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**EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE**

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## **NSC 2018 CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT**

|                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>           | <b>ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE</b> |
| <b>PAPER:</b>             | <b>3</b>                     |
| <b>DURATION OF PAPER:</b> | <b>2½ HOURS</b>              |
| <b>DATES OF MARKING:</b>  | <b>1 – 14 DECEMBER 2018</b>  |

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

Section A was more challenging in 2018, especially the visuals.

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

Section B covered a variety of formats from the allocated categories. The topics were less challenging and slightly less prescriptive than 2017. Unfortunately many candidates failed to address all the issues required which affected their mark for content because of the strict marking guidelines.

The majority of the candidates managed their time effectively. However, the number of candidates who fail to finish the paper is on the rise. Candidates are pressed for time and a significant number only managed to complete one piece of writing in Section B. Time management is an essential part of any examination. Cause for concern is that one candidate's response consisted of only 5 lines in Section A, with no attempt to respond to Section B. There was no documentation to suggest that the candidate had fallen ill.

Learners generally did not perform as well in Section B as they did in Section A.

Topic 1.1 (Marketplace secrets) was the least popular topic. The graphics were not as popular as in the past, possibly because they were more obscure than in previous years. Prior to 2019, weaker candidates had found the visuals easier to respond to.

The most popular topics were 1.3 (Mankind is on the edge) and 1.4 ('It is only impossible until it is done').

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

**SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions  
(It is expected that a comment will be provided for each question  
on a separate sheet).**

**QUESTION 1**

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

| <b>Average mark from the sample of 100 :</b> |   | <b>ESSAYS</b>                |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| <b>SUB-QUESTION</b>                          | <b>TOPIC OR ASPECT TESTED</b>                                 | <b>AVERAGE % FROM SAMPLE</b> |
| 1.1  | Marketplace secrets   | 74.8                         |
| 1.2  | "What is life?"   | 57.2                         |
| 1.3  | Mankind is on the edge  | 66                           |
| 1.4  | "It is only impossible till it's done."                       | 60.4                         |
| 1.5  | Necessary trouble   | 57.2                         |
| 1.6.1  | Picture: Man resting on statue                                | 57.4                         |
| 1.6.2  | Picture: Cityscape through the lenses of a pair of spectacles | 64.8                         |
| 1.6.3  | Picture: Face and Tree  | 84.6                         |

**SECTION A**

**1.1 MARKETPLACE SECRETS**

This was not a popular topic. It appealed to the more competent writers who were able to produce both literal and figurative essays. The topic lent itself to fantastical responses dealing with the realm of myth and legend. A minority of literal responses were less impressive. A small number of candidates failed to refer to the marketplace 'secrets'.

**1.2 'WHAT IS LIFE?'**

Because the candidates did not have to refer to each line of the quotation, they were able to focus on their experiences and perspectives of life. Responses were generally authentic and sincere. However, the weaker candidates produced autobiographical responses that became repetitive.

**1.3 MANKIND IS ON THE EDGE**

This was a popular topic. Some candidates misunderstood the topic and referred to 'men' instead of 'mankind', producing feminist-based essays which meant that the topic was not being addressed. The majority of the candidates responded well and conveyed ideas about moral decay. Candidates



knowledge of environmental and global issues was impressive; convincing essays were produced.

#### 1.4 'IT IS ONLY IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL IT IS DONE.'

This was an extremely popular topic, especially with the weaker candidates. Candidates predominantly wrote discursive essays; however, responses covered a variety of writing styles. Unfortunately some responses were predictable and repetitive. Many responses listed clichés or motivational quotes, with a lack of structure and narrative flow.

#### 1.5 NECESSARY TROUBLE

This was not a particularly popular topic. It allowed for creative answers. However, some candidates misunderstood or chose to ignore the word, 'necessary' in the topic. Some candidates deliberately re-interpreted the word to 'unnecessary' which meant that they could not achieve more than "Elementary" for content.

#### 1.6.1 MAN RESTING ON STATUE

It was an open topic to which candidates could respond in a factual or fictional way. It was generally well handled with many candidates choosing to focus on introspection and the value of support of friends and family.

#### 1.6.2 CITYSCAPE THROUGH THE LENSES OF A PAIR OF SPECTACLES

Candidates' responses were varied and candidates coped fairly well to very well. They included the following: a point of view perspective; looking into the future; city life vs rural life. Candidates chose innovative titles for their essays which immediately established the link to the visual.

