Examination Report

English Language

101

JC

2025

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Paper 101/01

General comments

In 2025, candidates who registered for the examination were 17 673. This showed an increase compared to 16 924 that registered in 2024. Generally, the performance shows much improvement compared to the previous year. 2025 saw a reasonable number of candidates scoring 40 out of 50 and the lowest the candidates scored was 4 out of 50.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This exercise proved to be accessible to all the candidates. Generally, the performance was above average. Seemingly, the candidates have mastered the skill of comprehension, though there are those who still perform below average showing some lacking compression skills.

(a) Where did maize originally come from?
Expected response

- the Americas

Comment

This was accessible question to most candidates. Those who failed to get full marks wrote America or Americans.

(b) State ONE activity that marks the farming season in rural Eswatini.
Expected response:

- land preparation
- sowing

Comment

Most candidates failed to understand the word 'activity.' Those who could not get a mark wrote *first rains_ which is not an activity.*

(c) How does the community practice of *lilima* promote good values among emaSwati?
Expected response

- strength bonds among neighbours / fostering a spirit of cooperation and solidarity

Comment

This question was accessible to many, though there were few who could not get a mark because they gave**;** *neighbours came together to help each other cultivate their fields*.

(d) Identify TWO challenges that face maize production in Eswatini.
Expected response

- erratic weather patterns
- soil degradation
- pests
  (any two)

Comment

This question was accessible to most of the candidates

(e) What has the government done to help farmers deal with challenges of maize production? Give TWO details

Expected response

- implemented programme to promote sustainable farming practices.
- improve access to seeds and fertilizers.

Comment

This question was accessible to many candidates, though some wrote "*increase food security"* which was not a way of helping farmers deal with challenges of maize production.

(f) Why is maize significant to emaSwati? Give three details.
Expected responses

- holds a special place in the culture of emaSwati
- symbol of sustenance, community and heritage
- harvest becomes a cause of celebration and Thanksgiving
- play a central role in the ritual and ceremonies
- used as a symbol of fertility, abundance and prosperity
- source of nutrition
- nourish and unite nations for future generations
  (any three)

Comment

This question proved to be accessible to most candidates as most were able to identify all the needed points.

Exercise 2

This exercise aimed at testing the candidates' ability to follow instructions and use given information to fill in a form

SECTION A (Use block letters to complete this section)

Full name: THABO MTHOMBENI

Parents: SAYITJENI AND LINDISIWE MTHOMBENI

Place of birth: PIGG'S PEAK

SECTION B

What provided capital for your business?

Inheritance

State one quality that has helped you in your business.

- determination / passion/excellence / hard work / business acumen / commitment to quality / being innovative
  (any one)

How have you helped your community?

- by supporting local farmers and businesses/ creating jobs for people in the region.

Comment

Many candidates were able to score all the marks in this section except for those who did not us block letters in section A as per the requirement. Some wrote *Mtfombeni instead of Mthombeni or worse Magagula*.

SECTION C

Write a sentence of 12 to 20 words describing your innovative approach to food production.

- always look for new and exciting flavours, ingredients, and cooking techniques or
- constantly pushing boundaries of what is possible in the food industry.

Write a sentence of 12 to 20 words advising the youth on hard work and success.

- remain humble and grounded, always focusing on being the best.
- dream big and never give up on your goals
- dedication and true passion.

Comment

Most candidates were able to write proper sentences though there were few who could not involve themselves in their sentences. Some wrote either below 12 words or beyond 20 words leading to loss of words.

Exercise 3

This exercise aimed at testing candidate's ability to present given information in notes form under relevant subtitles. This was another discriminating exercise.

Expected responses

Origins

- Pretoria and Johannesburg (both)

Elements helping Amapiono's emergence as a global force

- contagious beaten
- soulful melodies
- it's ability to evolve and adapt
- soul media platforms
- collaborative spirit

How popular artists' creativity has helped the genre

- carved out a unique position (in music world)/ set it apart from other genres
- attract a diverse and universal fan base
- filled with element of hip_ hop and Afro beat

Benefits of Instagram and TikTok

- help increase its reach
- connecting artists with fan worldwide
- viral dance challenges/hashtag campaign/live streaming event

How Amapiono has boosted economic growth

- through creation of Jobs in various sectors
- by benefitting supporting industries

- though increased tourism/spending on accommodation, dining and entertainment.
- attracted music enthusiasts and tourists
  (any two)

Comment

Most candidates found this exercise challenging as they presented answers

*wrote sentences instead of phrases write in full stop

*start with capital letters

*others presented incomplete responses.

Exercise 4

This exercise is aimed at testing candidate's skills of answering explicit and implicit questions. This exercise proved to be challenging to most candidates. getting as low as 3 marks in this exercise.

(a) How did the author feel about his first attempt at rock climbing initially?
Expected response

- excellent and gripping fear
  (mention both)

Comment

This question was accessible to many as majority got this one correct.

(b) Write one word from paragraph 2 that suggests that the task ahead was challenging.

Expected response

- "Daunting"

Comment

Majority of candidates failed to identify the word, some gave a phrase instead of ONE word as per the instruction.

(c) What evidence shows that Mandla and the writer were thoroughly prepared for the climb? Give two details.

