



ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF 2014

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE AND HOME LANGUAGE



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

2014

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FOREWORD



There is no doubt that in the four years that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has been administering Annual National Assessment (ANA) the focus in the basic education sector has shifted in the right direction, viz. towards continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. Every ANA cycle provides evidence of areas of improvement as well as areas that require special attention to improve learner performance in the key foundational skills of literacy and numeracy.

The next phase towards the improvement of educational quality in this sector is enhancing the effective utilisation of the assessment data at all levels of the system, particularly at the classroom level. There is need for a detailed analysis of the knowledge and skills that learners were able or not able to demonstrate in the ANA tests and use that evidence to inform all plans for intervention. But evidence must lead to appropriate action for it to result in the desired changes, hence the crucial value that the diagnostic report adds towards the utilisation of the ANA data to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

The diagnostic report from the 2014 ANA cycle profiles the levels and quality of skills and knowledge that the assessment identified in the system. Evidently, some of the weaknesses that are identified were also raised in previous ANA cycles and new areas of challenge are profiled more sharply in 2014. ANA has added an empirical dimension to some of the concerns that require special attention.

The ANA 2014 diagnostic report must be utilised fully to inform relevant decision-making in developing and implementing appropriate interventions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in basic education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angie Matsie Motshekga'.

ANGIE MATSIE MOTSHEKGA, MP

MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

2 FEBRUARY 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The Annual National Assessment (ANA) was administered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) country wide in Language and Mathematics on learners in Grades 1-6 and 9 in September 2014. Both public and state-funded independent schools took part in the assessment. ANA test results serve as a proxy for the quality of education at the General Education and Training (GET) Band in South Africa. Analysis of the knowledge and skills that learners were able or not able to demonstrate in the assessment shows that, while there has been an appreciable improvement in performance in the basic skills in both Language and Mathematics, a significant proportion of learners still experience challenges in providing responses to questions that require high order cognitive skills. In particular, learner performance in mathematics tends to decline progressively from the Intermediate to the Senior Phase.

The Diagnostic Report provides a detailed analysis of the knowledge and skills that learners displayed or failed to display in the tests that were administered in each grade and subject. The target audience for the report are teachers and School Management Teams (SMTs) in schools. However the information in the report will also be very valuable to district/circuit curriculum officials and subject advisors who need to provide support to schools in curriculum implementation. The report also presents findings that both provincial and national levels of the education system need to consider in monitoring provision of relevant resources to schools.

The Diagnostic Report is phase specific and comprises three separate documents. The first document is compiled for the Foundation Phase and contains analysis, findings and recommendations related to Home Language and Mathematics. For the Intermediate and Senior Phases there is one report for Mathematics and another for Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL). Each document has three parts viz, Part A: Diagnostic Analysis; Part B: Proposed Frameworks for Improvement; and, Part C: Diagnostic Analysis at school/district levels.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

➤ The purpose of the Diagnostic Report is to provide detailed evidence of the knowledge and skills that the analysis shows learners were able or not able to demonstrate in the ANA tests. The diagnostic evidence will inform appropriate interventions for a) teaching and learning, b) management of curriculum implementation, c) curriculum and management support at district/circuit level, and d) resource provision and monitoring at national and provincial levels. The report also provides SMTs with objective evidence to identify areas where individual teachers may need specific support in terms of various methods of facilitating learning and teaching.

3. METHOD USED TO COMPILE THE REPORT

The Diagnostic Report was compiled by panels of teachers and subject advisors who were identified as specialists in Mathematics and Languages. The data that was used in compiling the report was obtained from marked scripts collected from representative samples of schools and learners, drawn from all nine provinces, that participated in Verification ANA in 2014.

For each subject and grade, item (question-by-question) analysis was conducted to identify the content knowledge and skills that learners were able or not able to demonstrate in the relevant tests. Analysis proceeded from calculation of basic descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, mode and range of scores obtained by learners, followed by a systematic interrogation of learner responses to identify common errors and strengths.

Specimens of typical errors made by learners were scanned and included in the report to illustrate possible knowledge “gaps” and common misunderstandings that need to be addressed in each grade and subject. In each content area, the panels suggested remediation strategies included also in this report that can be used to address the identified weaknesses in learner knowledge and skills.

The Proposed Framework for Improvement (Part B) suggests appropriate interventions for remediation at school, district, provincial and DBE levels. It is expected that an improvement plan with clear deliverables and timelines will be developed so that interventions can commence at the beginning of the school year.

The last part of the report is a suggestion on how schools and districts should analyse ANA and any other test data to derive useful information that must be utilised to address identified weaknesses, and ensure that every child in the system achieves learning outcomes of a high quality.

**PART A:
DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS**



4. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

4.1 GRADE 4 FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Elementary achievement” level (average of 37%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

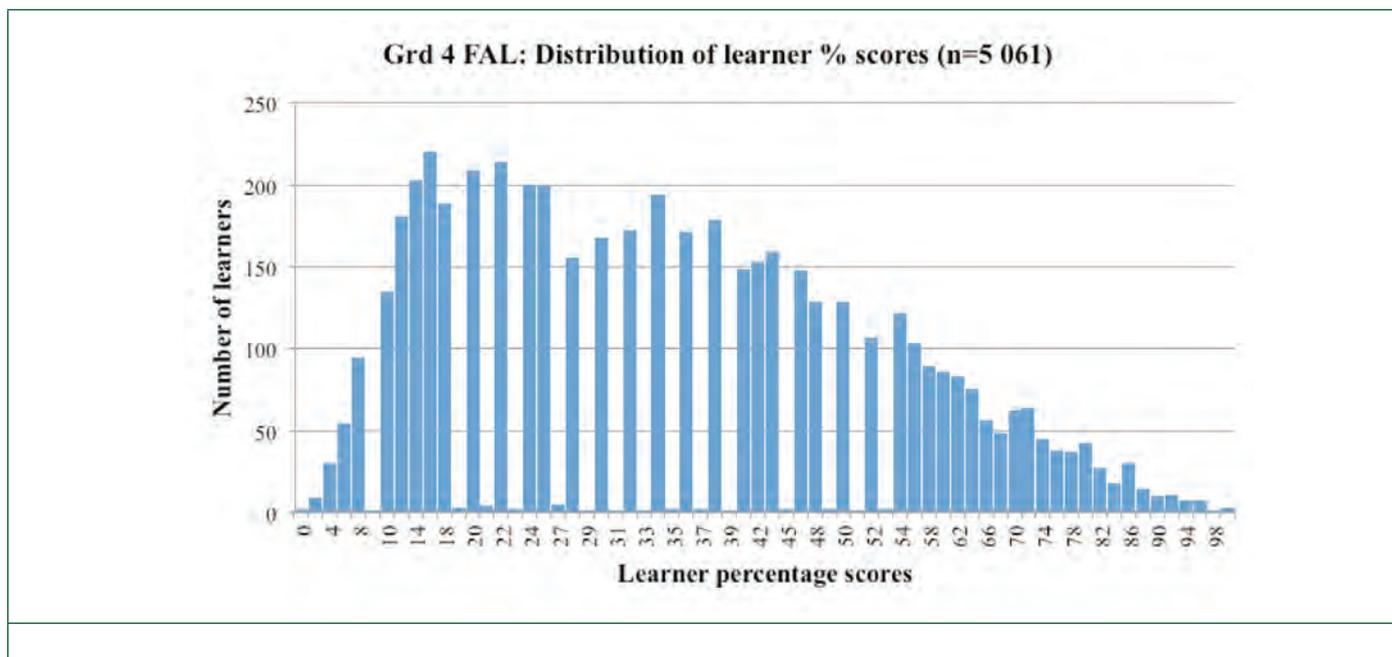


Figure 1: Distribution of Grade 4 learner scores in FAL.

Figure 1, shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 100% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 16%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 4 learners are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of learner strengths and weaknesses in Grade 4 First Additional Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|---|--|
| <p>The following areas of weakness were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sourcing information from a given text; • Inability to provide synonyms of given words; • Inability to write sentences from one tense to another; and, • Story writing based on mind maps (learners could not follow the guiding questions). | <p>The following strengths were observed as compared to the previous year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice questions were handled better; • Ability to provide short answers; • Ability to recognise the following parts of speech, pronouns and adjectives; and, • Ability to provide correct abbreviations. |

4.2 GRADE 5 FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Moderate achievement” level (average of 47%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