#### 1.6.3 FACE AND TREE

This was not a popular topic, possibly because candidates found it to be obscure. Often the link to the visual was tenuous. However, the more competent candidates responded creatively. This topic also produced a variety of fantastical writing. Unfortunately many candidates opted to approach the topic literally and tried to include every single element. This led to disjointed writing.

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

Common errors have been referred to in the question above. In question 1.2, candidates who tried to respond to every line of the quotation instead of the spirit of the quotation produced contrived and pedestrian writing.

Unfortunately some candidates who chose the visuals described what could be seen in the pictures instead of using the visual as a stimulus. This meant that their writing was unoriginal and lacked flow.

In topic 1.6.3 candidates tried to respond to the many elements in the picture. Candidates struggled to interpret the visual which resulted in disjointed and forced writing.

Some candidates tried to impress with their vocabulary; unfortunately, the words were often inappropriate in context and detracted from what the candidate was trying to convey.

A lack of punctuation seriously affected the logical flow of the writing. Markers had to try to make sense of run-on sentences that continued for an entire paragraph. Some candidates did not understand how to use paragraphs. Introductions and conclusions were often poorly constructed or lacking. The link between the introduction and conclusion was not evident. It appeared that candidates stopped or abruptly wrapped up the essay as soon as they reached the allotted word count.

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

- The June and September examinations provide candidates with knowledge and experience of the demands of the paper. Teachers should give thorough feedback to make candidates aware of the necessity of time management and choosing topics that play to their strengths.
- Candidates must be aware of the time allocation per section suggested in the instructions and plan the division of their time accordingly. It is strongly advised that candidates should adhere to this suggested time allocation. There were a number of candidates who did not write the second piece in Section B or who were unable to finish. Candidates write this paper from grade 10 and should be able to apply the necessary time management skills. It is hoped that the time allocation for the paper will be increased to three hours, which should alleviate the problem.
- A number of candidates, who answered Section B first, were unable to devote enough time to complete the essay in Section A. Candidates should be advised to answer the paper in the order in which it is set.

- Candidates should be guided in responding to the graphics. They must **not** describe what they see in the graphic, which is meant as a stimulus. Candidates should not write: ‘In this picture I see ...’.
- Candidates should not write: ‘I have chosen this topic because ...’.
- Candidates should be discouraged from preparing essays which they then try to manipulate into one of the topics. This leads to contrived and inauthentic responses.
- Candidates should not address the reader, for example: ‘So you should think about what you have said to people.’
- Section A in Paper 3 assesses candidates’ abilities to respond originally and creatively. For this reason, they should not simply rehash movies or books.
- Verbosity needs to be discouraged. Weaker candidates tend to use convoluted sentences and inappropriate vocabulary which compromises the coherence of their writing.
- Candidates must be encouraged to do some form of planning. They should plan essays to maintain focus, yet they should **refrain from overly long planning**. The writing of a draft should be **limited to the essentials** to allow time for writing and editing.
- Candidates should refrain from using correction fluid!
- Candidates should not write the word count on every word throughout the essay.
- To ensure that markers are aware of where the essay begins and ends, candidates must distinguish clearly between their planning and their final product. Candidates must please draw a line through their rough drafts.
- Candidates should number their planning **and** their final copy clearly at the start of the essay.
- Candidates who plan in pencil must not write over the pencil in ink for the final copy.
- Candidates need to proofread and edit their work. There were many examples where words were carelessly omitted.
- Candidates must be encouraged to use their reading time effectively to identify **all** the required components of a topic.
- Candidates should spend enough time choosing a topic to which they can relate and which suits their style of writing. If there is a word in the topic which they do not understand, they should avoid that topic as there are other options.
- Candidates should not leave pages open between pieces of writing.
- Candidates should start each new piece of writing on a new page.
- Candidates must not tear pages from their booklets.
- Candidates have an entire booklet in which to write. They should avoid cramming the writing onto as few pages as possible.