Expected responses

- carefully prepared safety gear
- generously applied chalk to his hands to improve grip

Comment

Majority of the candidates got this accessible, though there were those who could not get mark because they left out the keywords "*carefully, generously"*

(d) Describe one weakness that the writer discovered on his first rock climbing experience.

Expected response

- lacked upper body strength

Comment

Majority of candidates found this question accessible, though gave incomplete responses such as _ *lack of upper body,* leading to loss of marks.

(e) What makes Mandla a good friend?
Expected response

- convinced his to join him on an adventure
- supported / encouraged his friend when he was giving up
- shouted word of encouragement. Commitment

Comment

Majority found this accessible.

(f) Using evidence from the text, give ONE character trait that describes the writer.

Expected response

- appreciative of Mandla's support and encouragement during the climb indicating gratitude for his friend's role or
- brave/courageous, accepted a challenge or
- resilient, persevered until he reached the top, etc

Comment

This was the most challenging question in the exercise as most candidates failed to give a character trait, instead they only gave evidence from the text which did not warrant them marks.

(g) What was rewarding for the writer when he reached the peak of the rock?
Expected response

overwhelming sense of accomplishment / breathing stunning view below.

the thrill of conquering that huge rock face.

(h) Describe ONE lesson that writer learnt from this experience
Expected response

- Celebrate your achievements / don't let fear stop you
- never give up
- teamwork is important (accept any other relevant response).

Comment

Majority of the candidates found this question accessible.

Exercise 5

This exercise aimed at testing candidate's abilities to identify relevant points to the question and present them in continuous prose.

Read the following passage and then write a summary describing how the criminal avoided being recognised by the bank and how they were finally caught. Your summary should be about 100 words (and not more than 120 words).

You will receive up to 6 marks for the content and up to 4 marks for the style and accuracy of language.

Expected responses

How they avoided detection

- entered the building disguised as workmen

- accessed the premises through a lift shaft
- cut the phone line to the alarm / by passed a sophisticated alarm system
- drill through a 5 centimetres thick reinforced concrete wall (to access the vault) (**any three)**

How they were finally caught

- criminal forensic evidence / DNA and fingerprints
- clues from that use of traceable mobile phones
- ANPR cameras around London helped track their travels before and after the burglary.
- combined modern forensic techniques and detective work by Met Police Flying Squad
- surveillance and observation by police.

Comment

An overwhelming majority of candidates were to score maximum marks in the content aspects of this exercise. However, for language aspects candidates scored average marks due to limited expressions. Most candidates relied on lifting from the original text and failed to group as well as sequence ideas. Some candidates wrote in 2 paragraphs instead of one.

General comments

Due to the forgoing, it's therefore imperative that when preparing candidates for the paper they are:

- exposed to a lot of extensive and intensive reading as means of enhancing their comprehension as well as enriching their vocabulary. Given ample reading and writing exercises to aid in the mastering of question analysis and interpretation of implied meanings.
- taught the basic grammar and sentence construction
- taught the skill of note making
- exposed to exercises designed to equip them with the skill of following instructions
- taught how to differentiate between attitude, feeling and mood.

Paper 2 101/02

General Comment

In the 2025 Junior Certificate English Language examination, 17,395 candidates sat for the continuous writing paper. This component primarily assesses candidates' writing proficiency by presenting a context in which learners are expected to express themselves creatively within given parameters. Writing, as a productive skill, is a higher-order skill requiring clarity, accuracy, and relevance in communication. Issues of relevance and language style are central to this assessment. Paper 2 contributes significantly to the overall mark, carrying a weight of 35%.

Overall, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the rubric. They knew which questions were compulsory and which essays were required choice. The questions themselves were generally accessible; where candidates struggled with comprehension or expression, this was more often due to weak skills than to the complexity of the tasks. In some cases, misinterpretation of key words led to entire questions being answered incorrectly, which greatly disadvantaged those candidates.

In terms of writing proficiency, there was a slight improvement, particularly in the development of ideas. However, grammar and spelling remain major weaknesses. Alarmingly, it was more common in this examination for candidates to score straight zeros across all three exercises. Even after re-checking scripts to identify any creditable work, many remained ungradable, which is a serious concern. There were also several instances of questions left unanswered, not due to time constraints but seemingly by choice. At other times, candidates struggled to develop their writing sufficiently to meet the required length.

On the positive side, some essays were well-constructed, revealing candidates with strong potential for professional writing given the right exposure and training. Nonetheless, question analysis continues to be a significant challenge, even when the vocabulary used is familiar. Performance trends also varied across centres, suggesting uneven levels of learner preparation.

It is worth noting that Exercises 1 and 2 are designed to train candidates in concise, economic writing. However, many reduced the size of their handwriting to fit excessive content into the provided space. It was not uncommon to find responses far exceeding the 150–200-word range, sometimes reaching 400 words. This often-meant candidates

exhausted their allocation on a single prompt, or at best two, resulting in failure to fulfil the given task.

Another concerning practice was the use of pencil drafts overwritten with pen, followed by erasure. In many cases, candidates ran out of time before completing the erasure. This habit proved both time-consuming and costly, and teachers are strongly urged to discourage it.