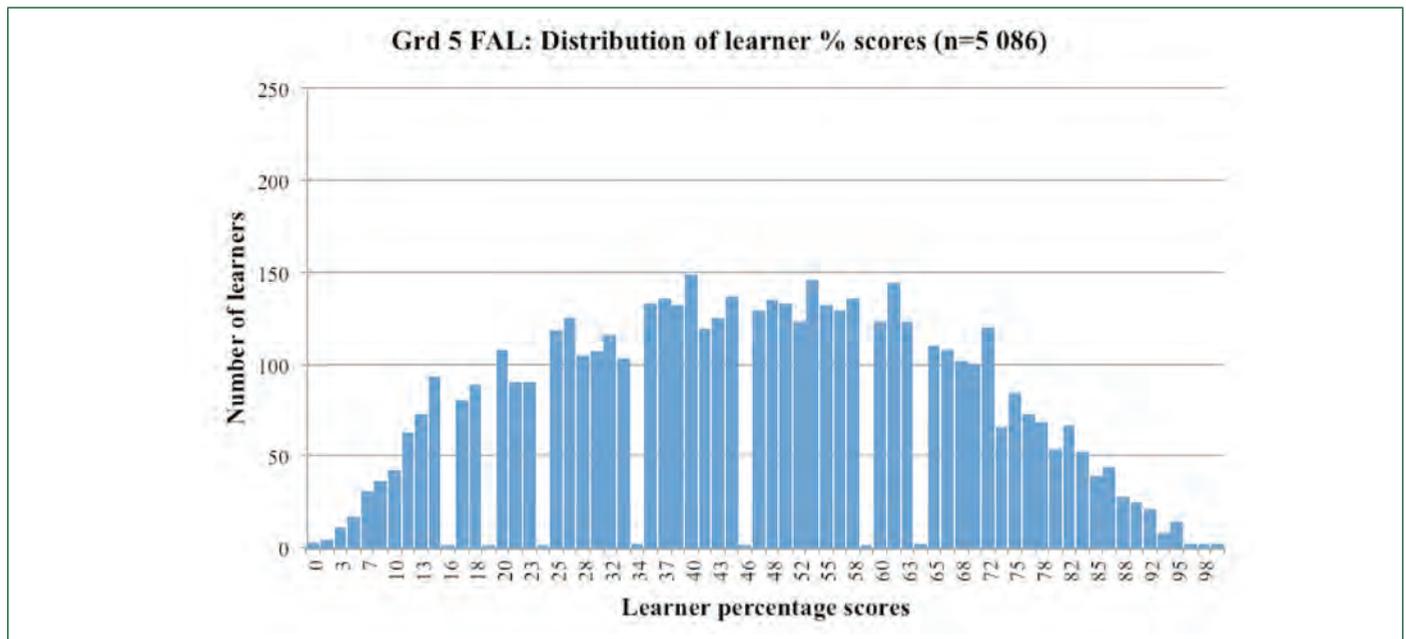


Figure 2: Distribution of Grade 5 learner scores in FAL

Figure 2, shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 100% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 40%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 5 learners are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of learner strengths and weaknesses in Grade 5 First Additional Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|---|---|
| <p>The following areas of weakness were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to provide for a true/false question the logical reason for the choice made; • Punctuation: Inability to place commas correctly and use capital letters for proper nouns in the middle of a sentence; • Finding a main idea in an information text: lack of understanding of the text; • Rhyming words: Lack of understanding of what rhyme is; • Tenses: Inability to change verbs into Simple Present Tense; and, • Superlatives: Inability to use an adjective in the superlative degree. | <p>The following strengths were noticed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to answer a direct question; • Ability to work with words and sentences; • Ability to work with poetry and understanding text; and, • Prepositions were better understood and applied than in the previous years. |

4.3 GRADE 6 FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Moderate achievement” level (average of 43%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram.

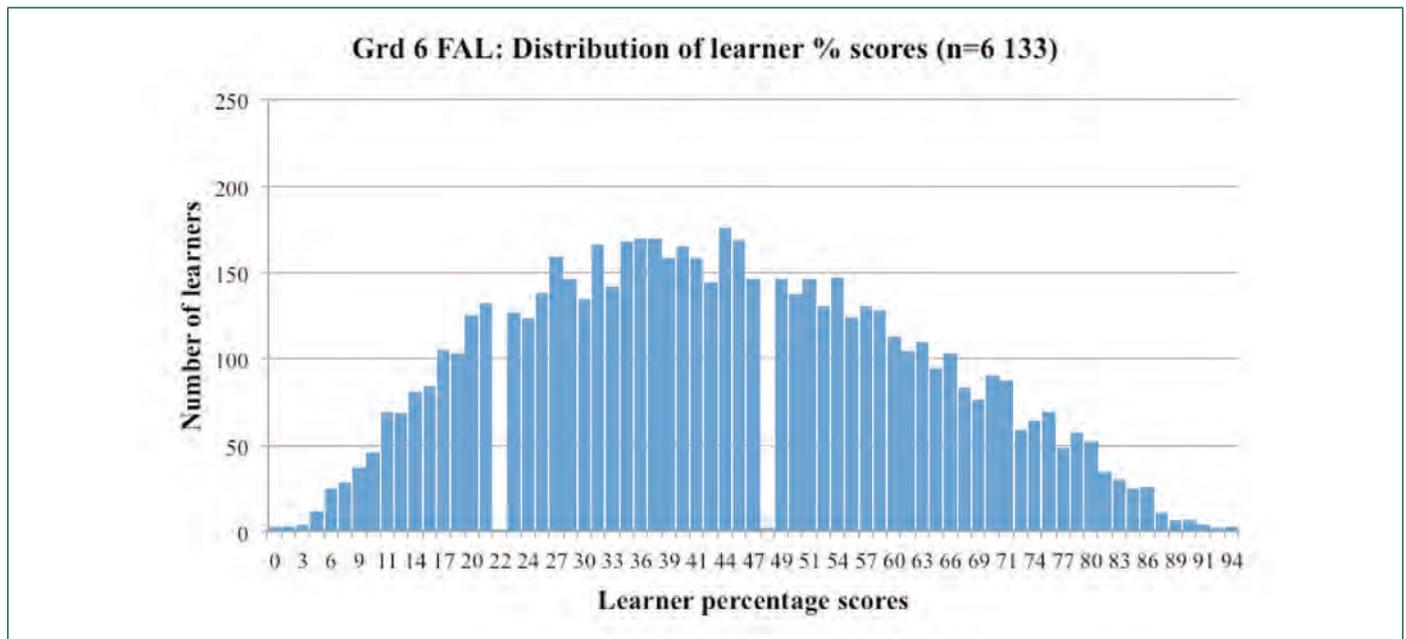


Figure 3: Distribution of Grade 6 learner scores in FAL

Figure 3, shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 94% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 44%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 6 learners are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of learner strengths and weaknesses in Grade 6 English First Additional Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|---|--|
| <p>The following areas of weakness were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of active vocabulary appropriate for the grade; • Inability to respond to open-ended questions that require a motivation; • Limited knowledge of literature features: setting and characterics; • Characterisation – inability to identify the main character in a story; • Poor understanding of different figures of speech; • Inability to transform sentences into the negative form; • Inability to provide examples of antonyms and synonyms of given words; and, • Inability to identify parts of speech, e.g. adverbs • Inability to demonstrate negative forms. | <p>The following strengths were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of prepositions was better; • Correct spelling of words – there was an improvement (in learner ability to spell) in spelling words correctly; • Interpretation of a graph has improved; • Identifying of main characters and the title of the story; and, • Learners were able to provide the correct format of the formal letter. |

4.4 GRADE 9 FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Elementary achievement” level (average of 34%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

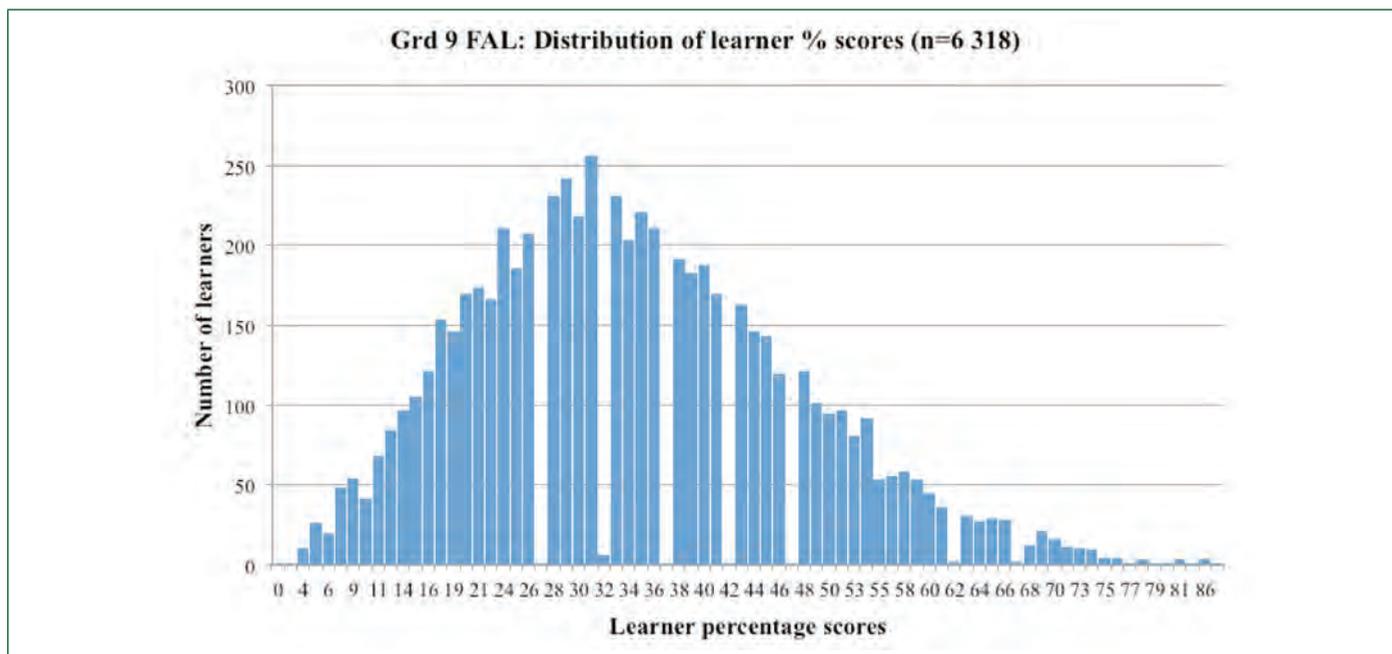


Figure 4: Distribution of Grade 9 learner scores in FAL

Figure 4, shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 89% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 31%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 9 learners are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of learner strengths and weaknesses in Grade 9 English First Additional Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|--|--|
| <p>The following areas of weakness were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech: Identifying concord, nouns ,adverbs, noun classes, plurals, degrees of comparison, and adjectives; • Parts of speech: Textual editing, grammar spelling and punctuation; • Inability to use the active and passive voice; • Inability to use direct and indirect speech; • Identification of topic sentence and main clause; • Reading and viewing: advertisement and cartoon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying target audience; ○ Interpretation of a cartoon; and ○ Inferential meaning. • Sound devices: antonyms, assonance and alliteration. | <p>The following strengths were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the dictionary; • Ability to use parts of speech: prepositions; • Ability to correctly identify the” who” and the “what” of the advertisement; • Writing and presenting: Correct format of the letter; and, • Writing and presenting: letter writing. |

4.5 DETAILED ANALYSIS

Grade 4 First Additional Language

In this section, identified ‘gaps’ in specific skills, knowledge and competencies that were displayed by Grade 4 First Additional Language learners have been presented. The language components assessed were as follows:

a. Reading and viewing

The skills that were assessed in this section included interpreting meaning and analysing information from the text by identifying the name and the headline for the article, answering the question “who” to identify the characters and comment on the plot of a newspaper article. Furthermore, learners were asked to respond to an open-ended question where they had to give opinions on passages that were given to them.

b. Language structure and convention

Learners were asked to spell familiar words and to use Past Tense correctly, change a verb to Present Perfect Tense and to re-write sentences in the Future Tense. Punctuation skills were assessed where capital letters for proper nouns and use of question marks were required. Identification of suitable adjectives and adverbs was required to complete a sentence correctly. Learners were also asked to demonstrate relevant skills of adding a prefix to a base word to give the correct meaning of a sentence. Furthermore, they were asked to fill in suitable pronouns (personal and demonstrative) to make sentences correct.

c. Writing

Learners were also assessed on writing skills. They were requested to write a paragraph of six sentences about themselves illustrating the correct sequence of sentences and adequate paragraphing using conventional grammar. Clues were given for guidance and to direct their responses.