- It is essential that candidates start their essays at the **top** of a page and write to the **last line** of the page, as at times it appears to the marker that the essay has ended, yet there is still a paragraph that follows once the page has been turned.
- Candidates should include a title for their essays, especially when they have chosen one of the pictures, since this will create focus and reader expectation, as well as enhance the quality of writing.
- There is no need for the candidate to repeat the topic or state the focus of the essay as if he/she were debating, e.g. 'In this essay I will be discussing...' or 'The topic means ...'.
- Encourage creativity and figurative responses to the topics. However, if the candidate is average, he/she should stick to what he/she knows.
- Educators should focus on the importance of **content** and learners should realise that their responses must be relevant to the topic.
- Candidates need to practise introductory and concluding paragraphs to ensure that the conclusion follows logically from the introduction. Educators should stress the importance of the impact of effective introductions and conclusions, as well as the need to establish the link between the introduction and conclusion.
- Candidates **must not use headings** like, 'Introduction', 'Body' and 'Conclusion'.
- The importance of **structure** needs to be emphasised: the development of an essay is greatly enhanced by correct, logical paragraphing and the use of topic sentences. Candidates could use words like, "however", "although" "furthermore" to improve the link of ideas from one paragraph to the next.
- Candidates who develop their ideas and provide detail are able to score high marks for structure.
- Paragraphs need to be varied! Some candidates are under the impression that an essay consists of three paragraphs only: an introduction, a body and conclusion.
- Candidates need to be reminded that a new paragraph means leaving a line open. This is also very important when direct speech is used in the writing.
- Teach learners how to construct a paragraph: topic sentence plus elaboration. One paragraph should contain one idea. Learners also tend to string together topic sentences without elaboration.
- The importance of sentence structure should be reinforced to create readable and effective writing.
- Candidates should focus on varying their sentence length as this improves the style and structure of the essay.
- The weaker learners, especially, should focus on being concise. A sentence is a unit of meaning. Lengthy sentences, which could almost be considered to be a paragraph, should be avoided. Overly long and cumbersome sentences detract from the essence of the writing.
- However, candidates should avoid constructing a string of simple sentences.

- Discourage the repetitive use of **participial phrases** to start sentences.
- The use of **sentence fragments** is still a problem. Teachers should address the candidates' use of incomplete sentences.
- While good vocabulary is rewarded, inappropriate use of excessive pre-learnt or pre-taught **vocabulary** should be discouraged. Invariably candidates use these words in the incorrect context, producing incoherent responses.
- Encourage original metaphoric responses and avoid the use of clichés and idioms.
- Teachers should **not** encourage learners to learn lists of clichés, quotations and platitudes which are then used excessively in their writing. These come across as “forced” and produce writing which is not cohesive; instead the writing is insincere, disjointed and lacks meaning.
- Teach candidates how to use rhetorical questions and devices effectively.
- Candidates must be more attentive to **punctuation**. Sentences were at times long and confusing, leading to a lack of coherence.
- **Comma splicing** remains an ongoing problem and needs **SERIOUS** attention. A lack of punctuation leads to long, rambling sentences. This is a problem which is on the increase and has a detrimental effect on the mark for language and structure. There were some centres where the majority of the candidates wrote paragraphs consisting of a single, confusing sentence.
- The correct format for listing is a comma between each item, with the last item in the list preceded by ‘and’.
- Learners should not use semi-colons indiscriminately.
- The focus should be on using a comma after the word instead of at the beginning of the next line.  
The following is incorrect: ‘Even though matric was hard work  
, it was worth the effort.’
- A hyphen must be used at the end of a syllable when a word is continued on the next line. If candidates are unsure where to use the hyphen, they should rather place the entire word on the next line.
- Candidates should avoid using ‘e.g.’ or ‘etc.’ or ‘i.e.’ in their writing. If they do insist on using these, they should abbreviate them properly and use them correctly.
- Instead of using ‘reason being’, candidates should use ‘because’.
- Inconsistent use of the **pronoun** needs to be addressed, e.g. Candidates write, ‘One should do their work’ instead of ‘One should do one’s work’ or ‘Everybody must do their work’ instead of ‘his/her work’; ‘A person should do their work’ instead of ‘A person should do his or her work’.
- Candidates should apply the rule that a pronoun replaces the name of the person or thing and should avoid writing: ‘This letter it is ...’ / ‘Anne, she is a bully...’ /



'some situations that we face they are difficult' / 'some problems we tend to solve them'.