Exercise 1

This exercise required informal writing in the form of a friendly letter, where candidates were asked to warn a friend about their obsession with social media. Below is the question:

> You have noticed that your friend has become addicted to social media, and you are greatly concerned.
>
> **Write a letter warning him/her against too much use of social media.**
> In your letter you must include:
> Your concern about this
> Negative impacts of too much use of social media
> Suggestions of other fun activities/hobbies your friend could enjoy.
>
> **Your letter should be about 150-200 words long.**
> You will receive up to 8 marks for the content of your letter and up to 7 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

Most candidates understood the expectations of a friendly letter, expressing themselves in language that reflected a close social relationship with the recipient. Most were able to relate to the subject of social media regardless of geographical location and therefore did not struggle to engage with the topic. In addition, most candidates tried at developing all three prompts.

However, there were shortcomings observed. Many candidates failed to analyse the question carefully, leading to avoidable oversights. Developing the prompts proved challenging, showing limited engagement and little evidence of independent thinking. In some cases, responses lacked the thread of friendship, reading instead like detached answers to questions. While candidates generally recognised the need for an introduction, the link between the introduction and the first prompt was often missing, creating weak transitions. At times, introductions were overly lengthy, leaving insufficient space for the development of the required content.

With regard to register, a number of candidates used chronological connectives such as *firstly, secondly,* and *thirdly* to mark paragraphs. This reflected a misunderstanding of the friendly tone expected in informal writing. Gross misinterpretations were also noted, with some candidates encouraging their friends to use social media by citing its positive aspects, contrary to the task requirements.

Prompt 1: Express your concern

This prompt was not clearly addressed in most responses, with many candidates simply inserting the phrase *"I am concerned."* Stronger candidates, however, highlighted observable changes in their friend's behaviour or circumstances, thus leading to the concern they were expressing. The concern was expressed cautiously, avoiding a tone that might appear imposing or judgmental.

Prompt 2: Negative impacts of excessive social media use

This prompt was the most fairly developed. Candidates discussed issues such as declining academic performance, sometimes citing a noticeable decline in their friend's results. Others, however, strayed into general discussions of advantages and disadvantages rather than focusing solely on negative impacts, as required. Misunderstanding the prompt led to some encouraging the use of social media use for its benefits, which contradicted the task. Many overlooked the plural form of *impacts*, addressing only one. Other candidates presented lists of negative impacts without elaborating on them. Above-average candidates demonstrated deeper analysis, showing chains of consequences such as poor performance which could lead to the loss of sponsorship, or lead to the friend forfeiting provisional tertiary placements, and ultimately the derailment of life goals.

Prompt 3: Suggestions of alternative activities

Candidates generally suggested hobbies or activities their friends could pursue instead of social media, including soccer, dance, cooking, and reading. Stronger responses tailored suggestions to the friend's interests, reminding them of talents they were neglecting, or of long-held aspirations, or new opportunities in their community. These suggestions were thoughtful and encouraging rather than random. Some candidates even proposed activities birdwatching.

On the weaker end, some suggested continued use of social media in different forms, such as watching soccer videos on TikTok, which failed to address the problem of addiction. Others recommended activities lacking the "fun" element, such as studying, revealing a lack of proper question analysis.

Exercise 2

Question Two required candidates to write a newspaper article expressing their views on government's move to include arts as subjects in schools. Below is the question:

> There is a move by government to include arts (drama, music, dance etc) as subjects in schools, and there are different views from the public concerning this issue. Below are some comments made by members of the public who were interviewed on this matter:
>
> "Many talented young people can benefit from this."
> *"Subjects like drama and music would be too expensive for parents."*
> **"A lot of people are extremely rich because of their talents."**
> There are very few job opportunities for arts in this country."
>
> **Write an article for your local newspaper expressing your views.**
> **Your article should be about 150-200 works long.**
>
> You will receive up to 8 marks for the content of your article and up to 7 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

The expectation was for candidates to write persuasively, defending their chosen stance on whether this was a good initiative. To do so, learners first needed to demonstrate an understanding of what "arts" refers to and what it means to offer them as subjects in schools. While the question provided clues about the meaning of arts, many candidates misunderstood the requirement. They argued instead for arts as extra-curricular activities—such as performances, practices, and competitions—rather than as formal subjects like drama or music that could be studied and advanced even at tertiary level. Consequently, their arguments often reflected the belief that arts are suited only for learners who are not academically gifted.

The question included stimulants in the form of opinions from members of the public: two supporting the idea and two opposing it. Candidates were expected to choose a side, add

their own voice, and develop arguments to support their conviction. They were also free to generate independent ideas beyond those suggested.

Several shortcomings were observed. Some candidates lacked awareness of the intended audience—newspaper readers—and wrote as though delivering a speech. Others failed to take a clear stand, instead discussing both sides of the issue without persuading the reader. Even when candidates did take a position, persuasive devices were rarely employed. Instead of respectful rebuttals, some resorted to disdainful language, calling opponents "imbeciles" or "ignorant," which weakened their arguments.

