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	**VISUAL ARTS**		
QUESTION PAPER	**1**	**2**	**3**
DURATION OF PAPER	**3 HOURS**		
INTERNAL MODERATOR	**KEVIN JENKINS**		
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DATES OF MARKING	**FROM: 29 NOVEMBER 2025**	**TO: 10 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)***

The question paper was fair. The range of marks obtained in the paper reflected this.
It was evident that many weaker results came from the same centre. The consistency of weaker results in a center may well reflect on the teaching in the art class or contextual factors impacting the school.
These candidates lacked basic art terminology and did not know how to discuss the formal elements of art, such as colour and line. More than half of the question paper examined artworks that candidates could prepare for and that they could easily score high marks on. Often, these candidates would not answer these sections, or they did very poorly.
Another reason for poor performance is the lack of language skills. In a subject where language plays an important role, it is concerning that some candidates struggled to express themselves clearly and logically. These candidates have a limited vocabulary and could not, for example, describe colour as 'subdued', 'rich', etc. They also struggle with interpreting visual sources.
Second-language candidates still struggled to express themselves in English, which hampered their

performance.
There were centres where nearly all the candidates received distinctions. These candidates were well-prepared and had excellent visual literacy skills. The candidates could discuss a range of artworks in depth in each question.

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?
Question 1 was the most popular question and well answered by most l learners. It was usually the best answered question. Question 1.1: The artworks allowed for rich description and analysis. (10 marks) Question 1.2 was on the whole well-answered, as it asked for a discussion of two artworks by any South African artist(s) that learners studied (10 marks)
(b) Why was the question answered poorly? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Question 1.2: This question was poorly answered in cases where the candidate had not studied.
(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
Teachers must equip learners with basic art terminology and the skills to analyse artworks (description, analysis, and interpretation). Teachers must provide ample opportunity for learners to engage with artworks both verbally and in writing. They must also teach learners to write about the characteristics of an artwork, e.g., colour, and to start developing their thinking about why artists make particular formal choices and what these choices may mean. Teaching visual analysis should be a process that begins in grade 10 and continues through the FET phase. Teachers must also place the South African artworks in a historical context.
(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Lack of visual analysis skills: candidates often struggled to substantiate statements; for example, they would list colours but would not show how the colours contribute to the artwork's mood or emotion, as per the question. Candidates must attempt to answer the question, which, for example, in 1.1, was to discuss the life of fishermen. The bullet points are a guide, but candidates need to return to the question. So, it is not sufficient to merely list the use of colour (according to the bullet) but rather to look at how the colour contributes to the story told or to the question.

QUESTION 2
(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

Although Question 2 was popular, the answers ranged from well-answered to poorly-answered, depending on the candidate's capacity to elaborate on observations about the artworks.
Question 2.1: Although the question was well-suited to the topic in this theme, many candidates struggled to articulate the pose of the figure or the evidence of naturalism. Answers to this question were sometimes vague or relied heavily on given information (8 marks).
Question 2.2: On the whole, well answered, because it was an open-ended question allowing for two studied artworks by South African artists whose work demonstrated the influence of indigenous art forms / African art (12 marks).

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

Some candidates struggled to see the glossary at the bottom of the page, so they made up answers based on the title. Candidates struggled to elaborate on the combination of Western and African Art in 2.1

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

Teachers must emphasise the influences of African art and/or indigenous art on their chosen South African artists studied in this section.
Candidates should practice writing about African indigenous artworks and masks. Candidates are generally more confident discussing two-dimensional or narrative works. African artworks require careful description of form, material, and style as three-dimensional artworks. The notion of influence also requires attention from Grade 10,
While it is no longer as problematic as in previous years, it is important to remind teachers that they must not study Irma Stern's Eternal Child in this section, as it does not show African/indigenous art influences.

(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 get a good grounding in Grades 10 and 11 so they can apply knowledge of African Art and Western Art to the artists they study in Grade 12. Teachers must equip learners to respond to unseen images from Grade 10 onwards. Learners need to build confidence in analytical/interpretive skills and be able to articulate, being comfortable with the 'language of visual arts'.

QUESTION 3

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

Question 3.1: On the whole, candidates fared very well in this section. Since only one artwork was given as the unseen example, they could focus in detail on its subject matter and meaning. The artwork by Leshaan Moses provided rich material for discussion, and candidates were able to interpret it, assisted by the focused bullet points that guided the question. Many candidates related to the artwork and poignantly described its emotional impact on them (10 marks).
Question 3.2 was, on average, sufficiently answered. (10 marks)

(b) Why was the question answered poorly? Also provide specific examples, indicate common

errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
The question was answered well.
(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
This question was answered well. In previous years, candidates assumed the work was about apartheid in the socio-political question, but many were able to see that the artwork engaged contemporary social issues.
(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Unseen artworks do not have to stem from apartheid in the 3.1. Teachers must remind candidates to read the text box carefully to understand the context of the unseen artwork and teach learners to interpret artworks and form substantiated opinions based on contextual factors. As mentioned above, this was well managed this year, but the reminder can remain ongoing.