- Remind candidates of the correct use of pronouns, e.g. 'Am leaving tomorrow' should be 'I am leaving tomorrow'.
- The incorrect use of pronouns creates ambiguity.
- It is correct to say: 'My friend and I went to town', not 'My friend and me...'.  
• Avoid using two conjunctions next to each other, e.g. 'I should not do it but yet I do.'
- Avoid the use of too many and repetitive conjunctions which lead to long sentences.
- Avoid starting a sentence with a conjunction and not including the main clause, e.g. Because women being the workers in the home.
- It is correct to say 'Congratulations on'. 'Congratulations with'/'Congratulations for' are both incorrect.
- It is incorrect to write: "By these words I hope...".
- Educators should address sequence of tense. Candidates change tense in mid-sentence and within the paragraph. There is a tendency to use the continuous tense when the simple or perfect tense would be more appropriate.
- Candidates misinterpreted 'taking people for granted' to mean that you do not understand them.
- Candidates misinterpreted 'laughing stock' to mean someone of a lower status.
- The apostrophe must not be used to form plurals.
- Candidates need to learn where to place the apostrophe in cases of omission.
- If contractions are used, they need to be punctuated correctly.
- The punctuation and paragraphing of **direct speech** needs to be addressed at grade eight level and reinforced every year, as well as the correct use of tense in indirect speech.
- Candidates must not use inverted commas indiscriminately.
- Discourage the use of **redundancies** such as: 'in this world we live in' / 'we as the youth / I as a person, / I as a human being / we as people / we as humans / we as individuals / us as mankind.' Such redundancies detract from the efficacy of the writing. It is worrisome that these redundancies are on the increase.
- Teachers should address **commonly confused words**: advice / advise; everyday and every day; they're / there / their; his / he's; where / were / wear; apart / a part; life / live / leave; still / steal; rich / reach; your / you are / peace / piece.
- Candidates should be made aware of the following words which are constantly **misspelt**: because / in fact / at least/ wonderful / occasion/ referred / occurred / diligently / tomorrow / challenges / powerful / grateful / truly / careful / beginning / develop / occasionally / a lot of / I am / as well / of course/ definitely / every time / in case / receive / deceit / separate / desperate / favourite / writing / until / till /

in spite of / in front / in fact / disappear / disappoint / guarantee / the use of sayed instead of said / payed instead of paid / cannot / happened.

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

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

- Learners were able to respond in any style to the topics. Candidates who prefer narrative essays were able to adapt the topics to suit their writing.
- Some candidates were unable to organise their thoughts, resulting in haphazard and muddled writing. Some form of **planning** is essential.
- Learners should ensure neatness and legibility.
- There are a number of learners who insert capital letters randomly into their sentences.
- It is a matter of concern that Whatsapp language is on the rise. The use of 'i' instead of 'I' remains a problem.

(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:**

- Correct their work in pencil.
- Use correcting fluid.
- Use different handwritings in their responses. Unfortunately this is on the increase and candidates have to be cautioned. These cases have to be investigated as “irregularities” and could have unfortunate consequences for the learners.
- Use multi-coloured pens to edit work. This interferes with the marking process.
- Use a pen that is too light. Legibility is of **paramount** importance.
- Choose topics which they do not fully understand. Topics which were poorly answered resulted from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the topic.
- **Tear pages** from their answer books. Planning must be left in the answer book.
- Use ‘In conclusion’ or ‘I conclude with’ to end their essays.
- Write: ‘I quote’ as an introduction to a quotation.
- Prepare essays then attempt to manipulate the topic.
- Address more than one topic in their responses.
- Use phrases from other topics in their writing: this detracts from originality
- Use incorrect prepositions. Candidates use ‘on’ as a preposition when others are correct and more appropriate. For example, ‘I am good on football.’; ‘all the best on your future’; ‘keep track on my life’.
- Use clichés, stock or flowery phrases as these do not enhance the writing and lead to confusion. Refer to the common errors listed in (c).
- Try to impress the marker by being verbose.
- Write religious essays that sermonise and threaten the reader with damnation. Avoid offending the audience.

## SECTION B: TRANSACTIONAL WRITING

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

| Average mark from the sample of 100 : |                        | SECTION B             |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| SUB-QUESTION                          | TOPIC OR ASPECT TESTED | AVERAGE % FROM SAMPLE |
| 2.1                                   | Speech                 | 58                    |
| 2.2                                   | Formal Letter          | 52.4                  |
| 2.3                                   | Obituary               | 50.4                  |
| 2.4                                   | Interview              | 62.4                  |
| 2.5                                   | Magazine Article       | 44                    |
| 2.6                                   | Letter to the Press    | 58                    |

### GENERAL

It is important to remember that transactional writing has a specific purpose and that relevant formats should be adhered to. This is NOT a creative writing section. Responses need to be appropriate to the topic and purpose. Register and tone are of **MAJOR** importance.