Several candidates punctuated their articles with elaborate phrases such as *"It is my strongest assertion that…"* or *"I vehemently believe that…"* but these were often followed by underdeveloped points, revealing superficial engagement. Some contradicted themselves by alternating between supporting and opposing the idea within the same article. Others simply lifted sections of the question—using the stem as an introduction and the speech bubbles as arguments—without adding independent thought. Such responses could appear average at first glance but, upon closer inspection, revealed a lack of originality. Exposure to argumentative writing clearly influenced performance: candidates familiar with the genre managed better, while those without prior practice struggled despite having relatively strong writing skills.

Rebutting opposing views was particularly challenging. Many candidates contradicted their own arguments or failed to provide reasons for rejecting opposing positions, merely restating their stance without justification.

On the positive side, strong candidates introduced the issue clearly and took a firm stand in the opening paragraph. They structured their arguments effectively, using topic sentences followed by explanations and examples. To strengthen their case, they cited relevant illustrations, statistics, or well-known examples, creating vivid images of the potential impact of the policy. Their language was persuasive and respectful, employing vocabulary such as *opponents, proponents, detractors,* and *advocates*. They also used connective devices appropriately, ensuring smooth flow and coherence throughout the essay.

Exercise 3

This section was an extended writing exercise where candidates were expected to respond to one of three essay questions within a stipulated word limit. A recurring issue was that candidates often failed to number their answers, forcing examiners to deduce which question they had attempted.

Write about 250-350 words on ONE of the following:

Write a story about a difficult time when you were helped by a friend.
Describe the beauty and the challenges of rural life.
Schools should do away with prefects. Discuss.

1. Write a story about a difficult time when you were helped by a friend.

This was a narrative essay requiring candidates to tell a story in the first-person and in the past tense. However, some wrote in the third person or struggled with tense consistency.

Key expectations, since this was supposed to be a short story, included the use of story-writing techniques: believable characters, rising action leading to a well-developed climax, and a resolution. However, candidates often presented a reflection on some past incident without presenting it in story form. Weak candidates often failed to carve out an appropriate scope for their story, including irrelevant details (e.g., morning routines) while barely developing the actual moment of either the difficult time or the help provided by the friend. Others revealed the entire story in the opening line—*"I was drowning and my friend rescued me"*—without suspense or elaboration. Also, chronological connectives such as *firstly, secondly, thirdly* were also misused, undermining narrative flow.

Another observation was that the nature of problems described was sometimes unrealistic or exaggerated, ranging from trivial incidents (losing bus fare) to implausible rescues (friends suddenly appearing with guns to fight off kidnappers). There were also candidates who listed multiple instances of being helped rather than focusing on one, or reversed the roles by narrating how they helped a friend. Other times, a total stranger helped them, who later became a friend probably for the candidates who tried to align with the question.

Strong candidates, however, produced believable stories that appealed to the senses and immersed the reader. They described the help vividly—for example, a friend administering first aid to a collapsed grandmother—showing action, dialogue, and emotional response. These candidates demonstrated excellent command of language and crafted compelling descriptive-narrative texts, sometimes with a dash of humour that can only be incorporated after an incident. The author's grandmother collapsed and a visiting friend quickly noticed the signs of an asthmatic attack and took charge. Panic and a sense of urgency were vivid as the author tripped over things in the house while trying to get whatever the friend ordered,

and the relief could be felt as the grandmother responded positively to the treatment. Such candidates were able to arouse and sustain the interest of the reader.

2. Describe the beauty and the challenges of rural life.

This was a descriptive, double-barrel question requiring coverage of both beauty and challenges. Weak candidates misinterpreted the task, describing physical features rather than aspects of rural life, or focusing only on beauty while neglecting challenges. Some approached it as argumentative, advocating for either rural versus urban life. Then there were candidates whose challenges were not unique to rural areas, e.g. natural disasters.

Strong candidates captured the communal spirit of rural life—shared happy moments and celebrations, mourning together, subsistence farming and hence food security, clean air, and just the simplicity of rural life. They described sensory details vividly, such as the sweet and sour balance in sour porridge, or the aroma of cooking that drew neighbours in, and they let the reader savour the moment. They also explored challenges realistically: gossip, patriarchy, poor infrastructure, unreliable transport, jealousy and witchcraft. Even urban-based candidates wrote convincingly, showing familiarity with rural experiences.

A common weakness was the tendency to list points without development, resulting in short, under-described paragraphs. The art of showing, and not just telling, needs to be developed.

3. Schools should do away with prefects. Discuss.

This discursive essay required a balanced discussion of the relevance of prefects in school governance. Candidates generally related well to the topic, drawing on personal experiences of prefects' roles and shortcomings. They highlighted issues such as prefects misusing authority or being overburdened by teachers, while also recognising their value in promoting responsibility and assisting administration.

Weaknesses included one-sided arguments, misreading 'prefects' as 'perfect.' Another costly error was that of candidates misinterpreting "do away with" as "retain," the direct opposite of what it means. As a result, reasons given for one side were those supporting the opposite side, which created confusion in the whole essay, e.g. "Schools should do away with prefects because they help maintain order in the school." Unfortunately, this was a common error with some centres. Furthermore, among those who argued instead of discuss, some contradicted themselves, failing to sustain a clear position as they kept skipping from proposing to opposing, probably a result of failing to execute rebuttals (note that this is being mentioned even though the essay was NOT argumentative).