Figure 5 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according to the content areas that were assessed.

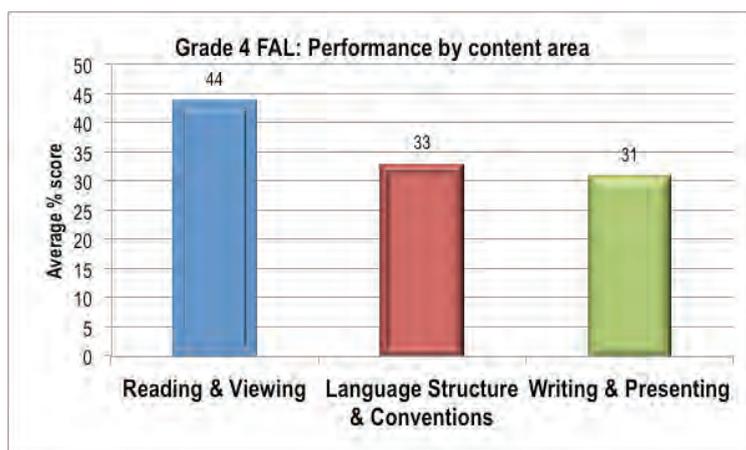


Figure 5: Learner performance according to content areas

The learner performance in Figure 5 shows that they experienced the greatest difficulty in responding to questions on “Writing and Presenting”. The second area of marked difficulty as experienced by learners was “Language Structure and Conventions”, whereas “Reading and Viewing” was performed fairly well although the performance was at 44% which is still less than 50%.

4.5.1 Reading and Viewing

- In this content area, it was observed that learners performed very well in answering questions that required reading with understanding and comment on the newspaper. They were expected to identify the name of the newspaper, headlines and comment on the plot of the text. Common errors were experienced in demonstrating adequate vocabulary, interpreting meaning and analysing information.
- The comprehension skills of learners were tested using a newspaper article.

a) Interpreting meaning and analysing information

At grade 4 level, learners are expected to be able to interpret meaning and analyse information from the text. Learners must be able to express an opinion and support with a reason. In the example below learners were required to give an opinion and motivate with a valid reason. They were required to give a reason on the significance of wearing gloves when assisting someone who was bleeding.

6. Answer the following question.

Why do you think it was important for the girls to wear gloves?

I think that girls save boy's life.

0
(1)

Most learners experienced difficulty in providing valid reasons for their answers. The specimen above represents many learners who failed to express their own views but simply extracted an answer without any logical thinking and support. The reason is not convincing as to why it was so important for the girls to wear gloves when assisting someone who was bleeding.

Remediation

Some of the strategies that can be used to address some of the weaknesses are the following:

- Teach learners how to source answers by linking keywords in the question with keywords in the information text.
- Choose a variety of information texts that develop the learner’s analytical thinking skills where questions beginning with words such as why, how, what are used. Read, use, and identify the features of the instructional texts such as sets of directions, science investigations, atlases, posters, flyers, forms, instructional manuals, menus, pamphlets, rules, invitations, recipes, advertisements and other functional documents.
- Learners must be encouraged to read the text several times before attempting to answer the questions.

b) Demonstrating adequate vocabulary

The purpose of the skill is to assess the learner’s developmental level in vocabulary; it is to assess if learners can demonstrate adequate vocabulary to identify words with the same meaning. The learners were expected to match the given word “discover” with a word simliar in meaning from the list provided.

13. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Find a word from the passage that has the same meaning as 'discover'.

A save
B pick
C find
D protect

0 (1) 0

Since 80% of the learners could not answer this question correctly, it can be deduced that most learners failed to see the similarity between “find” and “discover”. This could be due to a lack of understanding of the given word, “discover”, or because of limited active vocabulary.

Remediation

Possible remediation strategies for learners to expand their knowledge and vocabulary are to:

Teach vocabulary in an explicit, systematic way:

Teach the words that your learners most need to know in order to support their reading development and content area learning. When introducing new words be sure to provide learner-friendly definitions that are important to the task at hand.

Teach words thematically:

Organize vocabulary around a common theme, and choose reading materials that reinforce that vocabulary in context.

Teach words by focusing on common root words to expand word knowledge:

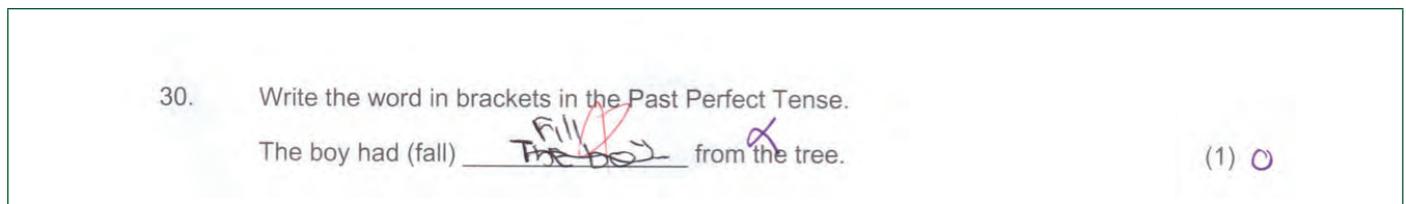
Learning about roots, prefixes, and suffixes is a great way to reinforce and expand understanding of English words. Breaking the words down into component parts makes unfamiliar words more comprehensible.

4.5.2 Language Structures

a) Understanding and use of different Tenses

In this content area, it was observed that most learners performed very well in identifying pronouns, adjectives, punctuations, proper nouns, and abbreviations. However common errors and misconceptions were experienced in identifying synonyms and understanding of different tenses.

The following example is typical of learner responses.



30. Write the word in brackets in the Past Perfect Tense.
The boy had (fall) the boy from the tree. (1) 0

The image shows a handwritten student response to a grammar question. The question asks to write the word in brackets in the Past Perfect Tense. The student has written 'the boy' in the blank space. There are red and purple markings on the answer, including a red 'X' over 'the boy' and a purple 'X' over 'the tree'. The score '(1) 0' is written in purple.

The learner knew that the verb had to change but the change made was incorrect. The correct form of the verb expected in this question is “fallen”. The response shows that although the learner had some knowledge of verbs, he/she could not differentiate between the tenses of verbs.

Remediation

Start with contextualized examples

When teaching past perfect tense it is of great importance to introduce grammatical constructions in clear contexts, relating them to the real world. The past perfect tense indicates that an action is completed (“perfected”). This tense is formed with the past tense of “to have” (had) plus the past participle of the verb. The **past perfect** tense is better understood if it is used in contextualized examples because learners need to know how to change a verb from what is happening now to what had happened.

By means of contextual sentences this form can be drilled until a pattern has been formed.

Yesterday when I arrived home, I couldn’t believe my eyes:

- Someone had broken into my house.
- They had stolen all my money.
- They had emptied my drawers.
- They had even eaten the food in the fridge.

b) Parts of Speech

At grade 4 level learners are expected to know how to change sentences from positive to negative forms. They were expected to add the word “not” in the appropriate place in responding to the instruction.

31. Rewrite the sentence in the negative form.

The ambulance was fast.

The ambulance is fast.

X

0
(1)

The expected answer in the negative form is “The ambulance was not fast”. The learner failed to use the word “not” when responding to the question. In the response there is no connection between the negative form and the word “not” but instead the learner changed the sentence into the simple present tense. A probable reason is that the learner did not understand the meaning of the term ‘negative form’.

Remediation

Some of the strategies that can be used to address some of the weaknesses are the following:

Small Group Activity

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give them a set of positive sentences and ask them to change those into negative sentences. You might provide each group by a set of answers in a little box. Tell them to try to find the change in the structure of the sentence. In this way they can form own patterns regarding the negative sentence structure.

4.5.3 Writing

To demonstrate writing skills, learners were expected to write a paragraph of six sentences about themselves. They were given a mind map as a guide to use when writing the six sentences about themselves. They were further expected to illustrate the correct sequence of the sentences and adequate paragraphing using conventional grammar. The purpose of this assessment was to test if learners could write a paragraph using the clues as guide.

The specimen below illustrates a typical example of a learner response.

~~my~~ All about me - me my favorite food is a isf.
All about me - me tomorrow we go to the ~~store~~ guy
All about me - me today today i am so happy.
All about me - me at today ago to the Jani.
All ~~about~~ about me - today after school to go play
All about me - and my mother go to the peni.

The learner responded to each of the clues in separate sentences instead of using the correct paragraphing in order to create a meaningful text. There is an attempt to respond to the question but the learner repeatedly started each sentence with the phrase “All about me”. The learner failed to use a mind map properly. A probable reason for repetition is that the learner is unfamiliar with using mind maps to plan a writing piece.

Remediation

Numerous strategies can be used to teach learners how to write meaningful sentences and paragraphs. A few suggestions are given below:

- Writing should be done in a regular manner every day;
- Let learners come up with ideas, cluster these ideas, but see to it that the topic is not lost. Unpack these ideas into a logical sequence;
- Encourage learners to edit their own work. It will still be ideal to provide guiding questions for this exercise and ensure that correct punctuation, grammar and spelling are used when learners write their own texts; and,
- Ensure that learners write texts for different purposes on a regular basis even if it is not going to be assessed.

4.6 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Grade 5 First Additional Language

Grade 5 learners were assessed on Reading and Viewing, Language Structures, Writing and Presenting. The analysis seeks to identify skills and knowledge that require specific attention at the grade 5 level.

The language components assessed were as follows:

a. Reading and viewing

Learners were expected to demonstrate relevant knowledge and skills in reading and viewing narrative texts. The skills that were assessed in this section included identifying the correct answer from given alternatives which required learners to comprehend what they had read before answering. They were also asked to respond to open-ended questions where they had to give an opinion with reasons. Some questions required learners to explain the main idea of an information text, identify words with the same meaning, choosing a pair of rhyming words from a poem and summarising a poem.

b. Language structure and convention

Learners were assessed on their abilities to use simple present and simple past tense, by changing the verb and writing sentences correctly. Use of punctuation was also assessed. Identification of suitable adjectives and adverbs was required to complete a correct sentence. Identification of synonyms and antonyms, opposites, degrees of comparison and gender were part of what was assessed. The skill to demonstrate ability to join two sentences by a conjunction (connecting word) to make one correct sentence was also required from the assessment.

c. Writing

Learners were assessed on whether they acquired the necessary knowledge and skills for writing. They were requested to write a dialogue between a boy and his mother. The correct sequencing of sentences, correct grammar and punctuation marks using correct language conventions were tested. Clues were given to them for guidance and to direct their responses.

