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

SUBJECT	ENGLISH FAL		
QUESTION PAPER		**2**	
DURATION OF QUESTION PAPER	**2 ½**	**HOURS**	
PROVINCE	EASTERN CAPE		
NAME OF THE INTERNAL MODERATOR	P. MASAKANE		
NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER	K. C. MATSAU		
DATES OF MARKING	28 November 2025 – 13 December 2025		
HEAD OF EXAMINATION:	E.M. MABONA		

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

For a great change, most learners followed the key instructions and answered only the required TWO questions. Eastern Cape Province had many learners doing drama; Question 4, *My Children! My Africa!* followed by short stories, Question 5 and poetry Question 6 respectively. Few learners responded to the novels (*Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde)* and the drama, *Macbeth*.

Generally, the learner performance shows a drop when compared to 2024 cohort. Learners who responded to poetry struggled to earn descent marks. In other genres learners struggled with cognitive levels 1, 2 and 3 questions.

There is a huge number of learners who performed below average, many scored between 03-21 marks (0-30%). They could not recall/ reorganize information in questions pitched at easy for cognitive level 1and 2 (mix and match of columns-Q1.1.1, 2.1.1, 3.1.1, 4.1.1 and 5.1.1). There was poor performance in Q 6.1.1 a cloze procedure which was also pitched at easy level. Some learners just copied chunks/lines from extracts which were not answering the questions. Out of the 98 200 scripts for 2025, there is a high possibility of about 39 280 - 44 190 learners (40-45%) achieving at level 1. This would be a huge drop in the number of passes when compared to last year's 29.4% which was recorded for level 1.

Even though in 2025 a drop in the performance of learners is anticipated, there are still pockets of excellence/ top achievers with high scores. They were able to obtain between 56 and 59 marks (80-84%) with different combinations of questions (Q4&5, Q2&6, Q1&4, Q3&6 and Q4&6).

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

QUESTION 1
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Cry, the beloved Country is one of the least popular genres with few learners who responded to question 1. The question had learners who answered the question well and scored from 23-31marks. These learners were fully prepared and were able to respond fully to both extract A and B. Some learners performed poorly and only scored 03 marks. They struggled to respond to almost all questions including Q.1.1.1(character question) and Q 1.2.8 theme of 'hardship' which is central in the novel. Other questions which posed challenges to many struggling learners include Q 1.1.2 (b), 1.2.3, and 1.2.7.

QUESTION 1
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q1.1.1 Learners were not well versed with characters in the novel; they could not match/ recall/reorganise characters using the provided descriptors. Q1.1.2 (b) Learners could not explain the relevance of a metaphor or personification. Q1.1.3 Learners could not highlight Msimangu's character trait nor provide substantiation. Q1.2.3 Learners could not describe Absalom's state of mind. Q1.2.8 The theme of 'hardship' was not fully discussed by some learners. Their discussions were not well substantiated, sometimes they provided factually incorrect points. Q.1.2.9 Learners could not discuss how Stephen Kumalo's faith carries him through his sufferings.

QUESTION 1
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Schools offering the novel must ensure that all learners have a copy of the book/text. Learners' reading of the novel must be monitored through post reading activities. All chapters must be analysed in context. Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used as part of notes to augment understanding of the novel. During analysis of the novel learners must be able to read, evaluate and apply the meta-language of literature study. Learners must be able to explain choice and effectiveness in novels of how elements support the message/theme. In addition to figures of speech and imagery, elements may include role of the narrator, structural elements, e.g. plot, exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action/anticlimax, denouement/resolution, setting (CAPS pages 31-32). Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Special attention must be given to aspects like setting, tone, explaining the irony, describing the state of mind, explaining the relevance of figures of speech and how to discuss theme questions and open-ended questions.

QUESTION 1
Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the extracts. They failed to comprehend what each question required. Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided by extracts as a basis for answering tone, state of mind, character traits and explaining relevance of the figures of speech.

Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported factually correct information.

QUESTION 2
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is among the least popular genres, therefore fewer learners responded to Question 2. Most learners responded fully to both extracts and scored marks between 23-31. Other learners managed to only score 09-17 marks. They struggled to respond to questions like Q2.1.4 (b), Q2.1.6(b)and Q2.2.2. Other questions where some learners provided scanty responses are Q2.1.3 Q2.2.3(b) and Q2.2.4.

QUESTION 2
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q2.1.3 Learners could not explain why Mr Hyde asks Mr Enfield to name his figure. Q2.1.4 (b) Learners could not explain the relevance of a metaphor. Q2.1.6 (b) Learners could not explain why Mr Hyde use the tone. Q2.2.2 Learners could not describe Dr Jekyll's state of mind. Q2.2.3 (b) Learners could not explain the purpose of the letter. Q2.2.4 Learners could not describe the character trait revealed in lines 10-12.

