**EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE**
**Home of Examinations and Assessment, Zone 6, Zwelitsha, 5600**
**REPUBLIC OF** SOUTH AFRICA, Website: **www.ecdoe.gov.za**

# 2025 NSC CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

| SUBJECT | RELIGION STUDIES | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| QUESTION PAPER | 1 | | |
| DURATION OF QUESTION PAPER | 2 HOURS | | |
| PROVINCE | EASTERN CAPE | | |
| NAME OF THE INTERNAL MODERATOR | Mrs U. Isaacs | | |
| NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER | Rev. S. Goba | | |
| DATES OF MARKING | 29 Nov 2024 - 12 December 2025 | | |
| HEAD OF EXAMINATION: | MR E MABONA | | |

| SECTION 1: (General overview of Learners Performance in the question paper as a whole) |
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The general overview of learners' performance in this question paper reflects three performance patterns**.**

-There is a small group of **High performers**. They demonstrated strong understanding of key concepts in Questions 1 and 2, excellent source-based questions answering skills, in Questions 3 ,4 and 5. They showed good application, clear critical thinking and strong retention of content and terminology.

The **middle range** performers' group is smaller than expected. They managed basic recall but struggled with Source -Based Questions (SBQ), 'answers in their own words' type of questions and handling high - order questions like Elaborate, analyse, evaluate, give reasons, etc.

The **low performers** showed difficulty in managing Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), Justifying TRUE / FALSE questions, Matching items, source-based questions and higher order questions. They struggled to write structured and coherent answers.

| SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions |
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| This section will provide details on areas of weakness per question, and suggestions for teaching and learning purposes, as well as Subject Advisory and Teacher Development support systems. It will further inform the Subject Improvement Plan (SIP). |

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| **QUESTION 1** |
| **(a)    General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?** |
| This question was poorly answered; especially for Multiple Choice Question (1.1) and 'Choosing the word that does not fit' and provide a reason (1.3) |

| **(b) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning** |
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| *The lesson plan structure or notes should start with the list of concepts/terms entailed in the topic for each lesson. This will assist learners to pay attention to terms/ concepts and improve their performance in Section A of the Religion Studies P1 Examinations.

*Use the "3-Part Definition" Routine, that is, **Meaning-Example-Sentence** to enhance the understanding of terms. For instance, let's take **Doctrine** as a term/concept:

**Meaning** = Official teaching or belief of a religion

**Example** =Trinity (Christianity), Karma (Hindu), Tawhid (Islam), Four Noble truths (Buddhism)

**Use in sentence** = The doctrine of the Trinity is a Christian doctrine which teaches that God's nature is three in one, that is, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Use localized relevant examples when teaching so that learners can relate to the concepts.

*Group your learners to create a **glossary chart** as an informal assessment task, display them on wall so that they see concepts every day.

* Include **terminology quiz** at the end of each lesson for regular practice. Record the learners' marks to monitor their progress and update your Subject Improvement Plan (SIP). |

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

* In TRUE or FALSE questions (1.5) and choosing the 'odd one out' (1.3), most learners are unable to provide correct reasons. This is further reflected by their poor performance in Matching Item (1.4) and Definition of Terms (1.2) question types.

**Comments that are useful to teachers:**

*The causes may include rushed curriculum coverage without regular assessment, surface teaching, not equipping the learners with Question-Handling skills, over-emphasis on essay - type questions, insufficient vocabulary teaching, lack of differentiated teaching, etc.

*The teachers must include a short assessment task in each lesson, instead of teaching the whole period.

*In the case of **Multiple-Choice Questions [MCQ]**

-Train learners by covering the options first. Allow them to predict the answer.

- When marking the MCQ as a class, do NOT just give answers, **go through the distractors** and explain why each is incorrect/ correct.

*The teachers must always remember that the below average achievers are highly visual learners. **Flash cards** with separate COLUMN A and COLUMN B items can be used to teach Matching Item Question type answering skill.

**Comments that are useful to Subject Advisors:**

*Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) where teachers:

-share Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) items, True/ False, Matching items

-share best practices to prepare the learners for all the Section A type of questions

-assist each other with content gap challenges

* Conduct Demonstration lessons for teachers, regarding teaching strategies in preparation for Section A types of questions.