Strong candidates, on the other hand, presented balanced discussions, weighing both advantages and disadvantages, and structured their essays logically. They used objective yet compelling language and examples drawn from school life, producing relevant and engaging responses.

Recommendations

- Teachers should revisit the basics, training learners to balance adequate development of points with economical writing.
- Rhetorical devices should be taught to strengthen persuasive writing, including metaphors, similes, hyperbole, sound devices, repetition, rhetorical questions, contrasts, appeals to emotion, and authoritative references. The selection and analysis of appropriate texts can expose learners to the art of crafting language for effect.
- Story-telling skills need sharpening. Teachers are encouraged to use well-written short stories for textual analysis, helping learners acquire narrative techniques.
- Learners should be given regular practice in essay writing, with guidance on developing stories and paragraphs to meet required length confidently.
- Reading programmes must be strengthened, as many candidates struggled with expression, producing awkward phrases such as *"wind blowing slowly up and down"* or *"rain raining slowly."* Extensive reading can also address the prevalent issues of grammar, spelling and first-language interference.
- Critical thinking skills should be fostered so learners can substantiate arguments and rebut opposing views effectively.
- Learners should be trained to number their answers clearly and to craft suitable titles rather than restating the question verbatim in the title.

Paper 3 101/03

General Comments

In the year 2025 a total of 17378 candidates sat for the examination which was a slight increase from the previous year's candidates. The paper was fairly done by many learners scoring above average even though there is still room for improvement. There were also cases of candidates scoring single digit scores which showed lack of understanding of the component. The paper was quite accessible to most learners with some even scoring totals in specific exercises such as 1, 2 and 3. The component is aimed at testing the skill of listening for general and specific information with understanding. It was noted from some of the candidate's responses that they still need to improve the skill. It is worth noting that a few candidates still made a lot of spelling errors and failed to follow basic principles of the language like the use of proper nouns and pronouns. It was also noted that some candidates lacked proper practice of the listening skill as they would leave blank spaces without responding to the questions.

Exercise 1

1. Who brings coffee in a coffee shop?
Expected response

- Waitress

Comment

Candidates were able to write correct responses but there those who couldn't score a mark. Those wrote responses like: *Waitres, Waittress, Weitress, Waiters*.

2. State any two places Mary visited while in Cape Town.
Expected responses

- **T**able **M**ountain, galleries, museums, beach

Comment

Learners were expected to give any two, but some gave only one and they could not score. Some misspelt the words and gave responses like. For 'galleries' they wrote: *gallaries, gallery, galary*. For 'museums' they wrote: *musiums, museum, musiams, museum*. For

'beach' they wrote *bitch, beech*. Some wrote small letters on the initial place for Table Mountain which was incorrect as it is a proper noun hence could not score any mark.

3. What is in the self-study rooms?
Expected response

- Computers / a library

Comment

Some candidates could not score marks in this question. They wrote wrong spellings. For 'computers' they wrote: *Computor, computer*; and for 'library' the wrote: *libry, labry, join libry.*

4. Why did the customer reject the red cap?
Expected response

- red does not suit him / does not like the colour

Comment

Candidates who could not score marks are those who omitted 'red' which was a key word and had written 'does not suit him.' Other candidates wrote 'does not like it' which was not detailed. Others misspelt words like: suit as *suite, sweet, sweat*, and wrote 'colour' as *coulor, cullor.*

5. What was significant about Whitneys first two albums in 1986?
Expected response

- first pop singer to sell 10 million copies

Comment

Candidates who could not score had left the first part which was crucial 'first pop singer' and other wrote albums instead of copies. There are those who wrote *10 million views, 10 million songs, to sale 1000 songs*.

Exercise 2

Background

Item 1

Expected response

- granite

Comment

Candidates that could not score came up with responses like *granite, granaite, granit, granyt and even "grammar"* which were incorrect.

Item 2

Expected response

- fascinating

Comment

Those that could not score wrote words like: *fasinating, fassinating, faxinating, faccinated which were all incorrect*.

Item 3

Expected response

- wildlife

Comment

Some candidates could not score as they wrote words like: *worldlife, worldwide, wildlive, wildlife*.

Activities

Item 1

Expected response

- biking

Comment

Those that could not score gave wrong responses like: *baking, barking, bulking, blicking*.

Item 2

Expected response

- hiking

Comment

Some candidates could not score as they wrote: *hicking, hacking, hilking*.

Tourists

Item 1

Comment

Expected response

- Spa

Comment

Most candidates that could not score wrote: spur, spar, spa which showed lack of understanding of the context.

Item 2

Expected response

- bird watching

Comment

Candidates that could not score wrote: *bed watching, badwatching, badwaching* which again displayed lack of contextualization.

Night view

Item 1

Expected response

- stars

Comment

Most learners scored but a few wrote “star” in singular form and couldn’t score.

Exercise 3

Biggest influences

Item 1

Expected response

- personalities

Comment

Candidates that could not score wrote: *personality, persenalities, pesonalities, pessonalities, personlise*

Item 2

Expected response

- enjoyable

Comment

Incorrect responses were: *enjoyble, enjonyable, enjoyble, enjoyible*.

Item 3

Expected response

- exciting

Comment

Incorrect responses were *exiting, ecxiting, exited, excitement*.