QUESTION 2
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Even though the novel can be read within a short period (88 pages only), some learners showed little insight into it. Learners 'reading of the novel must be closely monitored and complemented with post reading activities. All chapters must be analysed in context. Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used to augment understanding of the text. During analysis of the novel learners must be able to read, evaluate and apply the meta-language of literature study. Learners must be able to explain choice and effectiveness in novels of how elements support the message/theme. In addition to figures of speech and imagery, elements may include role of the narrator, structural elements, e.g. plot, exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action/anticlimax, denouement/resolution, setting (CAPS pages 31-32). Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Special attention must be given to aspects like setting, tone, explaining the irony, describing the state of mind, explaining the relevance of figures of speech and how to discuss theme questions and open-ended questions.

QUESTION 2

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

Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the extracts. They failed to comprehend what each question required.

Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided by extracts as a basis for answering tone, state of mind, character traits and explaining relevance of the figures of speech.

Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported factually correct information.

QUESTION 3
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Macbeth is the drama that is not very popular, consequently fewer learners responded to question 3. Learners responded moderately to excellent with some scoring from 12-33 marks. Most learners showed insight and responded well in both extracts. Those who struggled were challenged by questions Q3.1.2, Q3.1.3(b)and Q3.1.4 (b) Other questions where some learners provided scanty responses are Q3.1.6 and Q3.2.6.

QUESTION 3
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q3.1.2 Learners could not describe Macbeth's state of mind.   Q3.1.3 (b) Learners could describe the setting (time) where lines 1-9 are set   Q3.1.4 (b) Learners could not explain the relevance of a metaphor/personification.   Q3.1.6 Learners could not explain Lady Macbeth's fears in lines 23-24.   Q3.2.6 Learners struggled to provide relevant actions which Siward could demonstrate when saying lines 31-33.

QUESTION 3
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Learners' reading of the drama must be closely monitored and followed by acting of some scenes. Reading should be complemented with post reading activities. All Acts must be analysed in context.   Learners must be able to explain choice and effectiveness in drama of how elements support the message/theme. In addition to figures of speech and imagery, elements may include structural elements, e.g. plot, climax, characterization, stage directions, dramatic irony, setting (CAPS pages 31-32).   Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Special attention must be given to aspects like stage directions, setting, tone, explaining the irony, describing the state of mind, explaining the relevance of figures of speech and how to discuss theme questions and open-ended questions.   Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used to augment understanding of the text.

QUESTION 3
Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the extracts. They failed to comprehend what each question required.   Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided by extracts as a basis for answering tone, state of mind, character traits and explaining relevance of the figures of speech.   Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported factually correct information.   Even though the examination paper will provide extracts from the original text, learners must take advantage of the modernised version of the text which is placed side by side the original text in the drama book.

QUESTION 4
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Eastern Cape Province had many learners doing drama, *My Children! My Africa!* consequently a bulk of them responded to question 4. Learners' performance is mixed with poor, moderate and excellent scores ranging from 03-33 marks. Most learners showed insight and responded well in both extracts. Those who struggled were challenged by questions Q4.1.2, Q4.1.3(a)and Q4.1.4 (b) Other questions where some learners provided scanty responses are Q4.1.6, Q4.2.2 (a) and Q4.2.7.

QUESTION 4
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q4.1.2 Most learners confused the literature quiz's invitation with the debate when describing the time when Mr M visited Isabel. Q4.1.3 (a) Learners struggled to provide relevant actions which Mr M could demonstrate when saying lines1-3. Q4.1.4 (b) Learners could not explain the relevance of a metaphor/synecdoche. Q4.1.6 Learners struggled to discuss how apartheid is responsible for Mr M's death, many wrote about apartheid in general and failed to anchor their responses into the drama. Q4.2.2 (a) Learners had limited vocabulary to describe Thami's mindset. Q4.2.7 Learners struggled to discuss how Thami represents hope for the future, many merely focused on Thami as a brilliant person.

QUESTION 4
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Learners 'reading of the drama must be closely monitored and followed by acting of some scenes. Reading should be complemented with post reading activities. All Acts must be analysed in context. Learners must be able to explain choice and effectiveness in drama of how elements support the message/theme. In addition to figures of speech and imagery, elements may include structural elements, e.g. plot, climax, characterisation, stage directions, dramatic irony, setting (CAPS pages 31-32). Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Special attention must be given to aspects like stage directions, setting, tone, explaining the irony, describing the state of mind, explaining the relevance of figures of speech and how to discuss theme questions and open-ended questions. Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used to augment understanding of the text.

QUESTION 4
Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the extracts. They failed to comprehend what each question required. Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided by extracts as a basis for answering tone, state of mind, character traits and explaining relevance of the figures of speech. Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported factually correct information. Teachers should provide a wider range of words to describe tone and the state of mind especially for struggling candidates.