QUESTION 4
(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Question 4.1: Very poorly answered (8 marks). **Question 4.2:** Well answered if candidates studied relevant artworks from rural South Africa or very poorly answered if they tried to fit any studied examples into this section (12 marks).
(b) Why was the question answered poorly? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.
Some candidates answer this question but the remainder of the center does not, suggesting the section is not taught in the center. In addition, candidates struggled with elaborating on the terminology given in Question 4.1. They found difficulty in describing why a work was simplified or abstract.
(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning.
This theme combines crafts, art, and spiritual works, mainly from rural South Africa. It is a broad field of study, and teachers should select artists carefully to ensure learners understand the context of the chosen artists. The section focuses on rural artists, and teachers should ensure that they teach artists from rural South Africa.
(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
Expose learners to visual analysis terminology prescribed in CAPS. Terminology such as 'simplified' or 'abstract' is part of the CAPS curriculum, and learners need to be taught what the terms mean and how to apply them by practicing the analysis of unseen artworks and craftworks.

QUESTION 5
(a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
Question 5.1: Well answered to average. The bullets guided candidates in answering the question,

Question 5.2: Well answered. (10 marks)

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

Responses were often quite superficial and descriptive, and did not demonstrate understanding of performance and installation art.

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

Due to the nature of new media work, this section and question 5.1 are usually of a higher cognitive level. Teachers have the option to choose any five sections (questions) to study, and should consider only those they are confident their learners can handle. 'Stronger' candidates really enjoy this section and get very involved with these artworks. It also influences their practical work, which is very rewarding. Teachers who select this theme need to expose learners to contemporary artworks, such as installations and video works.

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

Visits to galleries to view more contemporary art are advisable so learners can experience artworks firsthand. Teachers should show learners how to engage with artworks of a more conceptual nature: to understand the nature of performance and installation art.

QUESTION 6

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

6.1 Candidates answered this question well, with some candidates offering exciting insights on the artworks (10 marks)

6.2 Candidates who studied appropriate artworks answered this question well (10 marks)

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

Some candidates responded with studied artworks that were made well before 1994, or with international examples. These artworks were not considered valid for marking.

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

The issue of identity can be explored from Grade 10 to Grade 12, through both practical work and Visual Culture Studies, to develop an understanding of how artworks portray identity. Many young contemporary artists in South Africa can be studied in this section, and teachers should take learners to exhibitions to give them a first-hand experience of their work. It is also an issue that can be debated in class, e.g., the role that race, history, religion, etc., play in forming identities. The approved textbook for Visual Arts Grade 12 (CAPS) will help teachers with teaching material regarding artists working with identity issues.

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

Teachers can make sure that artworks taught in this section are from after 1994; for example, many candidates answered Butcher Boys here, which cannot be awarded marks.

Teachers can make sure learners are clear that this MUST be South African artists, as the crux of the section is post-democratic identity.
It is important to understand this question as more than politics and having to do with identity.

QUESTION 7

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

Question 7.1: This question was moderately well to well answered (2 marks)
Question 7.2: This question was well answered (10 marks)
Question 7.3: This question was well answered (8 marks)

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

The question required interpretation. In the cases where candidates fared well, they were able to interpret artworks in context.

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

Gender issues are a part of our daily lives. It is important that teachers relay current issues or thinking about gender so that candidates can respond to contemporary issues of gender, as seen in the artworks chosen for this question paper. Teachers must show artworks in class that facilitate discussion and debate about these issues to foster a broader understanding of gender studies.

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

Gender issues can be introduced in Grades 10 and 11 to provide learners with a solid background and understanding of this issue. Learners need to build confidence in analytical/interpretive skills and need to be able to articulate, being comfortable with the 'language of visual arts'. Teachers must show learners how to interpret the meaning of contemporary artworks.

QUESTION 8

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

8.1 Poorly answered (8 marks)
8,2 Poorly answered (12 marks)

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

This question was generally answered by candidates who did not study architecture.

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

Every year there are fewer learners answering architecture. To be able to answer this question, teachers must cover a large amount of content and teach learners architecture 'language'.
(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners and comments that are useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.
As teachers have a choice of studying any six of the eight themes/questions, the unpopularity of this question will remain.