. Learners understood the concepts "very best", "same blood", "handcrafted", "unique"/"exclusively" and scored here.

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

- Candidates simply repeated the words in the question and did not explain what was suggested by the phrase "very best" (superiority/excellence, etc.).
- "Persuasive appeal" confused many candidates.
- An answer "**the horse and the bike are the same**" does not fully explain how the target audience is **persuaded** or finds the product **appealing**.
- "handcrafted"/"hand built" and "unique"/"exclusively" were simply repeated in learner responses.
- For 3.4 "The way the bicycle is positioned" or "The horse is standing" can never justify **THREE** marks.

Also there was no clear direction in answers as to whether the first/second part of the question was being discussed in 3.3.

Weaker candidates clearly struggled to relate the bike and horse (visuals/pictures) to the overall





message of the advertisement in 3.4.

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

Revise visual literacy and remind learners to look at all details in an advertisement.

Learners must be exposed to the various advertising techniques which are used to grab the attention of the target audience:

- An eye-catching image or picture
- Catchy headlines
- An attractive layout

Linguistic Techniques

- Punchy headlines and captions
- Puns
- Repetition
- Clichés
- Alliteration
- Opinion stated as fact
- Rhetorical questions
- Slogans
- Emotive language
- Exaggeration
- Jargon

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

Candidates struggled to find synonyms for “very best” even though they grasped the concept of superiority.

Candidates ignored the mark allocation in 3.3 and 3.4

For 3.3 candidates explained “handcrafted”/“hand built” and “unique”/“exclusively” without discussing the effectiveness.

Some weaker candidates completely missed the point in 3.4: “I don’t think it supports it well because it has nothing to do with speed. They could have used the speedometer of a car”.

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

Style must be taught:

- Tone (informal, chatty, simple, verbose)





- Diction (persuasive appeal – Why would the consumer want to buy this product? effectiveness - Why did the advertiser use “handcrafted”/”hand built” and “unique”/”exclusively” as a selling technique?)
- Register (appropriate use of language in a particular situation)
- Colloquial language, slang and jargon
- Verbosity, redundancy and tautology

Use the content/visuals to show how they complement each other.

#### QUESTION 4

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

A very varied mix of results with stronger candidates' marks ranging from 8-10 and weaker candidates scoring from 1-4. Candidates are unable to identify **visual clues** (facial expression/ a raised finger and Curtis's words) that convey **ATTITUDE**.

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

4.1 Learners were not specific enough about the setting i.e. kitchen and the mother takes responsibility for all the work: only one aspect was mentioned.

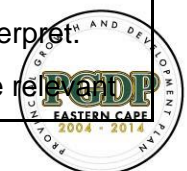
4.2 Learners missed out on a third mark if ONE of the aspects was not DISCUSSED , as they had to refer to ATTITUDE, BODY LANGUAGE AND SPEECH.

4.3 Many learners did not fare well in this question as they failed to pick up on the girl's domineering manner and Curtis not getting a chance to respond. Many responses had to do with his eating which only afforded them one mark.

4.4 Learners could respond to at least one of the stereotypes (Text E) of women seen as stay-at-home mothers, but many failed to get the third mark for the stereotype given in Text F.

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

- Teach visual literacy (facial expressions, body language and speech convey attitude - learners must be able to describe, explain and say what they imply and show).
- When asked to refer to a picture/cartoon/graphic, learners must look at the visual clues/details and avoid generalisations such as facial expressions.
- The use of “bad”/”negative” to describe attitude must be totally discouraged.
- Learners must be taught vocabulary related to question formats and how to interpret.
- Learners must study mark allocation and actually study the frames and provide relevant



responses.

- A concerted effort must be made to improve learners' general knowledge of current affairs.

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

Many learners thought "Didya" was the mother's name and Curtis her husband.

Some learners described what they saw in the cartoon but did not link it to the questions asked. For 4.2 many learners said Curtis's mother is not a good cook because she allowed the pot to overboil.

Many learners only focused on one cartoon for 4.4.

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

When revising visual literacy it is a good idea to remind learners to focus on all details in the graphic. The movements and attitudes of the body often communicate meaning that is not expressed in words. This is called body language.

The topics are human activities and behaviour, public figures, politics, fashion and sport, among many others. Humour often features.

The internet is an excellent source of information and there are hundreds of cartoons to choose from. If they are topical and age related, they can provide excellent practice.

Workshops must be organised for teachers so that their knowledge in this critical area is improved.

## QUESTION 5

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

Stronger candidates performed extremely well here and had full marks for this question, indicating that sound grammar is still being taught. However, the incidence of 1/2/3 out of 10 was common, pointing to the fact that language skills is an area that is sorely neglected. Candidates who are clearly not ENGHL struggled with time management and left Question 5 incomplete or untouched.

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

5.1 Candidates managed to score here, but the following incorrect responses were noted



opportunity/There is not a fuss or no fuss.

5.2 This is where a single mark was scored.

5.3 Mansions and expensive cars has never been guaranteed by contentment.

5.4 needs/ acquired/requires are some of the incorrect responses for a straightforward question on parts of speech.

5.5.1 Candidates merely eliminated like.

5.5.2 Clear inability to identify the misrelated participle.

5.6 is where weaker candidates scored: Pretty would no longer mean cute. It would mean the woman is very clever.

5.7 “and now we still don’t” is a clear indication that adverbial clause is not understood.

5.8 “a fat cat” for colloquial redundancy also shows no understanding of terminology.

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

- Terminology needs constant revision.

#### **REVISE**

- Colloquialism/slang/jargon
- Concord in as many situations as possible.
- Active and passive voice.
- Parts of speech.
- Adverbial/adjectival clauses
- Misrelated/dangling participle
- Split infinitive
- Comma splice error
- Ambiguity
- Malapropisms
- Redundancy/Tautology
- Punctuation
- Prefixes/suffixes
- Spelling rules
- Sentence Structure

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

Learners find it difficult to identify errors - let alone correct them.

Learners did not even attempt 5.2

5.3 Will contentment ever be guaranteed by mansions and expensive cars- **no question mark.**

5.6 The “pretty” would then be used to describe the woman.



5.7 We had very little

5.9 And one of the best of this is a bicycle, not a B.M.W.

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

- Textual Editing must be practised.
- Learners must read the questions carefully, analyse them and respond as instructed. “Identify the error” means **write it down**; and “correct it” means **write the correct answer**. Writing only the correction is not good enough.
- Encourage learners to manage their time carefully so that they can finish Question 5. Alternatively, suggest that they answer Question 5 (but in its sequence) before tackling the time consuming questions.

#### GENERAL ADVICE/POINTS TO STRESS/REQUESTS

- Follow instructions – start each section on a NEW page.
- Do the paper in the order in which the questions appear. Include instruction to answer in sequence in their school examination papers.
- Spelling needs to improve.
- Acquisition of vocabulary must be nurtured.

NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER:

SIGNATURE

DATE