**Comments that are useful for Teacher Development:**

* Workshop teachers on the following skills for Section A questions type:

- **Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) answering skill**

**Example**: Reading the stem first, underline key words, predict the answer, eliminate distractors and choose the best option.

-**Matching Item answering skill**

**Example**: Reading the whole list, Group similar items, identify unique ones, match easy ones first and eliminate options.

**True / False questions answering skill**

**Example**: Identify main concept, compare accurate information, Look for qualifiers like always, only, never, etc. Correct if false

- The Subject advisor and the teacher development should conduct workshop for teachers; and equip them on how to implement the above strategies.

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**QUESTION 2 (Summary)**

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

This question was poorly answered because the average mark of the sample of 50 scripts from different district was 20.

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

*The reasons include surface learning, limited background information about unfamiliar religions, Low-quality or irregular classroom assessment, Misconceptions, lack of question-handling skills, Poor revision technique, Weak cognitive skills, technical terminology vocabulary, etc.

*For instance, learners are required to give a **response in the context of religion** (2.3); the learner gives a general explanation. This exposes shallow understanding of the concepts and lack of question-handling skills.

*To the unfamiliar technical terms like **Tikkun Olam (2.3.2),** one leaner responded by saying, "Sorry I don't know and it's the first-time hearing about it". This shows that no effort is made to expose the learners to such technical terms. Most learners simply left the space open.

*Questions 2.3, 2.4 & 2.6 required the learners to explain for 28 marks. The learners struggled to respond to these questions. This shows weak cognitive skills.

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

***Introducing unfamiliar religions to learners:**

-Use diagrams, flow charts, short video clips, timelines and real objects like rosary, crucifix, prayer mat, candles, someone who practises the religion, excursion to the nearest Mosque, Temple or Cathedral, real life exposure to rituals like Eucharists, Baptism, Eid, Diwali, etc. to introduce the learners to unfamiliar religions, as early as grade 10. This approach is visual and will arouse interest regarding unfamiliar religions and terminology

***Question-Handling skills and Cognitive Skills:**

-**Use** question verbs like '**Explain**' in your informal assessments and guide the learners how to approach such questions. **Example**: Question 2.3.1 requires the learner to explain '*Comparability* 'and give example

-Since this is a concept, it implies that one must **define** it and give a relevant example.

-When we explain the **process** or ritual, the learner is expected to state the step-by-step process, meaning behind it and why it is performed.

**-Elaborate** implies that a learner must add more details, provide examples clarify the meaning, show different aspects.

**\*Unfamiliar Technical terminology and vocabulary teaching:**

**Example:** Question 2.3.2 *Tikkun Olam*

**-**Collect such terms from previous years' question papers. Create a vocabulary list. The learners must paste the list at the back of their notebooks.

-Use concept map and pictures of the ritual where it is usually happening.

-Indicate the religion of the term next to it.

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

*Most learners mix and / or confuse the features of different religions in their responses.

**Example**: Question 2.1 required learners to provide unique features of Judaism and Hinduism. They mismatched the unique features. Some simply gave general features of Judaism and Hinduism.

**Comments useful to Teachers:**

- Compile a '**Religious Identity Table**'' that shows each unique features side-by-side when summarizing the features of different religions.

**Example:**

| Features | Christianity | Islam | ATR |
|---|---|---|---|
| Founder | Jesus | Prophet Muhammad | Ancestors |
| Sacred Text | Bible | Qur'an | Oral Tradition |

- Use **signature facts** of each religion to help learners separate unique features from general features of different religions.

**Examples:**

**Islam** – 5 pillars, Qur'an, Allah

**Christianity** – Jesus, Resurrection, Trinity

**Hinduism** – Karma, Vedas, Diwali

**Taoism** – Yin and Yang

**Comments useful to Subject Advisors:**

- Do demonstration lessons for teachers to show how these teaching approaches work in a classroom.
- Provide teachers with **Survival kit notes** that contain, Signature facts of religions,

Religious Identity Table, Key vocabulary List, etc.

- Develop bilingual support material in English and learners' mother tongue

**Comments useful to Teacher Development:** Workshop teachers on how

- to develop Summary charts, Visual Diagram
- to build specific Question Item Bank
- to use past years' question papers for daily teaching & learning and exam preparation

| QUESTION 3 |
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**(a) General comment on the performance of candidates in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?**

The question was well answers because the average mark of the sample of 66 was 26 out of 50. Thus, 53 %.