Figure 6 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according the content areas that were assessed.

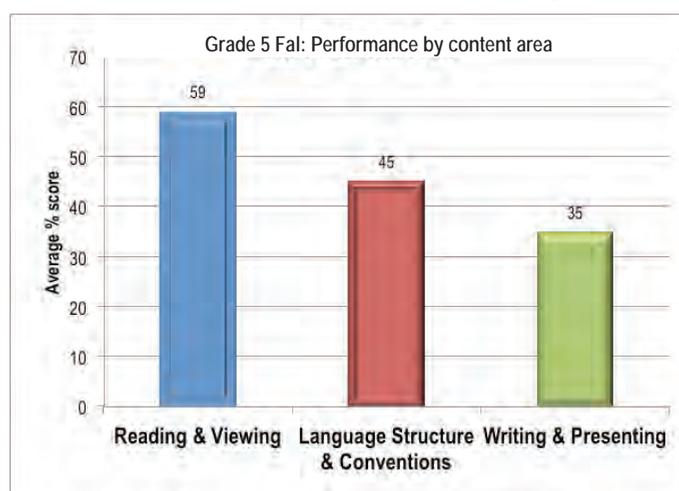


Figure 6: Learner performances in the various content areas

As shown in Figure 6, Grade 5 learners experienced difficulties in responding to questions on Writing and Presenting as indicated by the lowest average percentage marks (35%). Learners found questions on Language Structure and Conventions and on Reading and Viewing much easier to respond to, particularly the latter which had a high average percentage mark (59).

4.6.1 Reading and Viewing

In this content area it was observed that learners performed very well in answering direct questions from the text including choosing the best title of the story, cause and effect, main idea and summarising a poem. Specific weaknesses that were identified included words with the same meaning, expressing opinion and identifying rhyme words in a poem.

a) Identify the words with the same meaning from given alternatives

By Grade 5, learners are expected to read a text and be able to identify the words with the same meaning. The purpose of this assessment was to test learner ability to read an information text and demonstrate what they comprehended from the text. They were requested to choose the correct sentence with the same meaning as “the law were unfair”.

1.5 What is meant by unfair in the following sentence?

'The laws were unfair'.

A The laws were easy.

B The laws were unjust.

C The laws were the same.

D The laws were unsuitable.

X 0

(1) C

Since 72% of the learners answered this question incorrectly, it can be deduced that they did not understand the meaning of the word ‘unfair’ and therefore, could not make the connection to the word ‘unjust’. A lack of active vocabulary could be a possible barrier to reading a text with understanding even though contextual clues were given.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Assist learners to learn at least one new word per week (age appropriate words).
- Assist learners to extract the words with the same meaning from the text by using flash cards and sentence strips with meaning of the words. Explain to learners what the words mean. Ask learners to build their own word bank from newspapers and magazines by using dictionaries.
- Give learners a reading passage with certain words deleted (say every 5th word). Let the learner fill in the appropriate word that makes sense. It does not have to be the exact word that was deleted – the only criteria being that it must make sense within the context of the sentence.

b) Express an opinion

As a part of demonstrating reading with comprehension, learners are expected to express an opinion, with reasons on what they have read. The learners were required to express an opinion on the information text. They were expected to choose True or False in response to the statement: “It was good for Nelson Mandela to fight against the unfair laws in South Africa.” and give a reason for their choice. The purpose of this question was to assess whether learners could form an opinion based on an information text and substantiate the choice.

1.7 It was good for Nelson Mandela to fight against the unfair laws in South Africa.

Tick (✓) the answer you think is correct. Give a reason for your answer.

| | | |
|------|---|-------|
| True | ✓ | False |
|------|---|-------|

Because Nelson Mandela he must fight for
the Nelson Mandela is a South Africa
hero (2) 0

In the specimen above the learner responded to the first part of the question, but failed to justify the response. The clue was given in the text, but the learner like many others, could not extract it to substantiate the answer. The learner lacked the ability to link key words from the question to the passage to justify his/her choice.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Expose learners to more new words e.g. (Use interesting texts with relevant pictures, flash cards and sentence strips). When introducing a new text, build the vocabulary first as part of the pre-reading activity, teach strategies to decode unknown words, and introduce 3-5 new words daily.
- Ask learners to say what they think the text is about, and why, by looking at the pictures. As the learners respond, put the words mentioned on the chalkboard and say the words aloud. Read the text to the learners. Prepare questions for learners to give reasons for their answer.
- Invite debate from opposing groups showing how true and false may be correct if justifiable.

c) Identifying rhyming words

Learners are expected to demonstrate comprehension skills in poetry with an understanding of basic literary devices such as rhyme. The learners were required to identify the words that ended with the same sound. The two words given had to be matched with rhyming words chosen from the poem.

Write down the words from the poem which rhyme with the following

words:

2.3.1 'bright' rhymes with I rhymes with bright X

2.3.2 'best' rhymes with I rhymes with best X

X 0

(1) 0

X 0

(1) 0

From this learner response it can be deduced that the learner had inadequate knowledge of metalanguage. The learner used the words of the question in a jumbled manner. The learner did not understand the meaning of the word 'rhyme' in the question which resulted in the writing of the given example as an answer.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Read different poems to learners and have them read rhyming poetry in groups and to each other.
- Poetry-rhyming, take extra time in order to discuss words from the poem that rhyme. Let the learners take turns

finding new words that rhyme with the example.

- Chant simple rhymes (even nursery rhymes) to teach rhyming.
- Choose a sound and go through the alphabet e.g. the sound ear-beer, dear-deer, fear-gear etc.
- Give them opportunities to write their own poetry using familiar rhyming words.

4.6.2 Language structure and conventions

In this content area, it was observed that most learners performed very well in identifying prepositions, words with the same meaning, opposite gender, and adjectives. However, common errors and misconceptions were experienced in spelling, identifying punctuations, use of connecting words, joining a prefix to a base word and understanding of different tenses.

a) Use of punctuation

Grade 5 learners are expected to punctuate a sentence using capital letters, commas and a full stop. Learners were expected to re-write and correct the sentence using proper punctuation in the given sentence. They were also expected to fill in the capital letters where necessary.

Specimen 1

6. Rewrite the following sentence using capital letters, a comma and a full stop.

dr sibusi coaches rugby netball and tennis every wednesday in pinetown

Handwritten answer:
wo ednesday in rugby netball and tennis will every pine town
of coaches dr sibusi (6) 0

In the example above, the learner did not follow the instructions and thus merely changed the word order. There was no evidence of the use of capital letters or punctuation marks. Re-ordering of words into a coherent sentence is a skill expected to be understood by learners. It is possible that the learner assumed this was what the question required. The learner failed to begin the sentence with a capital letter and end with a full stop. This reveals that the skill of writing a grammatically correct sentence has not yet been internalised.

Specimen 2

6. Rewrite the following sentence using capital letters, a comma and a full stop.

dr sibusi coaches rugby netball and tennis every wednesday in pinetown

Handwritten answer:
Dr sibusi coaches rugby

Specimen 2 shows that the learner understands the use of capital letters at the beginning of the sentence but failed to demonstrate other requirements. The learner might not have understood the instruction or may have failed to read the instruction to the end. The learner also did not complete the answer properly with full sentence and a full stop.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Have flash cards of punctuation terminology on the wall for learners to see.
- Every opportunity should be taken to practice the use and recognition of simple punctuation characters e.g. during

reading aloud, stop the lesson and discuss the punctuation and the reasons thereof.

- Use magazine articles and get the learners to circle all the punctuation marks with a red pen (treat this as a fun exercise).
- Read to the children and get them to make a specified sound for each punctuation mark e.g. whistle for a fullstop, hum for comma.

b) Working with words and sentences

Learners in Grade 5 must be able to use connecting words in order to demonstrate understanding. Learners were expected to complete a sentence by using the connecting word (because) to show reason. The exercise is built on the understanding and use of conjunctions.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

7. Complete the joining of the following sentences using the word 'because'.

Mandla does not want to go to school. His shoes are missing.

Mandla does not want to go to school because is coming to x0
become a Free South Africa (1)0

In the example above, the learner completed the sentence by writing his own irrelevant sentence. A possible reason for the incorrect response was that the learner did not understand the connection between cause and effect or did not have enough own active vocabulary to express his/her thoughts.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Teach learners how to understand and apply instructions by constant reference to instructions given in books and on worksheets.
- Take opportunities to teach conjunctions when reading and talking.
- Draw train carriages on the board with conjunctions as the joining sections.
- Discuss cause and effect, action and reaction.
- Encourage learners to take time with instructions before attempting a question.

c) Gender forms

Gender differentiation is a skill commonly used in daily living, and specific gender words are taught as part of CAPS in each year. At Grade 5 level, learners are expected to be able to use genders of same nouns. Learners in this instance were required to write the opposite of sister and lion.

10. Write the opposite gender of the underlined words given below.

10.1 Nelson's sister stays next to Qunu.

Nelson's brother stays next to Qunu X 0
(1)

10.2 The doctor saw a lion in the jungle.

The doctor saw a lionst in the jungle X 0
(1)

Although the learner broadly understands what is supposed to be done, he/she demonstrated an inability to spell brother as the opposite gender of sister correctly (10.1). This was possibly due to poor pronunciation of some words e.g. “lionst” for “liones”. The learner re-wrote the sentence without changing the gender of the underlined word correctly (10.2).

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings.

- Have pictures/ charts on the wall of gender opposites correctly labelled.
- During reading lessons when a word depicting gender is used, the opportunity should be taken to play with gender words. E.g. aunt/uncle, tiger/tigress.
- Make up card games which the children can use when they have finished their work.
- Teachers should ensure that they set a good example by using suitable gender nouns.

d) Supply a plural form.

In Grade 5, learners must be able to change words to the plural form. The learners were required to write down the plural form of an underlined word without spelling errors. The conversion to the plural form for this example is easy but the spelling is of great importance. An answer that is spelt incorrectly is marked wrong.

The following example is typical of learner responses on plural forms.

11. Write the plural form of the underlined word.

The sun shines through the branch of the tree.