In previous years, candidates performed better in Section B than in Section A. However, with the inclusion of more restrictive aspects, candidates are not achieving as before. This is because they do not read the topic carefully and omit some of the requirements in their responses.

### SECTION B

#### 2.1 SPEECH

Many learners took too long to get to the point of the speech. They spent too much time greeting those present. Many of the speeches were illogical and unrealistic. Learners focused on being critical of the languages of instruction instead of the languages that should be introduced. Candidates simply regurgitated the wording of the topic. Many used words and phrases from different topics in the question paper to make up the necessary number of words.

The following problems were noted:

- The incorrect use of: 'protocol observed', 'greetings to the floor at large', 'standing before you is', 'my fellow peers', 'I have come forth', 'I plead for you'.
- register was not persuasive
- register was often inappropriate to a formal audience, e.g. audience addressed as 'You guys'. The expression: a 'speech should be as short as a mini-skirt' is utterly inappropriate in this context.
- candidates omitted the greeting



- powerful conclusions were lacking even with some of the more competent candidates
- speeches lacked motivation
- candidates referred to language in general without addressing the topic in the context of the school
- a letter format was sometimes used

## 2.2 FORMAL LETTER

Far too many candidates were careless with the format requirements. This affected the content mark.

- Subject lines were far too long. Candidates simply lifted the subject line from the question paper.
- Candidates still incorrectly use **both** the street and the P O Box address instead of only one or the other.
- Instead of the innovator's name, the terms "Sir/Madam" were used. A letter of congratulations would be addressed to a specific person.
- The signing off was incorrect. Candidates used 'Kind regards' and 'Yours truly'.
- When the addressee's name is known the signing off may be, 'Yours sincerely' instead of 'Yours faithfully'.
- The word, 'innovation' was misunderstood and often seen as community work or entrepreneurship. In most cases the innovation was not mentioned. This was a requirement on the marking guidelines. Not mentioning the innovation meant that candidates could only be awarded "Moderate" for content.
- Some candidates focused on offers of employment in their letters.
- Very often the letter sounded like a speech and more than one innovator was being congratulated.
- The topic clearly states that it is a formal letter; however, candidates used informal register and vocabulary.
- Candidates should not start the letter by writing: 'My name is ....', or 'I as the chairperson...'

## 2.3 OBITUARY

It was a popular topic. Although there has been a marked improvement in the format, there are still too many learners who write a eulogy. They start by addressing an audience. Educators need to ensure that the learners are aware of the correct format. The use of personal reference to the deceased, as in "He and I were great friends' is incorrect. The references to the breaking of the record and extreme sport were largely ignored or misunderstood.



Candidates referred to the deceased dying of a heart attack, for example. Candidates must avoid a response where the deceased has written his/her own obituary. Such responses will be awarded “Elementary” for content. A number of learners gave a narrative account with a lot of detail of the person’s death. Such responses sounded like newspaper articles. The content marks, as well as the language marks, were affected. Candidates focused on the sport and the record, ignoring the required biographical details.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- an obituary is a **notice of death in a newspaper**. A eulogy is read in the church.
- surname, name and possibly nickname
- details of birth, death and life of the deceased
- details of the service, cause of death and instructions regarding condolences
- use of euphemism (‘passed away’ instead of ‘died’)

**AVOID:**

- first person narration, e.g. ‘I was born ...’; ‘I died ...’
- personal references to the deceased
- present tense
- overly emotive language
- inappropriate content, e.g. ‘He was a gangster who was involved with drugs ...’
- muddling of chronological order
- the use of sub-headings
- ‘She was born by her mother...’
- ‘He attended primary at ...’
- ‘He did his lower grades...’/‘He did his senior grades...’

## 2.4 INTERVIEW

This was a less challenging topic with fewer aspects to consider. It was a popular choice and candidates produced good, authentic responses. Most referred to winning the Lotto.

There was too much emphasis on the greeting and goodbye. Learners should get to the point of the writing more quickly. Candidates should be encouraged to use short, pithy, conversational dialogue, not long stilted ‘speech-like’ discourses. Candidates should avoid irrelevant questions or disconnected dialogue where the questions did not match the answers.

