basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEARNER RESPONSES
AND
EVALUATION OF THE QUESTION PAPERS (PER PAPER)
NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE 2025
WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT	**ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE**		
QUESTION PAPER	**1**		
DURATION OF PAPER	**2 HOURS**		
INTERNAL MODERATOR	**CW TUCKER**		
CHIEF MARKER	**A PRINGLE**		
DATES OF MARKING	**FROM: 29 NOVEMBER 2025**	**TO: 11 DECEMBER 2025**	
HEAD OF EXAMINATION	**MS LM BREDENKAMP**		

REPORT 2: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEARNER RESPONSES

SECTION 1: ***(GENERAL OVERVIEW OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN THE QUESTION PAPER AS A WHOLE)***

Overall, the quality of responses has shown improvement, with a noticeable reduction in the number of candidates scoring between 0 and 10. Additionally, there were fewer questions left unanswered. That said, while we anticipate an improvement in performance compared to the November 2024 cohort, some candidates still struggled with what was a fair and accessible paper, accompanied by a very reasonable marking guideline.

SECTION 2: ***COMMENT ON CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE IN INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS***

(It is expected that a comment will be provided for each question)

QUESTION 1
(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

The comprehension section was fair and accessible, with candidates (not only the stronger ones) responding exceptionally well to the questions. The first eight marks were very accessible. Weaker candidates, who relied on lifting sections from the text, were still able to earn marks too. While some questions were challenging, they were nonetheless fair, and the marking guideline provided allowances for valid alternative answers where applicable.

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

Many candidates exhibit a decline in reading habits, resulting in a limited vocabulary. Additionally, they often struggle to engage critically with the material, and some lack a fundamental understanding of the technical elements of the subject. Furthermore, candidates frequently fail to read the questions carefully, leading to non-compliance with instructions, which resulted in penalties for some responses this year.

1.8 'Discuss the implication' – some candidates were hindered by the term 'implication', which led to confusion and detracted from the clarity of their responses.

1.9 'Diction' - This is a standard question that has been consistently included over several years, and candidates have the potential to perform well on it. However, some candidates still fail to grasp the subtleties required in their responses, often resorting to excessive lifting of text rather than providing a thoughtful analysis.

1.10 'Appropriate conclusion' – another standard question, but it caused confusion for many candidates, who resorted to lifting directly from the comprehension instead of engaging with the question.

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

- Candidates must be encouraged to read more widely and engage with current events and issues around them.
- They need to be taught the expectations associated with terms such as: **Explain**, **Discuss**, **Account**, **Comment** and **Critically Discuss**.
- Candidates should develop a clear understanding of what 'in your own words' means.
- It is essential for candidates to grasp key literary and rhetorical terms, including **attitude**, **diction**, **intention**, **satire/satirical**, **paradox**, **rhetorical question**, **tone**, and **repetition**.
- Furthermore, candidates must be taught to anchor their technical responses within the text to ensure relevance and accuracy.
- Candidates need to pay close attention to instructions, such as providing **two examples of diction**.
- In response to specific questions, candidates must reference **line 58 of Text A**, as many candidates incorrectly referred to the text as a whole or cited other lines instead.

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

- Instructions must be carefully read, comprehended, and adhered to.
- Candidates are required to read the entire question thoroughly before attempting a

response.

- Phrases such as 'reinforces the writer's argument', 'justify your response' and 'to what extent' are critical instructions that must be followed with precision.

QUESTION 2

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

The summary question was generally answered proficiently, with candidates performing well, given the availability of ten clearly delineated points.

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

There remain candidates who falsely report the number of words used and fail to adhere to the instruction to 'use your own words'. Additionally, some candidates continue to employ incorrect formats, such as point form, or replicate answers directly from the marking guideline (quote, point, paragraph), which results in time being wasted. While less frequent this year, there are still candidates who treat this question as a creative writing task, neglecting to address the required points.

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

Candidates must first read the instructions, followed by the summary text. They must underline the designated points on the question paper, then transfer these to the answer sheet, making adaptations to the wording. Many candidates waste time by first rewriting the quotes, the points, and then writing a paragraph. Candidates spend excessive time attempting to rephrase points entirely in their own words, often altering the meaning in the process, which results in mark loss.

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

- Read the instructions, followed by the summary text.
- Underline the designated points on the question paper, then transfer these to their answer sheet in paragraph form, making only slight adaptations to the wording.
- Do not attempt to rephrase the points entirely in your own words as this alters the meaning in the process at times.

QUESTION 3

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

Candidates were generally able to engage effectively with the two advertisements. Two advertisements were not unexpected this year. Candidates who adhered to the mark allocation and carefully read the questions performed well on this section.

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

Candidates frequently fail to follow instructions and do not read the questions with sufficient care:

3.3 - The question specifically instructed candidates to refer to the '*written text*', yet many mistakenly referred to the visual image. The question also required **one technique**, **one example**, and **a comment**, but candidates either provided excessive detail, wasting valuable time, or failed to include the required technique or example. Furthermore, candidates found it challenging to provide a meaningful comment.

3.5 - The instruction required candidates to explain '*which visual image conveys the advertiser's message more effectively*'. Although this was a higher-order question, it called for a personal opinion, which should have been accessible for candidates. Unfortunately, many candidates did not refer to the visual image in their answers or mention the advertiser's message. They also often resorted to merely describing the visual image without making mention of its role in conveying the message. A number of candidates compared different images within the same text, rather than the two advertising texts, again highlighting candidates' superficial engagement with the wording of the question.

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

Advertising techniques must be explicitly taught, and candidates must be instructed to read the entire question carefully before responding. Educators must adopt the questioning style currently employed in the NSC papers to ensure that candidates are familiar with it.

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

Candidates must develop the ability to engage with the questions, articulate their opinions, and provide well-reasoned justifications for their responses. This is not a difficult task; it simply requires candidates to form an opinion and substantiate it effectively.

QUESTION 4

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

Candidates demonstrated an ability to engage with the cartoon, although there was some confusion. Those who adhered to the mark allocation and carefully read the questions performed well in this section, although there were a few challenging questions.

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

4.1 - There was some confusion, as the character's attitude was not overtly explicit, making it more challenging for candidates to identify.

4.2 - Candidates frequently described the relationship, but failed to reference the body language, which was an essential component of the question.

4.4 - The irony question presented a significant challenge, with many candidates merely describing the events in the cartoon, overlooking its nuances.

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

Candidates must read the questions more attentively and ensure they fully understand the expectations before attempting to respond. They should also familiarize themselves with the mark allocation, as it provides important guidance for structuring their answers.

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

QUESTION 5	
(a)	***General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?***
Historically, this question has been problematic; however, the structure of the question this year was conducive to improved performance. Despite its fairness and relatively straightforward nature, some candidates still struggled, though many achieved full marks.	
(b)	***Why was the question answered poorly? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.***
Candidates are not adequately preparing, or being prepared, for this question. 5.1 – candidates misread 'antonym' and provided synonyms instead. 5.3 – candidates do not know what a complex sentence is. 5.4 – candidates are used to answering from direct to indirect speech, but had difficulty answering from indirect to direct speech. 5.6 – candidates do not know what a subordinate clause is, or how to identify it.	
(c)	***Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.***
Candidates should engage with as many past papers as possible, starting from Grade 8, to strengthen their preparation. Teachers should also be asking questions in line with these questions in their own teaching practices/ tests or examinations.	
(d)	***Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.***
No other observations.	