The sun shines through the 'branc' of the tree X
(1)

The learner re-wrote the sentence and replaced the underlined word with an incorrect version of the root word “branch”. The response shows that the learner did not understand the term ‘plural’ and could not apply the rule (add – es) to attain a correct response. A lack of knowledge of spelling rules is apparent in this specimen.

Remediation

In order to improve the knowledge of spelling rules and plural form the teacher should:

- Display the words which end with “es” and “s” when changed to plural form.
- Teachers should apply spelling rules in the context of forming plurals.
- Make sure that marking and correcting of spelling is done vigorously and constantly.

e) Using adjectives in the superlative degree

In Grade 5, learners should know how to use adjectives in the superlative degree. Learners were expected to choose and circle the correct superlative offered within a list of adjectives. The purpose was to assess whether learners could distinguish between the different degrees of comparison, and whether they could choose the correct response based on the context of the sentence.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

12.2 The sun is the (big) star.

A bigger

B biggest

C more big

D most big

X 0
(1)

Since 57% of learners could not answer this question correctly, it can be deduced that they most likely applied the rules of comparison but in an incorrect manner. Also, the learner possibly did not have any knowledge of stars and the universe and thus chose bigger rather than biggest. He/she failed to link the degree of comparison with the word ‘the’ which is a clue for the use of the third degree of comparison that appeared before (big). In degrees of comparison using “big” requires some background knowledge.

Remediation

The following steps are suggested to teach degrees of comparison:

- Point out and discuss adjectives in their superlative form when reading.
- Impromptu lessons using pupils e.g. Siphon is tall, John is taller, Mpho is tallest, should be used.

f) Understanding and using tenses

At Grade 5 level, learners are required to have knowledge of the different tenses and the ability to use tenses appropriately. Learners were given a sentence written in the Simple Past Tense and were required to change the form of the verb into Simple Present Tense. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners could identify the verb and change it from one tense into another.

The learner in the following example made changes that were not relevant. It seems that knowledge of tenses is tenuous at best.

Below is an example of one of the responses on tenses.

Write the following in the correct tenses.

13.1 Write the underlined word into the Simple Present Tense.

The sun stopped shining during the night.

~~The Sun stop shined at during the night~~ (1) X 0

13.2 Write the underlined word into the Simple Past Tense.

The plants also need sunlight to make their own food.

~~The plant also sun to sunlight to make the own food~~ (1) X 0

The learner changed the word “stopped” to “stop”. The verb “stopped” should be changed to “stops” in the Simple Present Tense. In the Simple Past Tense the verb “need” is supposed to change to “needed”. The learner lacked the ability to rewrite the sentences in a different tense. From the responses it is evident that the learner did not understand the term ‘tense’, which is a possible reason for the incomprehensible response in 13.2.

Remediation

The following steps are suggested to teach tenses.

- Have newspapers and magazines in class and let the learners look for and write words found in the text that can be changed into different tenses.
- Use every day examples in the classroom to consolidate the precepts and thus build concepts.
- Insist on correct tenses being used in speech e.g. “I go the playground.” must be, “I am going to the playground.” etc.
- Do not accept poor speech patterns.
- Display the correct speech patterns.

g) Understanding and using the negative form.

In Grade 5, learners are expected to be able to change sentences into the negative form. Learners were requested to change a positive sentence into the negative form. This required understanding of the use of negatives.

The specimen below is an example of the common error that was made by most learners.

Specimen 1

14. Change the following sentence into the negative form.

The doctor stays in town.

~~The doctor she go town.~~ (2) X 0

The response above shows that the learner did not understand what was meant by the negative form. The learner response is unrelated to the question. There is no sign of negativity in the sentence.

14. Change the following sentence into the negative form.

The doctor stays in town.

The doctor always stays in town not going to work (2)

In this example, an attempt was made to use a negative form albeit incorrectly. The use of the word "not" indicates knowledge of the change from positive to negative. However, the learner added words that were not relevant to the sentence which led to the incorrect answer.

This question is listed as difficult and although interventions were suggested in 2013, the question remains one which still needs attention.

Remediation

In order to improve the knowledge of positive and negative form, teachers should ensure:

- Greater practice in the use of negatives by pointing to classroom articles and asking first for positive statements and then rewriting them into the negative form;
- Consolidation of the difference between the use of opposites and use of the negative form; and,
- More intensive spelling programme involving basic rules.

h) Using the question form e.g. who

In Grade 5, learners are expected to be able to change statements into questions and vice versa. Learners were expected to change a statement into a question beginning with the word "who". The word "who" is intended to assist the learner in the correct presentation of a question.

15. Change the following sentence into the question form.

Begin your question with "Who".

Mandela fought against the unfair laws.

Mandela fought against unfair laws? Who Mandela (2)

The example above shows that the learner answered the question "Who fought against the unfair laws?" instead of changing the statement into a question starting with the word "who". The learner could not convert the statement into a question and merely added a question mark as a means of completing a task. Furthermore, he/she failed to distinguish between a statement and a question.

Remediation

In order to improve Learners' knowledge of question forms, teachers should consider applying the following:

- When reading to the children, ask them to change the sentence you have just read into a question.
- Ask the learners to make up questions orally that have only one answer e.g. what colour is the ceiling? Follow up with the answer as a statement.

4.6.3 Writing and Presenting

Grade 5 learners are expected to understand many forms of writing, from creative through to factual reporting. To demonstrate writing skills, learners were expected to complete a dialogue in a given frame on how the sports day was at school. The dialogue is between a parent and a child and was meant to be at least 100 words long with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation marks.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

16. Complete the following dialogue. You should write TEN full sentences to respond to the questions.
Note! The dialogue must be at least 100 words long.
Use the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation in your sentences.

You had a sports day at your school. Your parent wants to know how the day was.

Parent: Welcome home my child! You look very tired! Why are you so tired?

Learner: GRAMMAR SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION
SPORT DAY SCHOOL YOUR PARENT WANT

Parent: Tell me, at what time did the visitors from the other school arrive at your school?

Learner: dialogue you should write ten full
dialog must be at least 100

Parent: What did you do when they arrived?

Learner: day was parent wants
welcom home my child

In the example above, the learner failed to see dialogue as a “written conversation” and treated each part as a separate entry. The learner wrote each space in isolation and did not treat the work as a dialogue; as a result there was no flow, no logical connection or flow of thought.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings.

- Create a dialogue journal: Get learners to record their thoughts in brief notes. Write back responses to learners on a continual basis about topics of individual interest.
- Learners can keep personal journals in which they write their reactions to daily happenings and the teacher writes back in response to what the learners have written.
- Teach different types of writing vigorously.
- Teach listening skills in order to achieve flow of thought in the responses.

4.7 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Grade 6 English First Additional Language

In this section, specific skills, knowledge and competencies related to the Grade 6 First Additional Language content areas of assessment that were tested are discussed. Typical learners' responses are shown to indicate misunderstandings/common errors/errors/'knowledge gaps' which affected learners' performances.

After discussing learners' responses, there will be comments on proposals for interventions given to support both teachers and learners on how to avoid such misunderstandings/common errors/errors/ 'knowledge gaps' in future.

The overall performance in Grade 6 ANA 2014 shows an upward trend, although the marks for this grade generally stayed at low levels.

The language components assessed were as follows:

a. Reading and viewing

In this section, some skills that were assessed were cause and effect where learners had to explain what happened in a story and why. Learners were required to identify the title, plot, character, setting and the moral of the story. They also responded to open-ended questions, expressing an opinion and giving reasons based on what they had read. Furthermore, they were given a poem where they had to identify elements of poetry such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, words which begin with the same sounds (rhymes) and comparisons. The skill of interpreting information from the graph was assessed to demonstrate their broad and analytical thinking.

b. Language structure and convention

Learners were assessed on the skill of using correct spelling when changing words from singular to plural and how to use simple present tense and simple past tense correctly. Their ability to apply punctuation marks correctly were also assessed whereby they were required to demonstrate the correct use of capital letters, full stops and question marks. Identification of suitable adjectives and adverbs was required to complete a sentence correctly. Identification of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms, opposite gender, comparative and superlative adjectives were part of the skills that were assessed. The ability to join a prefix or a suffix to a root or base word was also required from the assessment.

c. Writing

Learners were also assessed on their writing skills. They were requested to write a personal letter informing a cousin about experiences gained when attending a memorial service of former President Nelson Mandela.

Figure 7 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according the content areas that were assessed.

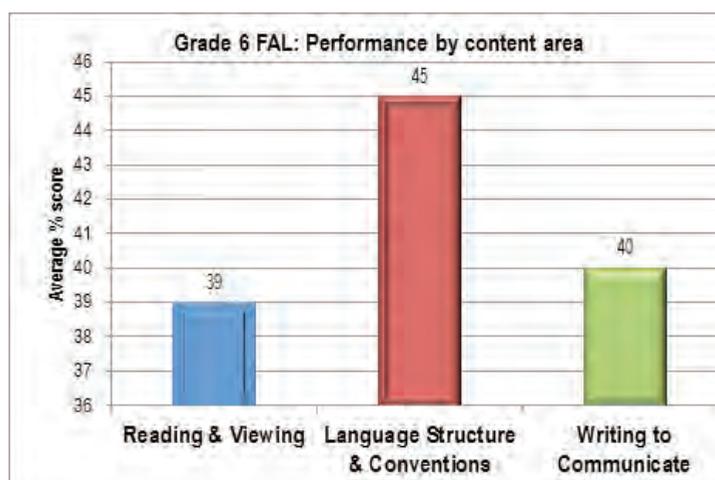


Figure 7 Learner performances in the various areas

As shown in Figure 7, Grade 6 learners answered questions on Language Structure and Conventions fairly well, as shown by the highest average percentage mark 45%. For skills of Reading and Viewing and Writing to Communicate the average scores reveal that the learners are not achieving at a satisfactory level.

4.7.1 Reading and Viewing

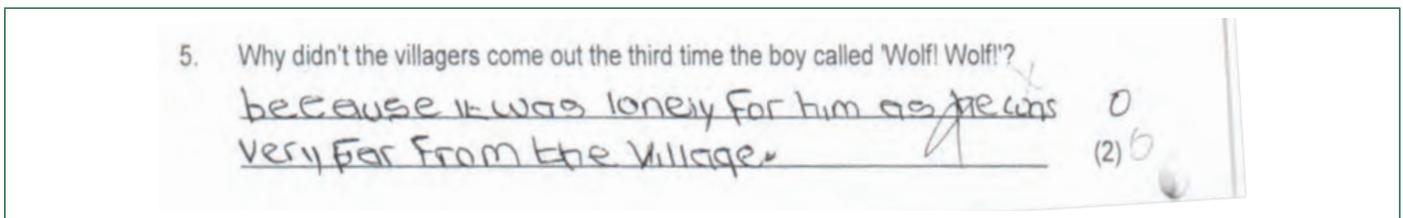
In this content area, it was observed that learners performed fairly well in identifying the moral of the story, title, rhyming words, comparison, plot character, and analysing a graph. Specific weaknesses were experienced in identifying the setting of the story (where the story took place), deducing meaning of words, vocabulary, alliteration, expressing feelings and describing cause and effect in a story.

a) Describe cause and effect in a story e.g. what happened when and why?

Grade 6 learners are expected to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect, and the relationship between the two. The purpose of the assessment was to test whether learners could identify cause and effect in the story.

They were requested to read a text and then give a reason why the villagers refused to come out the third time the boy called “Wolf! Wolf!”

The following example is typical of learner responses.



The learner focused on the loneliness of the boy instead of giving the cause or reason why the villagers would not come out. The learner could not identify the key words (why, didn't, come out) which would have helped to provide a relevant response and also could not determine **WHY** (cause) something happened and the desired /not desired **effect** on **WHAT** had happened. The possible reason for giving an incorrect answer was that the learner might have read the story without understanding the meaning of the text.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Design activities focussing on identification of key words, using a variety of texts. Learners should read a variety of texts and underline the key words.
- Explain to learners that cause and effect relationships occur whenever one event makes other events happen. Sometimes one event causes another event. Sometimes one event causes more than one event. Sometimes one event causes a series of events. The teacher should start with simple examples to teach the learner cause and effect.
- Use a chart to display causes and effects from your life. In column one, list an event that caused one significant other event in your life. This is the cause. In column two, list the event that resulted e.g. **Cause:** When I was a child I was carelessly jumping up on a window sill on our back porch. **Effect:** My arm went through the window and I was cut. I had to get about ten stitches.
- To further support learners in the skill of reading and thinking teachers should give opportunities for learners to read from different subjects to increase their vocabulary.

b) Use vocabulary from the reading text by deducing the meaning of the word

In Grade 6, learners are expected to have acquired adequate vocabulary so that they can read a variety of genres and texts with understanding. The learners were expected to choose a sentence from a given list with the same meaning as “company” as used in the passage that was provided to them.

7. Draw a circle around the letter of the correct answer.

What is the meaning of the word 'company' as used in the passage?

A It is people to talk to.

B It is a group of people in a search team. X

C It is a large flock of sheep.

D It is the whole village.

(1) 0

Since 80% of the learners answered this question incorrectly, it can be deduced that they did not know the meaning of the word “company” and yet the word is explained in the text. It shows that the learner did not read the text with understanding, instead he/she picked answers randomly in the provided list without applying the elimination technique in multiple choice questions e.g. eliminating all irrelevant options before making a choice.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Show learners how to use contextual clues (preceding or succeeding the words in question; **example:** It was lonely for him ..., he hardly ever saw people (company)).
- Give learners vocabulary exercises where they need to match the word with the meaning, or the meanings with a word in a column or table.
- Expose learners to a rich and varied vocabulary e.g. introducing new text; build the vocabulary first as part of the reading process, especially in the pre-reading activity. Decode unknown words (word attack skills). Teach 3-5 new words daily and provide opportunities to use this new vocabulary orally and in their writing.
- Give learners an activity on multiple choice questions and learners should be required to explain **why** other options are **not correct**.

c) Discuss where the story takes place (setting)

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to read the text with understanding and follow the sequence of events properly. They were expected to demonstrate adequate knowledge in identifying the setting of a story by extracting the answer directly from the text that was provided to them

10. Where did the boy look after his flock?

So the wolf ate many of the boy's
sheep X

(2) 0

In the above example, the learner could not determine the location where the story took place. The response given is irrelevant and is not related to where the story takes place. This was probably caused by the inability to read with understanding and not following events sequentially when reading.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings.

- Setting is one of the critical elements of a story. It entails the place where the story happens and the time when it happens. When teaching setting comprehensively, the teacher must include the questions ‘where’ and ‘when’ at appropriate points in the story.
- Further support can include designing of activities which require learners to create their own settings.

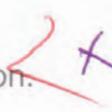
d) Understanding in a simple way some elements of poetry e.g. alliteration

Learners at Grade 6 level are expected to understand in a simple way some poetic devices e.g. alliteration, assonance, simile etc. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners can demonstrate their knowledge on figures of speech from the provided list. They were requested to choose the correct figure of speech for the provided text.

12. Draw a circle around the letter of the correct answer.

The repetition of the 'th' word in 'Thursday, they and threw' is an example of ...

A alliteration.
B a metaphor.
C personification.
D onomatopoeia.



Since 63% of the learners could not answer this question correctly, it can be deduced that the learner had no idea that "Thursday, they and threw" is an example of alliteration. The learner could not link the given example from the poem with the correct figure of speech from the options provided. This shows a lack of understanding of figures of speech.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Present structured lessons (theory) on poetic Metalanguage- e.g. alliteration, assonance, personification (definitions and features) and teach learners the **features** of these concepts.
- Allow learners to use figures of speech in both written activities and oral presentations, e.g. write your own poem and include figures of speech.
- Use figures of speech in an oral presentation.
- Further support may include using advertisements, headlines, jingles, lyrics, poems, jump rope rhymes, alphabet books and tongue twisters to reinforce the teaching of alliteration.
- Once the learners have mastered alliteration, it should be taught in comparison with assonance. This will lead to a better understanding of alliteration and other such devices.

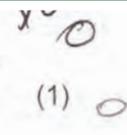
e) Expressing feelings motivated by text

Grade 6 learners are expected to answer various questions based on feelings and the ability to express those feelings. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners can express feelings stimulated by the text. They were requested to give their opinions on how the poet felt when they were throwing mud at him.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

14. How did the poet feel when they threw mud at him?

~~On Wednesday they laughed at him me~~ (1) 0
~~after the test~~ X



The above example shows that the learner could not interpret the poem and explain the feelings of the poet. The learner only copied and wrote a line from the poem that is irrelevant to the question. He/she did not give an opinion on how the poet felt when mud was thrown at him. This was probably caused by the lack of skill on how to interpret and analyse a poem.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Provide more opportunities for learners to read a **range of poems and stories** for them to identify different feelings expressed in the texts.
- Create activities that will give learners the opportunity to identify words that depict mood and tone in the texts e.g. cry, pain, bad, anger, and frustration depict a sad mood.

4.7.2 Language Structures and Conventions

In this content area, it was observed that most learners performed very well in identifying conjunctions, adjectives, punctuations, prepositions, concord and adverbs. However, common errors and misconceptions were experienced in identifying synonyms and understanding of different tenses.

a) Use of Simple Past Tense

Grade 6 learners are expected to understand and use correct tenses when speaking and writing. Learners were requested to change a sentence from simple present tense to simple past tense. The question required considering the form of the verb used in order to elicit a correct response. In language development verbs receive a lot of attention with emphasis on changing from one tense to another. The observation made with reference to learner responses is that they were not able to modify the verb to provide a correct response.

20. Write the following sentence in the simple past tense.

The hungry wolves kill the sheep.

The hungry wolves kill the sheep. X (1) 0

The learner could not change the verb “kill” to “killed” to make the sentence correct. The sentence remains unchanged because the verb is still in the simple present tense. The learner failed to change a simple sentence to the past tense. This inability to use tenses correctly has not changed from past years. Recommended strategies that were suggested still need to be emphasised.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings.

- Use a table showing regular and irregular verbs in the past tense as a source of knowledge for the learners
- Begin teaching the simple past tense by letting learners speak about some of their past experiences. If possible, use a mix of regular and irregular past tense verbs. Make sure to use time expressions to provide context.
- Use a past tense timeline to visualize the idea that the simple past tense is used to express something that began and ended in the past.
- Review time expressions that are used in the past including *last week / month / year, in + dates, yesterday*.

b) Antonyms, synonyms and homonyms

Learners at Grade 6 level are expected to know a variety of antonyms, synonyms and homonyms and also to use them in context as part of their vocabulary. The purpose of this assessment is to test whether learners can identify antonyms, synonyms and homonyms.

The specimens below are typical of learner responses.

Specimen 1 Antonyms

24. Write the opposite of each word on the line next to the given word.

The boy laughs because the men are too early to rescue the sheep.

laughs - sad ✓ ✓ ✓

early - night ✗ ✓ ✗

(2)

In the above example, the learner failed to provide the correct opposites of the words given. Instead of changing “laughs” to “cry”, the learner changed a verb to an adjective e.g. laughs – sad. It is evident that the learner had limited vocabulary and showed a lack of knowledge of grammatical metalanguage e.g. antonyms (opposites).

Specimen 2: Synonyms

25. Write the word with the same meaning as the one underlined.

The boy was very unhappy when his sheep died.

happy ✗

(1)

In **specimen 2**, the learner could not differentiate between an antonym and a synonym. Instead of giving the synonym (same meaning) of unhappy, the learner wrote the opposite of the word due to a lack of understanding of the definitions of these concepts.

Specimen 3: Homonyms

27. Write two different sentences to show the **two** different meanings of the word 'right'.

Sentence 1 I think you are doing a right thing
to be clever ✓

Sentence 2 I think you are right today and okay ✗

(2)

In **specimen 3**, the learner failed to write two sentences depicting two different meanings of the homonym ‘right’. The response shows that he/she did not understand what the question required and used only one meaning of “right” in two sentences.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings.

- Present focused lessons on antonyms and synonyms (Definitions, similarities and differences, giving appropriate examples).
- Give learners a little warm up by encouraging them to brainstorm as many synonyms of “big” as they can. Then brainstorm a list of antonyms for that same word.
- Teaching of antonyms and synonyms should be done in context, so that learners also consider the parts of speech of the words in question.
- Teach focused lessons on the concept homonyms (**words that are spelled the same but have different meanings.**)
- Design activities that show homonyms in different sentences with different meanings.

