

Section A**Question 1**

This was, without doubt, the most popular choice in Section A and, almost without exception, candidates chose South Africa's unacceptable levels of crime as the issue they felt citizens should not be silent about. Candidates expressed strong feelings of anger and frustration in these essays and left one in no doubt that South Africans want to take their country back from the criminals who are plaguing and endangering our lives.

Question 2

There were a few pleasing responses to this topic, with candidate capturing the appropriate style and tone of a delighted child. Unfortunately, some candidates did not read the question carefully and produced the response of an adult, or a response to a situation other than a city, a farm or the seaside.

Question 3

There were only a few responses to this question and most of these did not provide convincing suggestions as to what the public should do about the situation. Candidates must plan their responses before writing and, if in the course of their planning they find they have very little to say, they must seriously consider choosing another topic.

Question 4

Only one of the responses to this question left a strong impression. That candidate wrote confidently, and with obvious personal insight, about the everyday working conditions of a taxi driver. Once again I was struck by the difference it makes to the quality of the writing when candidates choose to write about something within their experience.

Unfortunately, there were a number of candidates who did not read the question carefully and described their experiences as a passenger in a minibus, instead of telling the story from the driver's point of view.

Question 5

This question produced some reasonably good responses, although some of the candidates had difficulty explaining, or omitted to explain, just what it was that they had learned from the situation.

Question 6

There were hardly any responses to this question. This was puzzling as candidates in past years have often produced impressive and creative answers to this type of question.

Question 7

Candidates in the past have usually avoided a request for a creative response to a photograph. However, there were some pleasing responses this year to this kind of stimulus. In fact, one of the most impressive responses to Section A came from a response to Addendum 7.1. Teachers need to show candidates how they can interpret a picture in many acceptable ways, thus offering them a large array of topics within one question.

Section B**Question 8**

This was the most popular choice in Section B. As if to underline the impression created by the many responses to Question 1, most of the candidates wrote, with serious concern, about the ravages of habit-forming drugs amongst young people in their communities.

Once again this year, I found that many candidates had no knowledge of the appropriate form of a letter. There is, for example, no need to repeat the salutation at the beginning of the informal letter, e.g. *Dear Koos*, and then on the next line, *Hullo, my friend*. Also, many candidates kept repeating their friend's name in the course of the letter, e.g. *You must see*

Nomsa the school principal OR *My friend your daughter needs help*. There is no need to do this and, as illustrated in these two examples, it often results in ambiguity or clumsy sentence construction.

Question 9

There were some very good responses to the letter to the press. However, some candidates, who obviously did not understand the extract from Mrs Williams' letter, began by stating that they disagreed with Mrs Williams, and then proceeded to agree with her.

As with the previous question, there were many candidates who had no idea of how to set out this kind of letter.

Question 10

All of the candidates who answered this question gave the impression that they were totally unfamiliar with newspaper reports – let alone the form and style of such reports.

Question 11

As far as diary entries are concerned, I can only repeat the comments that I made in my 2005 report:

... teachers must emphasise to candidates that diary entries are not running commentaries spoken into a portable tape recorder, but a recording in writing of one's thoughts and feelings at the end of a day. A sentence such as the following is, therefore, entirely inappropriate: "At the moment I am climbing a tree to escape the lion."

Section C

Questions 12

Very few of the responses to this question would have achieved the desired effect. These candidates were unable to provide sensible advice in simple, clear language. Many did not know the meaning of the word "pamphlet".

Question 13

This was a popular choice in this section and most candidates coped reasonably well with this question, although some forgot to give the homeowner's contact details. A word of advice to candidates: Try to find alternatives for words you don't know how to spell. Misspellings encountered included *on sweet bathroom*, *launch* (instead of "lounge"), *gikoosy* and *naughty pine ceilings*.

Question 14

There were some competent responses here from candidates who were obviously familiar with this kind of form at their places of work. However, some candidates provided extremely vague instructions on the form. For example: What sort of information should be given in response to *Relatives:* or *Death policy:* ? When checking a form such as this, the candidate should try to put him- or herself in the position of the person filling in the form.

Section D

Questions 15, 16 and 17

Not all candidates had read the stories on which these questions were based. Of those who had, some provided intelligent and creative responses.

By contrast, many candidates had obviously never studied the prescribed short stories. In spite of a Departmental circular drawing attention to this matter, the availability of past Senior Certificate question papers, subject guidelines, the annual list of English prescribed works issued by the Department and regular reminders in my examiner's reports over the years, this seems to be an insoluble state of affairs.

General comments

1. There was a marked increase in the use of SMS language this year, e.g. *u, u r, i, rite, b4, 2nite, gr8*. Please impress upon candidates that this type of shorthand is unacceptable in formal English writing.
2. Candidates are increasingly using the colon in all sorts of unacceptable places, particularly when it comes to composing headings. It must be explained to them that the colon is used to introduce either a list or quoted information.
3. Once again this year, many candidates did not number their answers. This is an annoying situation for the examiner, who must record marks next to question numbers on the cover of the answer book, and a hazardous omission for those candidates whose responses display tenuous links with more than one topic.