Memorable events

Item 1

Expected response

- Audience

Comment

Incorrect responses were: *adience, audiance, audance, odans, adio*.

How to overcome challenges

Item 1

Expected response

- solution

Comment

Learners would give words like: *sollution, solutins, sallutions*

And they could not score.

Item 2

Expected response

- planned

Comment

Incorrect responses were: *plan, plane, planed*

Advice

Item 1

Expected response

- apart

Comment

Incorrect responses were: *upart, arpart, appart, arpat*.

Item 2

Expected response

- yourself

Comment

Incorrect responses were: *youself, yourselves, himself, itself, your-self*.

Exercise 4

1. How much rain do hot dry deserts get per year?
Expected response

- less than 250 mm

Comment

Most candidates did not score because they gave responses such as *250ml* instead of '250mm,' others left out 'less than' which was key to the answer. Some wrote *2500* hence they could not score. They gave incorrect measurements, such as *milliliters* instead of 'millimetres,' 'millimetres' was the correct response which measures the depth of water accumulated while *milliliters* depend on the surface area of the container.

2. Name any two countries that the Sahara Desert stretches across.
Expected response

- Algeria, Egypt, Chad, Mali, Sudan
  (any two)

Comment

Learners that could not score began proper nouns for countries in small letters. Other candidates wrote 'Namibia, South Africa, Botswana' which were distractors in the tape, not the expected responses.

3. How long is the Okavango River?
Expected response

- 1600km

Incorrect response

- 1600 – without units (km)

Comment

Incorrect spelling for 'kilometers' as candidates wrote *killometres* instead. Other candidates mixed number inscription for 1600. They would mix words and numerals) for example, a candidate would write 1000 six hundred.

4. What causes a roaring sound as you walk on the Kalahari Sand?
Expected response

- air escapes through the gaps between grains of sand.

Comment

Most candidates that could not score this one misspelt 'escape' and wrote: *escappe, escape*.

Some candidates omitted some of the words making their responses incomplete.

5. Why is the Namibian Desert considered as one of the oldest?
Expected response

- Its dry conditions date back over 55 million years.

Comment

Those candidates who gave incorrect responses left out key word 'over', and some wrote incorrect number of years as the wrote *5 million years*.

Exercise 5

1. What is migration?
Expected response

- Movement of people from one place to another.

Comment

There are candidates who wrote incorrect responses. They wrote: '*moving, move, moved, removing in place of* 'movement.' Some misspelt 'people' as they wrote: *peeple, purple, person, pupil*. There are those who showed incorrect usage of prepositions, they used 'to' instead of 'of.'

2. Which is the most popular migration pattern?
Expected response

- rural to urban migration / countryside to cities migration

Comment

There are candidates who wrote *urban migration* only, and others misspelt *urban* yet it was written on the paper, and they never scored a mark.

Wrote countryside to urban which was incorrect.

3. How does migration affect rural households?
Expected response

- women become heads of households

Comment

Some candidates never got this one correct. They wrote: *house, family, homes* instead of 'households.' Some wrote: *hustlers, heaters, hilters* instead of 'heads.'

4. State two items women spend money on.
Expected response

- food, education, health

Comment

Candidates who wrote only one of the three could not score a mark. Some candidates misspelt words as they wrote: *educantion, education* instead of 'education.'

5. Why is it a problem when young workers migrate from rural to urban areas?
Expected response

- *labour force drastically reduced*
- *cannot effectively engage in farming*
- *negative impact on food production and income*

Comment

This was the most challenging question in the whole paper as most candidates gave incorrect responses. Most responses were incomplete. An example of the incomplete responses was, '*negative impact on food production*' and other candidates left out, '*drastically*' yet that was key. Other candidates wrote, '*children cannot engage in farming*.'

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that candidates be exposed to more reading to avoid mistakes in spelling and being out of context.
2. More listening exercises for practice could be of great help.
3. Exposure to the target language (English) is essential.
4. It is recommended that students should be taught homophone, so that they are able to relate to themes / contexts.
5. Students must be guided in identifying key words which are usually before and after the gap.
6. Teachers should help candidates with spelling exercises.
7. Neatness should be emphasized, and candidates should be taught not to overwrite and cancel their responses as they become unclear.
8. Candidates should be now and again taught and be reminded question analysis.

Paper 4 101/04

ORAL ASSESSMENT

This is a school-based component assessed by teachers and moderated at ECESWA.

General Comments

There was a noticeable increase in accessibility of cards to candidates this year. Candidates performed better than previous years as the cards were more accessible to them and they related better to each card. Most candidates were able to get more than the average mark of 3 with only a countable number scoring below average. The cards were friendly, touched more on personal experiences thus making candidates more relaxed, and gave more. In addition, most examiners now can understand the component and what it entails to make candidates develop their points to the fullest. They now understand the concept of paper 4 and more showed an improved confidence in conducting the test making candidates more at ease. Yes, some candidates lack in vocabulary but being at ease and talking about personal experiences made them able to develop more on their points given.

Only a few examiners failed to simplify prompts for struggling learners. One such example was in simplifying the Card C-Wasted opportunities. Examiners would simply ask the bullets as they are without further simplifying the bullet for those candidates who were struggling.