- Emphasis should be on the different **meanings** of the homonym and not necessarily on the different sentences. (This will assist learners to avoid the situation in which they write two different sentences **with the same meaning** of the homonym.)
- Teach homonyms and homophones together, where possible, because they have similar features just like antonyms and synonyms.

c) Use of comparative and superlative adjectives

Learners at Grade 6 level are expected to understand and use comparative and superlative adjectives correctly. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners can identify comparative and superlative adjectives. Learners were requested to complete a table with the correct degree of comparison.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

26. Complete the following table with the correct degree of comparison.

| | Positive | Comparative | Superlative | |
|------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| 26.1 | fast | more fast X | fastest | XG (1) |
| 26.2 | difficult | more difficult | most difficult | XO (1) |

In the example above the learner could not provide the correct degree of comparison and instead used the incorrect comparative and superlative. The learner failed to add “most” (26.2) in the superlative form and use the suffix – ‘er’ (26.1) in the comparative degree.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Use a table showing irregular and regular forms of degrees of comparison as a source of knowledge for learners.
- Develop worksheets (**close exercises**) to help learners practise degrees of comparison. This will enable learners to apply knowledge of degrees of comparison in context.
- Degrees of comparison should be taught in a fun way e.g. playing games.

d) Using the gender forms of some nouns

Learners at Grade 6 level are expected to understand and use the gender form of some nouns correctly. Learners were requested to give the opposite gender of the underlined words, “grandmother” and “uncle”.

29. Write the opposite gender of the underlined words.

My grandmother and uncle are coming to visit us.

29.1 grandmother - grand father ✓ (1)

29.2 uncle - antie X (1)

The example given above shows that the learner used informal language for the opposite gender of ‘uncle’ which is ‘antie’. Despite the fact that the opposite is known, the difference between informal and formal language has a negative impact in the learner’s response. Contamination of one language with another has also an influence on learners giving incorrect answers. Learners should be taught to use formal language at school.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Explain when and where the use of formal and informal language is applicable e.g. create different scenarios showing formal and informal set ups.
- Design tables showing classification of gender nouns.
- Display wall charts depicting gender in the class room. A common noun gender classification includes masculine and feminine categories.
- Present focused lessons on the definition of the concept gender e.g. masculine nouns are words for men, boys and male animals. feminine nouns are words for women, girls and female animals.

e) Words ending in – l: double the l when you add a suffix (Spelling).

Learners at Grade 6 level are expected to have knowledge of spelling rules e.g. words ending in – l: should double the – l when suffix is added. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether the learners could differentiate between suffix and prefix without spelling errors. Learners were expected to write the word in brackets, “usual”, in the correct context of the sentence.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

31. Write the word in brackets correctly.

The snake (usual) hides itself behind the house.

Usual (1)

The example above shows that the learner could identify the correct form of the adverb, but could not provide the correct spelling of ‘usual’ as an adverb. The probable reason could be a lack of knowledge of spelling rules e.g. words ending with – “l” need to double “l” when a suffix is added.

Remediation

The following steps might help in overcoming the perceived misunderstandings:

- Teach learners rules of spelling and identify class or category of words, in this case words ending in “– l”: double the “l” when a suffix is added e.g. usual, model and travel.
- Use a variety of texts showing such words spelled with double ‘l’ in context.
- Display such words in table form in the classroom as an additional resource.
- Use dictionaries to look up the spelling of related words.
- Further support (spelling bees, spelling competitions, word searches, word puzzles)

f) Use possessive pronouns

Grade 6 learners are expected to understand and use nouns and pronouns properly when speaking and writing. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners could identify and use the possessive pronoun correctly. Learners were requested to use possessive pronouns to attain a correct sentence.

Specimen below is a typical example of learner responses

35.2 We are eating (we) favourite meal tonight.

my (1)

The learner failed to change a personal pronoun to a possessive pronoun. The response given in the example is in singular form and the sentence is in plural form. Although the learner is familiar with the possessive pronoun, he/she failed to answer the question to suit the context of the sentence.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Design a table showing subject verb concord and their relative possessive pronouns to address the mismatch between the subject and its possessive pronoun.
- Begin with a quick introduction about where possessive adjectives appear in basic sentences and relate these sentences to clear and simple images e.g. My house : This is your house. This is Jane's house. This is her house. This is the rabbit's house. This is **its** house.
- Give learners the opportunity to create simple sentences using *my*, *his* and *hers*.
- Introduce the possessive adjectives *our* and *their*: e.g. They wake up at seven. They put on their clothes.
- Begin teaching possessive nouns by using learners' knowledge of possessive adjectives.
- This concept is challenging for learners and it is not always possible to teach all these concepts in a single lesson, but they should be taught over a period of time.

4.7.3 Writing and Presenting

a) Writing a personal letter to communicate

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to demonstrate good communication and writing skills. Learners were expected to write a personal letter to present good communication skills. In their answers, they were expected to demonstrate knowledge of features of a personal letter e.g. address, salutation, introductory paragraph, body and conclusion.

37. Imagine that you attended a memorial service for former President Nelson Mandela at the FNB stadium. Write a personal letter to your cousin telling him/her about your experiences at the service and the important people you saw and heard.

Your letter should have the following features:

- Address
- Salutation
- Introductory paragraph
- Body
- Conclusion

Lloyd Primark School
Pravide Bog 3060
Stanger 4450
16 September 2014
I love my president Nelson Mandela and the stadium of them because he was fighting for US black people and Mandela stadium was so beautiful like a flower and when I grow up I want to play soccer in the stadium of them Nelson Mandela

The example above shows that the learner wrote a number of badly constructed sentences that were not on the given topic. The letter does not have features of a personal letter which are provided as a guide; e.g. address, salutation, introductory paragraph, body and conclusion. Other weaknesses in this response are poor grammar, punctuation and bad spelling. The learner also failed to write on a given topic to construct meaningful sentences and failed to use rich and varied vocabulary.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Use a writing frame for a personal letter to support and assist learners e.g. indicating the address, salutation, introductory paragraph, body and conclusion.

- Give learners a lot of opportunity to write (they learn to write by writing a great deal).
- Create the type of environment in which learners feel that it is safe to experiment and try out new things. Learners need to be taught to take themselves and each other seriously as writers.
- Encourage learners to interact with others during the writing process. They can help each other to generate ideas, refine plans and polish the final products. Good knowledge of *grammar* and *vocabulary* is essential for fluent reading, writing and speech.
- Learners, who have a real **purpose** for writing, learn to write more effectively. Ensure that learners get opportunities to write for a variety of audiences beyond just for the teacher to mark. It is important to look out for chances for learners to write for real audiences. For example, writing a letter that will be posted and making books for other learners to read.
- Encourage learners to follow a process approach to writing. Writing and designing texts is a process consisting of the following stages that should be taught explicitly.
- Learners need the opportunity to put this process into practice. They should, among others:
 - decide on the purpose and audience of a text to be written and/or designed;
 - brainstorm (process writing, with many different ideas) ideas using, for example mind maps, flow charts or lists;
 - consult relevant sources, select relevant information and organize ideas;
 - produce a first draft, which takes into account purpose, audience, topic and genre;
 - read drafts critically and get feedback from others (classmates);
 - edit and proofread the draft; and,
 - produce a well-designed final version.

4.8 DETAILED ANALYSIS

Grade 9 – First Additional Language

In this section, specific language skills, knowledge and competencies for Grade 9 English First Additional Language, are discussed. Typical learner responses are shown to indicate misunderstandings/misconceptions/errors/knowledge gaps which affected learner performance.

After discussing learner responses, recommendations are suggested for interventions to support teaching and learning. These are intended to prevent misunderstandings/misconceptions/errors/knowledge gaps in future.

The language components assessed were as follows:

a. Reading and viewing

Learners were assessed on extracting relevant information from a text whereby they had to identify the main idea of the story, identify purpose, distinguish between fact and opinion, identify topic sentence, summarise the main points and draw conclusion. They also responded to open-ended questions whereby they had to express an opinion giving reasons based on what they have read. Furthermore, the skill of interpreting information from an advertisement was assessed to demonstrate their broad and analytical thinking. They were given an advertisement where they had to identify the advertiser, target market and the slogan. Similar to this was a cartoon where they had to analyse the cartoon and also a poem where they had to interpret the poem and respond to questions.

b. Language structure and convention

Learners were assessed on using present progressive tense and future tense correctly. They were required to demonstrate the skill on editing a paragraph by using correct spelling and relevant punctuation marks. Identification and use of direct speech, passive voice, compound sentences, prepositions, pronouns, collective nouns, adverbs and adjectives were assessed where learners were required to either fill in one word or change a sentence to make it correct. A dictionary entry was supplied where learners were required to identify synonyms, adjective, adverb and degree of comparison.

c. Writing

Learners were assessed on their writing skills. They were requested to write a letter of appreciation, paying attention to the purpose, main and supporting ideas, sentence types and the use of pronouns.

Figure 8 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according to the content areas that were assessed

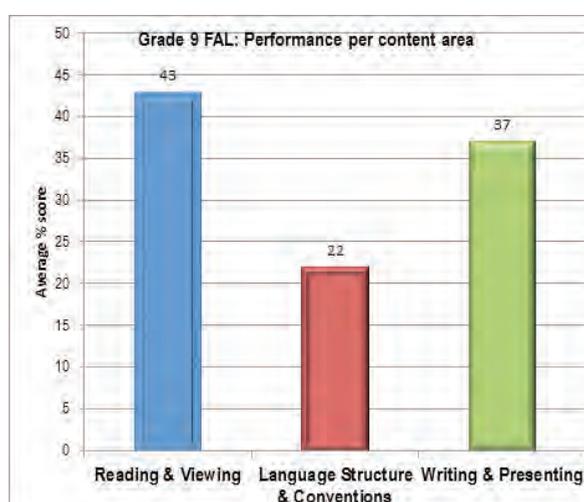


Figure 8: Learner performances in the various areas

As shown in Figure 8, Grade 9 learners performed fairly well on Reading and Viewing as shown by the highest average percentage mark (43%), followed by Writing and Presenting (37%). Learners experienced difficulties in responding to questions on Language Structure and Conventions as indicated by the lowest average percentage mark (22%) in the graph.

4.8.1 Language Structure and Conventions

In this content area, it was observed that most learners performed satisfactorily in identifying some parts of speech e.g. prepositions, pronouns and use of compound sentences, prepositions, adjectives and collective nouns. However, common errors and misconceptions were experienced in identifying parts of speech e.g. concord and verbs, adverbs, noun classes. They also performed poorly in textual editing.

a) Parts of Speech: (Concord and Verbs)

By Grade 9, learners are expected to demonstrate adequate knowledge of parts of speech (concord and verbs). Learners were required to demonstrate an understanding of subject-verb agreement and apply the use of concord and present continuous tense. Furthermore, they were expected to change the form of the verb and re-write the sentence into the present continuous tense.