QUESTION 5
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Eastern Cape Province had many learners doing short stories subsequently a bulk of them responded to question 5. Learners' performance is mixed with poor, moderate and excellent scores ranging from 00-31 marks. Most learners showed insight and responded well in the first short story. Those who struggled were challenged mainly by Q5.1.3, Q5.1.5 and Q5.1.7 Other questions where some learners provided scanty responses are Q5.2.2, Q5.2.3 (b) and Q5.2.5.

QUESTION 5
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q5.1.3 Most learners could not get Thulisile's source of embarrassment, their responses were mostly linked Nkwane's lack of empathy as he insists that Thulisile should rise above her home situation. Q5.1.5 Learners struggled to contrast Thulisile's current situation and the success she attains later. Q5.1.7 Learners confused Thembekile, the mother with her daughter, Thulisile when they discussed whether Thembekile deserves to be praised or not. Q5.2.2 Learners struggled to discuss how apartheid is responsible for Mr M's death, many wrote about apartheid in general and failed to anchor their responses into the drama. Q5.2.3 (b) Many learners could not explain the relevance of personification/alliteration, they could not link the whistle sound with Eveline's sadness. Q5.2.5 Learners could not recall Frank's nickname for Eveline.

QUESTION 5
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Learners' reading of all prescribed short stories must be closely monitored, where possible learners should keep a list of characters in each short story. Reading should be complemented with post reading activities. Each short story must be analysed in context and learners must be able to read, evaluate and apply the meta-language of literature study. Learners must be able to explain choice and effectiveness in short stories of how elements support the message/theme. In addition to figures of speech and imagery, elements may include role of the narrator, structural elements, e.g. plot, exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action/anticlimax, denouement/resolution, setting (CAPS pages 31-32). Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Special attention must be given to aspects like setting, tone, explaining the irony, describing the state of mind, explaining the relevance of figures of speech and how to discuss theme questions and open-ended questions. Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used to augment understanding of short stories.

QUESTION 5
Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the extracts. They failed to comprehend what each question required. Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided by extracts as a basis for answering tone, state of mind, character traits and explaining relevance of the figures of speech. Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported factually correct information. Teachers should provide a wider range of words to describe tone and the state of mind especially for struggling candidates.

QUESTION 6
General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
oetry comes third in the list of popular genres. Learners' performance ranged from poor, moderate and excellent with scores from 04-29 marks. Most learners struggled to respond well in both poems. They were challenged mainly by Q6.1.3, Q6.1.7 and Q6.1.8 Other questions where some learners provided scanty responses are Q6.2.2(b) Q6.2.4, Q 6.2.5, Q6.2.6, Q6.2.7(a) and Q6.2.8. Most candidates struggled with almost all questions.

QUESTION 6
Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Q6.1.3 Most learners could not describe the colour of water in the stream, some focused in line 2 instead of line 1.   Q6.1.7 Learners struggled to discuss the theme of 'wildness of nature', they wrote about the beauty of nature while ignoring to highlight examples to show that nature is raw and untamed.   Q6.1.8 Learners struggled to identify descriptive words and show how such words created a peaceful atmosphere.   Q6.2.2 (b) Many learners could not explain the relevance of a metaphor/personification.   Q6.2.4 Learners could not explain what the speaker refers to in line 9.   Q6.2.5 Learners could not describe what is happening in lines 10-12.   Q6.2.6 Learners struggled to explain the **state of mind of the person being addressed** in line 13, they focused on the speaker's state of mind.   Q6.2.7(a) Most learners wrote sad instead of appeal/urgency.   Q6.2.8 Learners could not link their responses to the poem, many indicated that the speaker can be pitied because the speaker feels remorseful and guilty for the time wasted.

QUESTION 6
Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Each poem must be analysed in context and learners must be able to read, evaluate and apply the meta-language of literature study. Learners should be able to identify and explain figurative language and rhetorical devices as they appear in different texts, e.g. simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, contrast, irony, sarcasm, anti-climax, symbol, euphemism, pun, understatement (CAPS page 32)   Other focus areas include to: Identify and explain poet's intention, explain choice and effectiveness in poetry of how elements support the message/theme. Elements may include figures of speech, imagery, structural elements and sound devices, e.g. rhyme, refrain, rhythm, Alliteration (CAPS pages 31-32)   Informal activities' questioning style should model externally set papers' phrasing of questions. Additional/freely available resources like the DBE Mind the Gap Study Guide may be used to augment understanding of short stories.

QUESTION 6
Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Learners who scored low marks could not provide relevant information, some merely quoted from the poems. They failed to comprehend what each question required.   Learners must be guided on how to use contexts provided as a basis for answering tone, state of mind and explaining relevance of the figures of speech.   Learners should be afforded time to sharpen the skill of discussing theme and open-ended questions. Discussion questions should include valid points which must be supported with factually correct information.   Teachers should provide a wider range of words to describe tone and the state of mind especially for struggling candidates.