Comments on Specific Aspects of the Oral Test

PART A – Welcome and Brief Explanation

Most examiners seemed not to have gotten the communique on the new way of introducing oneself. This year, we were expected to introduce ourselves as examiners, with each candidate. Most examiners forgot to do this, giving examiner name and date, then introducing the candidate's name and number. Some examiners even went to the extent of even discussing the card first instead of introducing the exam to candidates. Examiners are

asked to first introduce themselves and the date when exam was conducted for every candidate, then go over the steps to candidates for them to be well prepared for the exam. Some examiners jumped into saying, 'Tell me about yourself.' It should be noted, however, that most examiners were able to use the new system of introducing the oral exam and then going over the steps of the oral exam. This is much appreciated, although consistency in doing it was lacking.

PART B – Warm up

This part was done exceptionally well with many examiners. Only a few examiners forgot to stick to the stipulated time. It is commended that examiners are now able to calm down those candidates who are very nervous at the beginning of the test. This resulted to most candidates being at ease. However, please take note that for those warm-ups that were too long, about 5 minutes, it compromised the conversations of candidates. Some would shorten their conversations, with others running out of ideas to talk about in the main conversation. For the shorter ones, candidates would find themselves not relaxed but more nervous for the test to come. Examiners are advised to avoid asking sensitive questions during the warm-up. If you find you have asked such, it is advised that you go to more neutral questions. For example, asking more about the other parent when candidate has revealed he or she stays with a single parent or parents are divorced. It is best you go to a more suitable place because some candidates shut down after such probes.

PART C – Handing of Card

This part had a slight improvement this year. Most examiners did well here by mentioning the card before pausing. This is really appreciated. Only a few examiners forgot to mention the card before pausing the recorder. Others simply forgot to pause but dove straight into discussing the card. Mentioning the card before pausing is done to limit the rate of malpractice, which may be changing a card given to a candidate, or allowing the candidate

liberty to choose a card of his own while recording is paused. Please note that the card can only be mentioned now NOT to mention the card immediately after welcoming the candidate. There were instances where examiners would say, 'Welcome Sony. Your card is card E and we will discuss what it is all about.' This is discouraged as it shows that the examiner has chosen the card for the candidate prior to conducting the orals, which may be a form of malpractice.

PART D – Conversation

This part is examined and graded. It is the longest part of the whole exercise. It is noted that most conversations were not too long but were up to the stipulated time. Most examiners simplified bullets for candidates except for those few who resorted to sticking to the given bullets thus disadvantaging candidates. Some examiners seemed to be impatient with candidates when they simply failed to answer any question asked. Yes, there were those examiners who simplified prompts for candidates but were not met with the desired results as candidates failed to answer or refused to talk. Thank you, examiners, for not losing patience with those candidates who had speech defects.

Some examiners, however, dominate the conversations making candidates have less to say. You are reminded that this is a learner-centred test not teacher-centred. Dominating the conversation results to candidates responding with yes or no answers. Examiners are reminded that this is a test of conversational skills not a test of knowledge. Do not try to sway candidates to your own viewpoint and expectations but allow them to talk about what is in their mind pertaining to the given card. Examiners are reminded not to interrupt candidates while they are still talking.

Oral Assessment Cards

CARD A – School Trips

This was a card that seemed more accessible to candidates but was a bit challenging to candidates from rural schools that are not or have not been to any school trips. It exposed those disadvantaged candidates who found themselves struggling to say anything on the topic. Some resorted to talking about their pre-school trip or primary school trip, making it difficult to recall. Some Candidates ended up expressing their hopes of going on a school trip. Most candidates from rural centres talked about local trips to Mantenga and the National Museum, as well as the career expos that are hosted regionally. Urban schools' candidates were at an advantage as they attend school trips to South Africa therefore are more exposed. Some examiners upon realizing that candidates have little or nothing to talk about on this card, moved from school trips to family trips. For bullet 2, *why trips are organized*, candidates talked general stuff like 'So we can be with our friends, for fun and entertainment. Reasons they gave were not educational but just too general. Those who were able to understand the demands of the bullet were able to talk about being exposed to some topics they learn about in class. For example, Geography candidates were able to state that these trips exposed them to different landscapes and the sea, which they learn about in class. Bullet 5, on what government and schools can do to ensure that all learners partake in school trips, candidates only said they should make sure these trips are free of charge. Those who clearly got what the bullet wanted talked about subsidizing the trips, hosting fundraising campaigns to help cushion the blow of the fees on their parents, e.g., "***The school can make them wear their civvies on Fridays and they pay a certain amount to raise funds.***"

CARD B – Generosity

Generally, this card was not friendly to most candidates. This was because most candidates misinterpreted generosity for respect. For example, a candidate talked about helping the

elders when they come across them along the way. This is not generosity but an act of respect. Some candidates only focused on generosity being giving a person money and food, yet they could have also talked about acts of kindness like helping elderly who lives alone free of charge or asking their parents to pay school fees for an orphaned colleague. Another challenge was an exchange between "generous and generosity". Those candidates who had this challenge found themselves stuck on what to say later after using generous and generosity, affecting structure, fluency and development. For example, "I am generosity to my friend because I gave him my lunch box to eat."