12. Correct the sentence by changing the form of the verb in brackets.

Everybody's fluid intake (to decline) during cooler months.

Everybody's Fluid intake decline during cooler months(1) ○

As depicted in the learner response above, the learner provided either the incorrect form of the verb or misconstrued the question entirely. The learners could not change the word within brackets into the correct verb tense (declines) as required in this question. It is possible that the learner did not understand that the question tested knowledge of tenses. However, learners showed a marked inability to understand the subject/verb relationship.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Concord (also called agreement) can be taught during the writing process. The basic rules of concord need to be taught. [A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb.] Learners can be provided with a paragraph where the subjects have been highlighted and learners will be asked to either insert the correct verb or choose the correct verb to complete the paragraph.
- A practical solution to address vocabulary is a word wall. Difficult or unfamiliar words are pasted against the wall prior to the lesson. These words will be explained and learners will be asked to add this to their personal dictionary in their workbooks. The words will remain on the wall for a week. At the end of the week a spelling test can be written or learners can write a short paragraph using these words while applying or consolidating concord. It is vital to keep in mind that learners who struggle with concord will experience difficulty with speaking and writing.

a) Parts of Speech (Adverbs)

The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners could provide the parts of speech (adverbs) of the word within brackets correctly. They were expected to either re-write the sentence with the correct adverb or they could write only the correct word.

Specimen 1

17. Provide the correct form of the adverb in brackets to complete the sentence.

Both teenagers and adults are (absolute) confused about fat content in foods.

absolutely absolutely A

Specimen 2

17. Provide the correct form of the adverb in brackets to complete the sentence.

Both teenagers and adults are (absolute) confused about fat content in foods.

Both teenagers and adults are very confused about fat content in foods.

From the learner response above (specimen 1), it is evident that the learner knew what an adverb is but was unable to provide the correct form of the adverb of manner because there was a general lack of vocabulary (spelling rules and

patterns) which resulted in poor performance for this question. It should be borne in mind that if the word is incorrectly spelt, the answer is incorrect.

In Specimen 2, the learner rewrote the sentence which showed that there was no knowledge of what an adverb is. Therefore unnecessary changes that were not related to adverbs as required in this question were made.

Remediation

The following measures are suggested to assist learners in improving their vocabulary:

- It is important that learners are exposed to all the types of adverbs (time, place, manner, degree and frequency). Learners must be taught that each adverb can be identified by its function. An adverb of manner modifies the verb. Teachers can ask three learners to sing a line from a pop song. Learners will have to listen to the level of sound and speed (loudly/softly/quickly) to determine how the line was sung. Learners will then have a practical example of how the action (verb) was performed.
- Teachers can provide learners with a number of practical (aural and visual) examples and write the words on the board to strengthen spelling.
- Spelling patterns and rules can be taught through:
 - using word games – hangman/scrabble;
 - Using spelling rhymes ‘...the **i** before the **e** except when there’s a **c**...’;
 - Syllabification (sounding out and dividing words into syllables), e.g. **mea – sure – ment**;
 - The doubling rule (short and long vowel sounds), e.g. hugged – short vowel sound / cleaned – long vowel sound; and,
 - Word-attack skills.

c) Parts of Speech (Noun Classes)

By Grade 9, learners are expected to demonstrate adequate knowledge of noun classes (pronouns and collective nouns). They were assessed on their ability to correctly identify the pronoun (Specimen 1) and provide a collective noun (Specimen 2) in the two examples respectively.

Specimen 1

13. Identify the part of speech of the underlined word.

Health conscious people are sensitive about their weight.

is direct speech

Specimen 2

18. Complete the sentence by providing the correct collective noun.

You do not really need to eat a Cradle of bananas to keep healthy.

In specimen 1, the learner could not identify the correct pronoun, while another learner (specimen 2) could not supply the correct collective noun. Learners were not able to identify the pronoun or provide the correct collective noun.

Remediation

The following measures are suggested to assist learners in improving their vocabulary:

- Teach learners that a pronoun takes the place of a noun. Pronouns are used to avoid repetition.
- Example: **Vuyo did not want Vuyo’s friends to stay at Vuyo’s home.**
- This sentence must be read aloud in order for learners to hear how inept it sounds. Learners can be provided with a list of personal pronouns and be instructed to find a suitable option to improve the sentence. This will form the basis to build on teaching personal and possessive pronouns.
- Learners need to be taught the names of nouns when they form a collection or group of objects, people and creatures. Provide learners with pictures of: a class full of learners, teachers in the staff room, people in a stadium and the stairs at a school. The proper collective noun must be added to each picture with the correct spelling. This exercise can also be taught using flash cards or matching the pair games. This must be used to explain the basic concept of collective nouns.

d) Parts of Speech: Textual Editing (Use knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation)

By Grade 9, learners are expected to demonstrate how to use knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation to edit a text. Learners were expected to identify and correct punctuation, grammar and spelling errors in the text provided. The purpose was to test whether learners could consolidate all that was learnt in grammar throughout the year to edit a text.

9. There are six spelling and grammatical errors in the text below. Identify and correct the spelling and grammatical errors by writing them down in the space provided. Write down each error and the correction.

For years we have steered away from tasty avocados because they are 'fattening' – but the good news are that they are jam packed with healthy nutrients and happily, may even help you to slim down. Natural unprocessed plant fats are essensial to the body and avocados contain plenty of them – minus the cholesterol. You will generally be healthier and lose wait more easily to.

1. Stayed ✓
 2. , (comma) ✓
 3. is ✓
essensial
 4. nutrients and happily may even help you to slim down ✓
 5. being weight ✓
 6. weight ✓
- (6) 23

In this specimen, the learner could identify the concord error and two spelling errors. The learner was able to rewrite the answers correctly. However, the other responses indicate that the learner was not able to identify many of the errors contained in the text. This resulted in the learner randomly choosing words that were not correct. The poor performance could possibly be as a result of insufficient exposure to textual editing using a variety of texts.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- This is a multiple sub-skill application. Teach learners how to punctuate a sentence or paragraph (start with punctuation). Provide learners with a list of punctuation marks and its functions (this sub-skill should have been taught in previous lessons as a refresher). Provide learners with a short paragraph littered with poor punctuation and ask them to correct it. A second activity to strengthen punctuation can involve writing a paragraph with specific punctuation requirements noted by teachers.
- Spelling patterns and spelling rules can be taught using word games.
- Learners need exposure to a variety of texts. Use newspapers, magazines, e-mails, posters, brochures and literary genres to teach, consolidate and assess this skill.

e) Parts of Speech: Use and understand the Passive Voice

Learners were expected to understand and apply the sub-skill of writing sentences in the passive voice. They were required to rewrite the sentence into the passive voice beginning with the words provided. The purpose was to give learners the opportunity to change a sentence from the active voice to the passive voice.

The following example is typical of learner responses.

15. Rewrite the following sentence into the passive voice. Start as indicated.

"Water regulates body temperature." (paragraph 4)

Body temperature regulates water (2)

The learner failed to change the sentence from the active to the passive voice. The convention of conversion from one sentence type into another still requires that there is a subject, verb and object. If this skill had been understood, the learner would have realised that in changing to the passive voice, the original meaning should not be lost, as is the case in this learner's response.

In the specimen, the learner did not know how to change the verb and that the object had become the agent (doer).

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Teach learners that a sentence may only be used in the passive voice if it contains a transitive verb (a verb that takes a direct object).
- The general rule: underline the verb, divide the sentence into subject / verb / object and begin with the object.



- Teach learners the effective use of passive voice. Passive voice is used when: it is not necessary to mention the doer; you are not sure who performed the action; demands are made anonymously; and, when a nameless accusation is made.
- This language skill requires multiple practice exercises in writing and speaking.

f) Parts of Speech: (Degrees of comparison/adjectives)

By Grade 9, learners are expected to identify degrees of comparison. Learners were required to provide the correct degree of comparison.

21.3 Complete the following sentence by giving the correct form of the word in brackets.

Of the two children, Thandi is healthier (health) than John.

21.3 Complete the following sentence by giving the correct form of the word in brackets.

Of the two children, Thandi is healthier (health) than John.

The learners responded poorly because of incorrect spelling and their inability to understand comparative and superlative degree.

Remediation

The following are suggested to assist learners improve their vocabulary:

- Learners who struggle to grasp this concept should be taught that adjectives have three forms: positive, comparative and superlative.
- Learners must be taught that the positive denotes one person or thing, while the comparative degree compares two things to a greater degree and the superlative compares to the greatest (the best and the most) degree.
- Spelling patterns and spelling rules must be reinforced during the teaching process.

g) Parts of Speech: Understand and use the plural form

Learners are expected to demonstrate adequate knowledge and skills to correctly change from singular to plurals. They were expected to rewrite the word in the plural form.

19. Write the plural form of the word in brackets.

Food is one of the great pleasures in our (life).

Food is one of the great pleasure in our ~~lives~~ (1)

The learners' poor responses in the example above can possibly be attributed to insufficient knowledge about spelling rules and patterns. The specimen reflects that this learner failed to change the word into the plural form.

Remediation

The following are suggested to assist learners in improving their vocabulary:

- Teach learners that nouns are either in the singular or plural form.
- The singular and plural forms have to be taught and emphasized in different language contexts. Wall charts (visible daily) as well as daily interaction with text books and other written texts will improve spelling skills. Board games can be utilized to enhance and consolidate spelling skills.
- Learners need to understand that forming plurals will either be in a regular form (plus -s) or an irregular form (tooth-teeth).

h) Parts of Speech: Understand and use Direct Speech

Grade 9 learners are expected to understand and use direct speech through application. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners could rewrite a sentence from the direct to the indirect speech. A specimen of typical learner responses is presented below to illustrate this common error.

10. Change the following sentence into direct speech. Start the sentence as indicated.

The writer said that their bodies need water to help carry nutrients to all the cells.

The writer said that they are needs bodies water to help carry an nutrient to all the cells (2)

It is evident from the poor response that the learner struggled with the changes. The learner failed to correctly change the verb and pronoun and include punctuation marks. The sentence was supposed to be in direct speech.

Remediation

The following steps should be used to help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Teach that direct speech uses the exact words of the speaker. It is indicated by inverted commas.
- