

ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE

8167
Paper 1

2021 was the first year this paper was written. Understandably, a number of candidates struggled with the general time limits of the paper. This was really disconcerting as a great many learners lost marks for incomplete or too short responses.

Too many learners struggle with their SPAG (spelling and grammar). Note that SPAG is considered an important aspect of AS level as this shows basic competencies of the candidates. This definitely needs more attention in the AS level class.

Paper 1 (Writing paper)

Question 1 (a) Leaflet

The candidates were requested to write an advisory leaflet for their peers about improving their immediate environment.

- Many candidates did not use the structure of the leaflet which obviously influenced the mark of the reflective commentary adversely.
- The most important problem is that the candidates did not meet the requirements of the question.
- The sense of voice was not clearly established.
- Advice was often neglected to be given or learners merely listed the advice but focused more on the reason for giving advice.
- Candidates had to discuss how the learners could change/ improve the school grounds/ their home environment and perhaps their city. However, most of them discussed the pollution in the ocean and global warming in general.
- The other problem was that many candidates did not clearly indicate their audience. The generic address often made it difficult to discern from the essays that children were being addressed. In fact, the inconsistency in their formality caused the examiners to assume that the candidates did not know
- Question analysis seems to have been quite neglected by the candidates. It is advisable to spend some more time on the analysis of questions and the style requested by the format as well as the targeted audience.

Question 1 (b)

Candidates often merely listed the techniques they have used to write their leaflets instead of analysing the techniques which was supposed to be focusing on why and how the techniques were used. Only a few candidates were able to discuss the form of the leaflet. Reflection did not happen either. Technical language should also be used with care (often not accurately identified and analysed) in this question.

Section B

It was such a pity to find that many candidates did not complete this essay or did not meet the length requirements of the question, with some learners writing as little as 250 words. As a result, they had to be marked down due to a rubric infringement which cost them an entire band in their writing.

Question 2

The narrative was generally poorly answered. A huge number of the learners responded by writing biographies of a person they admired or trains of thoughts about a person they admired. Very little attention was given to the specific incident that was requested. Even though it was expected to state why the person is admired, this could have already been done in the introduction. The admiration received too much attention in most narratives. A clear change in tone and atmosphere was necessary with specific focus on the incident for a more successful response. Some candidates who did focus on the incident often ran out of time and merely ended the essay with no clear resolutions. The narrative definitely needs more attention in class.

The candidates have ample opportunity within the 600 - 900 word count to write more extensively about this incident which could have been the climax of their story.

Question 3

Two contrasting blogs were requested. This question was answered with more success than the narrative. Unfortunately, many of these blogs were merely informative and lacked the persuasive that was requested. Unfortunately, the learners also struggled with the informal/conversational register of the blog. The style of the blog requires the creativity from the learners which depicts a real blog.

It is advised that learners are taught to focus more on their tone and the audience of the piece. Two clear voices had to be established. Teach them the difference between formal and informal writing and expose them to the blog format.

Question 4

The speech about Namibia often lacked the address of the audience. The biggest struggle was developing the points of this motivational speech with evidence. Many a learner merely responded with an informative piece about Namibia. The motivational tone and pride which were clear requirements of the prompt were often ignored. This resulted in a weak rapport with the audience.

It might be good to teach candidates to use more rhetorical devices in their writing as well as address the audience consistently when writing a speech. Once again, assist the candidates to find the focus of their pieces by doing question analyses.

Note that there might be two reasons for rubric infringements which could lead to a mark that drops a band:

1. if a candidate does not adhere to the word count of the requested piece. A margin of 10% either way is allowed in the first section and in the second section, the response has to remain within the margins set by the questions.
2. if a candidate does not answer the question for example a candidate writes an expository essay or biography instead of a narrative.

LANGUAGE

Only the fewest candidates used sophisticated expressions and were able to write aesthetically appealing essays. Grammar deserves more attention in the class room.

The following common errors should be avoided in future:

Malapropisms, punctuation errors, sentence constructions, commonly confused words

Tautology was all too common: more easier and utmost best were common problems.

Spelling errors like

- **Disappointment** and **environment** frequented the essays.
- **Occurring** and **occurred** was more often than not spelt incorrectly.

GENERAL

It might be a good idea to have the learners practise more to establish their speed of analysing and responding to this paper. Some candidates wrote insightful and complete responses whereas the majority struggled to reach the word limits. It seems like there are still too many candidates in the First Language class that do not belong there.

We commend all the AS level teachers on a job well done! This year was surely a challenging year for teachers and learners alike. We sincerely wish that this advice assists all teachers in doing an even better job in 2022.