Bullet 2: candidates did not have a distinctive reason why generosity is important. Most candidates opted to talk about giving for blessings, which would assist later in life. They could not fully unpack the importance of giving but only gave the importance without developing much further. A few candidates unpacked the importance of giving. They were able to quote from the Bible some verses on why it is important to give. Bullet 5 proved to be an uphill battle when it was not broken down for candidates. Examiners are asked to unpack such bullets for candidates. It is best to start talking about what candidates know as a society, like church, school, then go to the community. It confuses candidates to ask them about a society when they are not sure what a society is.

CARD C – Wasted Opportunities

This card was fairly done. Yes, candidates had more to talk about but most of the things they were talking about were too sensitive. Candidates talked about falling pregnant, aborting or baby daddies and substance abuse. These are sensitive things, which did not help them develop at some point in time. Some would end up not talking at all and responding with "yes or no" because they were scared to reveal things that are more sensitive. Most examiners used this card, but it was not done well.

Expected responses were that candidates would talk about opportunities in life, which would propel them in life instead of talking about mistakes they regret in life. For example, candidates could have talked about being offered a scholarship to study at Waterford if he or she got a merit but instead chose to focus on friends and therefore got a second class. This could have led to a missed opportunity to study at the best school in the country.

CARD D – Boosting your mood

Generally, this card was fairly done as well. Those candidates who are good in English had a great time with this card. Those who are not good failed to clearly understand what the card required. Examiners played a huge role in simplifying this card for candidates, especially the word "mood". This resulted to candidates being able to talk about ways or things they do to boost their mood. Good candidates talked about going for shopping and getting the latest gadget to help boost their mood, taking leisure walks, or going to gaming rooms and spending time with their peers laughing their lungs out. Weak candidates only said they go to sleep when their mood is down or asked their parents to borrow them their phones to play video games. There were those who daringly talked about imbibing in alcohol to boost their mood. Bullet 5 proved challenging for most candidates. An excellent candidate talked about building of recreational centres like stadiums so big teams would come and play locally, which would help boost the mood of community people. Others talked about availing employment opportunities so people can provide for their families thus making people happy.

For bullet 4, some examiners could not unpack what it required of candidates. Examiners were expected to bring the bullet to the level of the candidates like talking about their reaction to maybe finding out their friend had betrayed them.

CARD E – Understanding yourself

This was the most popular card as examiners thought candidates knew themselves well. However, some candidates could not differentiate between knowing themselves and understanding themselves. Candidates who know themselves were merely talking about their physical appearance and character traits. Those who understand themselves talked about why they are the way they are, e.g., they are shy and know why and what makes them shy. It was noticeable that most candidates are still in the journey of self-discovery hence were having challenges in exploring or discussing whether they know themselves or not. There were those candidates who were good in understanding themselves and talked about how they are able to read their body changes and mood swings to say they are about to undergo a certain change in their lives. Girls especially, talked about knowing when their cycle is about to come and what they need to do for themselves. Bullet 4 was an uphill battle for most candidates. They were lost for words on the importance of understanding themselves and talked about personality traits. Candidates were expected to talk about knowing which group to fit in, places and people to avoid and for what purpose, knowing your strengths and weaknesses to order one's life.

Problems and Challenges

Examiners are requested to take note of the following errors:

1. **Attendance Register**
    - Using a pencil
    - Failure to submit original but submitting duplicate
    - No page totals
    - Not ticking script submitted column
    - Crossing the register instead of ticking the appropriate box
    - No signature and examiner's name

2. **MSI**

- Faint shading
- Use of a pen
- Not submitting MSI
- Signing in undesignated areas
- Confusing missing(M) and absent candidates (A)
- No raw scores
- Shading percentage instead of raw scores
- Crossing of the number 7
- Not shading properly- shading only the tens instead of also shading the ones/ shading the ones only

3. Summary Forms

- Wrong additions
- Not arranging candidates according to Attendance Register
- Not checking calculations/ not cross-checking
- Not including those who are absent then writing or indicating they are absent by writing Absent in their spaces
- Not stapling summary form
- Use of correction fluid
- Overwriting of words and numbers
- Writing marks on externally moderated column

4. USB

- Omitting candidates from the audio
- Failure to check if all candidates are included
- Poor recording system
- Not using MP3/MP4 format for tracks
- Separated tracks for warm-up and conversation

- Failure to check audibility of each track to the end
- Failure to label audios with candidate names and numbers
- Writing centre number in space provided on USB

5. ECESWA Envelopes

- Not indicating absent candidates' numbers on spaces provided

Recommendations

- Read the Teacher's Notes and discuss them at department level to understand them clearly.
- Examiners need to co-ordinate before conducting the orals if more than one examiner will conduct the exam. This will help the department understand the marking criteria as well as the cards beforehand.
- List all candidates in Summary Form according to the Attendance Register
- Listen to all audios before submitting to make sure they are all audible
- Cross check each official document to be submitted to ECESWA
- Ensure you fill and submit the MSI together with all other ECESWA paperwork
- Keep all unnecessary gadgets out of the exam room. Only the recorder should be in the exam room with the examiner and the candidate.
- Centres are advised to invest in better recording devices, soundproof rooms for orals/ English laboratory

Thank you for conducting the Oral Examination well in your centre.





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