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

The common errors committed by the learners include:

-Selecting one word in a question, look for it in the extract and copy the whole sentence / paragraph as an answer.

- Verbatim quotations, though instructed to write in own words (3.1.2)

-Inability to deduce and process the information provided in the extract (3.1.5)

-inability to explain the meaning of phrases asked, in the context of the extract (3.1.2; 3.1.6)

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

*Teach Reading Comprehension as a Religion Studies skill, not English using '**Read and Pause' Method.**

**Example:**

Give learners a Religion Studies extract from previous years' Exam Question Papers. They **read** one paragraph at a time, **pause.** Then guide them to understand what they read with questions like, 'What is the main idea of the paragraph''. Allow them to first state it in their mother tongue to ensure understanding and then in English.

*Teach them to **paraphrase**

**Example:**

Learners must have pencil or highlighter to underline difficult words as they read. They underline or highlight difficult words and write simple ones above them. Then re-write the sentence / paragraph in shorter version without losing its meaning.

*Apply **Model thinking aloud** approach

**Example:**

-While learners read the extract aloud, they tell each /discuss what they think the author says in the extract, using the thinking pattern like "Here, the author says that……. This means that…

From this we can see that ......

-In this way you equip the learners with the skills to **deduce**, that is, reading between the lines (3.1.1), **Write in own words** (3.1.2); **state findings** (3.1.3); **explain** [clarify in simple terms] phrases from the extract (3.2.4; 3.1.6), **Analyse** (state in details what is said in the extract including cause and effect) effects (3.1.7) and **elaborate** (Give more details )like in Question (3.3).

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

*Learners struggled to understand the questions. Thus, insufficient or totally irrelevant answers were given.

**Comment useful to teacher:**

-As part of exam preparation, teach learners to breakdown questions into pieces using

**Question Deconstruction** approach.

**Example:**

Discuss the uniqueness of African Traditional Religion in comparison with other religions.

- Discuss – give sides + conclude
- Uniqueness – what makes ATR different from other religions
- Comparison – similarities + differences
- Other religions – mention religions you have studied

**Comment useful to the Subject Advisor:**

Empower and equip the teachers to help their learners understand the questions in the examination question papers.

**Suggestions:** Conduct workshop on cognitive levels and Source-Based Skills Training

Example:

**Assessment workshop** to construct and identify Lower Order, Middle Order and Higher Order and how to integrate that with teaching and learning.

**QUESTION 4**

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

- This question was fairly answered by the learners.

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

This question was fairly answered by the learners because there is a good range of performance, some obtaining between 20 to 28 and some 35 – 42 marks achievers, out of the 20 scripts I sampled. Very few learners chose this question.

**Common errors:**

-Giving irrelevant or wrong or insufficient reasons (4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)

-Misconceptions detected e.g. Ethnic Cleansing in 4.3

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

Compile a list of complex terms like ethnic cleansing, xenophobia, Euthanasia, etc. and include "**Concept Breakdown Strategy**" in your teaching and learning.

**Examples**:

Ethnic cleansing broken down into:

**Key word**: ethnic = group identity

**Key action**: cleansing = force removal or killing

**Putting together**: Forcing a particular ethnic group out of an area through violence or intimidation

**Simplify**: Pushing/forcing people out because of who they are or chasing community away because they are different

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

The learners struggle to determine if a conflict is religious or not

**Comments useful to teachers:**

Introduce your learners to the **"Four-Question Conflict Test".**

**Example:**

 **Question 1**: What is the main cause? [religion, politics, land, identity, power, resources]

**Question 2:** Who are the groups and what do they represent? Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda 1994, ethnic not religious; Shia and Sunni internal religious division

**Question 3**: Is religion used as a justification or weapon? Israel and Palestine land, nationalism, identity with religious elements.

**Question 4**: Would the conflict continue if religion was removed?

If yes = it is not religious conflict

If no = it is a religious conflict


**\*Inability to draw lessons from South Africa.**

Noting that the question regarding lessons drawn from South Africa often appears in question papers, the teacher must include it in the notes such that the learners will be able to apply it in any situation regarding lessons to be learnt from South Africa.