Even though this is a fairly informal situation, the candidates may not use slang. The following were particularly problematic: ‘wanna’, ‘gonna’, ‘yeah’, ‘bro’, ‘bra’, ‘bru’, ‘hey girl’.

Candidates were credited for good interaction in the interviews.

A few candidates wrote only the questions without the responses.

Some candidates did not elaborate on the change of fortune. They constantly lifted the wording from the topic and the actual change was not identified.

Some pleasing responses also referred to a negative change of fortune, e.g.  
a promising athlete left paralysed.

Excessive use of stage directions should be avoided in an interview.

## 2.5 MAGAZINE ARTICLE

This was not a popular topic and was generally poorly answered. There were potentially too many layers to the visual which confused the candidates. Some responses were similar to newspaper articles on which a disaster was being reported. There was a tendency toward a narrative response. This was possibly because of the inclusion of the photograph.

Most candidates referred to environmental disasters. A few creative interpretations referred to loneliness or psychological issues. For example,  
one candidate referred to the disappearing breeding habitat for frogs.

## 2.6 LETTER TO THE PRESS

This was a very popular topic and candidates who were able to focus on the function of the writing were able to produce good letters. Unfortunately many candidates wrote generic responses and failed to identify the dishonest practices, which was a requirement of the marking guideline. The lack of elaboration on the dishonest practices meant that candidates were awarded “Moderate” for content.

Candidates misinterpreted ‘dishonest’ and referred to the ignorance of officials and referees. They also included the lack of facilities and resources in their responses. The word, ‘practices’ was misinterpreted as training sessions

Some candidates listed the problems without expressing an opinion, which was a requirement of the topic.

The following problems were noted:

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

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

Far too many candidates did not know the appropriate formats for the transactional writing nor did they understand the purpose. They did not address all the required aspects of the topics.

In the letter of congratulations (2.2), many candidates focused on inviting the young innovator to an award ceremony instead of congratulating him/her.

There was slight ambiguity in the obituary (2.3). The topic could also be understood as a person who was an enthusiastic supporter of extreme sports. The ambiguity meant that candidates did not refer to the deceased as practising an extreme sport when he died. This approach was not credited because the marking guidelines stipulate the identification of the extreme sport and record.

Problem areas have been discussed at length above.



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

- Centres must ensure that they provide learners with the correct format and requirements of Section B. It was clear that learners have been provided with incorrect information, especially regarding the obituary. There were many centres where candidates' responses mirrored incorrect teaching. Eulogies instead of obituaries were written.
- 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 on the quality of writing and to make learners aware of issues they need to address.
- Focus on the importance of using correct transactional formats to score top marks.
- Candidates should be made aware of the descriptors on the rubrics to equip them to respond to the paper as expected and to improve on their writing. Being exposed to the rubric will create an understanding of the requirements of the topics.
- Educators should condition learners to answer to their strengths.
- Candidates need to be taught to analyse a topic and highlight the key aspects.
- Learners should select topics to which they can relate and to which they can respond with confidence and knowledge.
- Register and tone must be appropriate to the purpose of the writing.
- Candidates must avoid flippant responses to the topic and must bear in mind that this section has a definite function. Silly and inappropriate jokes in, for example, the obituary or speech affected the mark awarded.
- Inappropriate information should not be included, especially in the obituary.
- Expose candidates to actual letters to the editor and obituaries in newspapers in order to acquaint them with the requirements of these genres.
- Paragraphing, structure, register and tone are important.
- Concise writing must be practised since learners need to give as much relevant detail as possible.
- Details need elaboration to achieve the purpose of the writing. This will prevent general responses. Candidates should avoid needless repetition to make the point.
- Candidates must avoid redundancies, e.g. We are going to look/see; We were searching/looking for.
- Candidates must focus on proper conclusions. Transactional writing, especially, cannot be left hanging.
- If *nom de plumes* are used, the writer's name must still appear.

- The dates should be written in full and numerals should be used for the day and year.
- Numbers used in a sentence must be written in full, e.g. He was five years old.
- & should not be used instead of 'and'.

**(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 and the obituary

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

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

Candidates should avoid responses that are too general or vague. Educators should stress the importance of appropriate register and tone. Slang and swearing are never acceptable.

**PLANNING:**

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

**SECTION A: CHOICE OF TOPIC**

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



have reached the allocated number of words and bring the essay to an abrupt end.

### LANGUAGE VS CONTENT MARK

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

### RUBRIC

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

### SECTION B: GENERAL

#### FORMAT

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