

Question 1 - Comprehension

Certain questions in this section were challenging. However, they were answered well by candidates who had some insight into what they read. Grade 12 candidates ought to be able to read demanding material and must be taught to read carefully, and re-read if necessary. Too many candidates did not answer the questions clearly enough to earn marks - they wrote down answers that seemed appropriate to them in an unsystematic way. There were certain questions that required more effort than merely snatching at the first possible response. Candidates should weigh up what would best serve the purpose of earning marks.

Question 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, and 1.16 were the more demanding questions. Candidates must be taught to answer questions in full sentences and to be crisp and concise. Long-winded, rambling answers must be discouraged. In fact, marks for style were lost if the answers were verbose. Candidates cannot expect to earn marks if they write 4 lines for a one-mark question.

Candidates must be made aware of the instruction to 'use your own words'. Merely lifting large sections directly from the text does not earn marks. The test is to see whether the candidates have understood the concept and can reflect it in their own words. Many merely copied sections directly from the passage when answering questions 1.7, 1.8 and 1.16.

Question 2 - Summarising

This question requires the candidates to apply numerous comprehension proficiencies and those candidates who had practised these skills scored good marks. The foremost problem with this question was the inability of the candidates to follow the instructions. Question 2.1 was answered well, but 2.2 showed the inability of candidates to follow instructions. Six points were required here, yet many candidates wrote paragraphs. Unfortunately, the instruction to 'use your own words' was often ignored and candidates were penalized.

Question 3

In previous examiners' reports, the need to understand grammatical terms has been emphasised. These terms - simple subject jargon - need to be understood by the candidates. In Question 3 there were many questions that merely required the candidates to be familiar with certain terminology. Terms such as *active and passive voices*, *literal and figurative language*, *ambiguity*, *register*, *colloquial*, *irony*, *pun* and *reported speech*, need to be understood. Centres where candidates were unfamiliar with, for example, the meaning of *reported speech* lost those marks as they were unable to perform this simple operation.

Question 4 - Editing

Candidates were better prepared than in the past. Candidates must realise that, to earn full marks for a question they have to complete the question! In 4.6, candidates were expected to explain and correct the punctuation error. Most candidates took a guess at correcting it, but did not explain their change. Many candidates confused a comma with the apostrophe.

Misspelling of even basic words is becoming a serious problem. Spelling is often seen as a reflection of a person's intellect. It was sadly hilarious to see spelling such as *peer pressure*, *pure preshure*, *Pierre presure*, *pear pressure*, *pre pressure* and *pier pressure*. The thorny issue of pronunciation also plays a role in poor spelling habits. The spelling problem needs to be dealt with in every subject and language teachers need support from all other subject teachers. Perhaps they (History, Mathematics, etc.) could include a 5 % penalty specifically for spelling and grammar errors in all tasks, projects and examinations.

Two further concerns.

1. The Standard Grade candidates, who will be part of this examination in 2008, will find it gruelling to cope with Question 1, and especially Question 2.

2. The application of the memorandum in the 2008 final examination, considering the apparently flexible and 'open-ended' exemplar Grade 11 examination of 2007. Candidates and markers have been taught to be precise and exact in assessing

the responses to the language paper because language needs to be accurate and unambiguous, yet the exemplar Grade II memorandum was relatively vague and open to interpretation. Instructions were either inadequate or unclear.

While we are fully appreciative of the world-class curriculum to be examined next year, we trust that the assessment process will be of equal quality.

We take this opportunity to thank previous examiners and markers whose professional efforts have done much to bolster the enviable reputation of English First Language in the Western Cape.