**Example:**

| South African practice | Why it works | Lesson or other countries |
|---|---|---|
| Interfaith council | Build trust | Countries should create religious dialogue |
| Religious freedom in constitution | Protect minorities | Other countries should include strong rights in their laws |
| Ubuntu values | Promote co-existence | Teach values that unite like respect, tolerance, etc. |

**Comments useful to Subject Advisors:**

-Demonstration lessons on how to teach these specific skills

- Teacher moderation and reflection: take 10% of scripts from each school to confirm if

learners can answer **in their own words**, can they **classify conflicts**, etc. for instance.

-Provide teachers with **Survival Kit** notes that include "Four-Question Conflict Test".

**Comments useful to Teacher Development:**

Workshop teachers on:

-**Case study pedagogy** emphasizing the context, conflict causes, conflict nature,

consequences of conflict and lessons drawn from the conflict.

- **Critical Thinking and Question Handling Skills** including evaluate, justify, analyse, etc.

question verbs

- **Language support strategies** like simplifying concepts, glossary building, vocabulary

scaffolding

-**Designing application-based** assessments

| QUESTION 5 |
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**(a) General comment on the performance of candidates in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?**

-The question was poorly answered because the average mark was 20 out of 50 in a sample

of 30 scripts. Very few learners chose to answer this question.

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

* The learners struggleg to find answers in the extract as in comprehension, like 5.1.2, which required the learners to answer, 'according to the extract'.

*They mix their misconceptions with the source, instead of reading the source and respond to the questions accordingly.

*The dismally poor performance in 5.2 and 5.3 (18 marks) shows that the learners have a faint idea of human rights.

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

* Use the **R.A.D.E.** strategy to skill the learners in handling Source-Based questions:

- R-**Read** the source slowly, underlining key concepts, names, dates, religious terms and instruction

- A-**Analyse** what the source is about, that is, what is the main idea? which religion is it about? Who is doing what to whom?

- D-**Decode** the academic words circle unfamiliar words such as doctrine, ritual, ethics, transcendence, etc. and explain them in simple English.

- E-**Extract** information by highlighting definitions, examples, differences, similarities, arguments, etc.

*In response to 'according to the source' questions, train the learners the following approach:

- First sentence from the source followed by own explanation

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

*The learners mix and mismatch Human Rights and responsibilities.

**Comments useful to teachers:**

*Teach Human Rights content through the Three Anchors, namely,

A. **Constitution**, emphasizing Freedom of religion clause, rights and responsibilities, limitation clause, the Bill of rights. Use CAPS for coverage and guidelines.

B. **Religion and Moral Teachings**. Emphasizing teachings for each prescribed religion.

C. **Real-life examples** like school-based, home-based, current issues like GBV, LGBTQ+ community, etc.

-Structure your content such that each religion is linked with its teaching on specific Human Rights.

*Use relevant tasks from the previous years' exam question papers for assessment. Do not wait for the end of the year revision.

*Introduce **Human Rights Court Simulations** approach, where learners use school-based case studies, like, learners expelled for wearing religious beads, etc.

*Encourage learners to share Human Rights articles, experiences in the community, etc. every day to start Human Rights lessons.

**Comments useful to Subject Advisors:**

-Develop and organize a module for teaching Human Rights based on the Three Anchors, which will include a table of different religions with their respective teachings on Human Rights.

**Example:**

| Religions | Christianity | Islam | ATR |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Human rights teaching** | Human dignity = People created in the image of God | Equality before Allah = justice, compassion | Ubuntu = respect, community, harmony |

*Provide standardized Human Rights assessment tasks for the teachers.

**Comments useful for Teacher Development:**

**Conduct** a training for teaching strategies on how to teach Human Rights effectively like the **'4 – Step Method'** to Teach Any Right.

**Example:**

**Step 1**. **Name** the Right e.g. Freedom of Religion, belief and opinion.

**Step 2**. **Explain** the Right e.g. Every person may choose to follow any religion or belief system

**Step 3**. **Link to religion** teaching e.g. Freedom of religion means that people must be allowed to choose their own religion or belief

**Step 4. Give example** e.g. A learner cannot be forced to participate in religious prayer if it is not their belief.

**NOTE:**

The teachers will leave the workshop with most of the Human Rights, unpacked in this method.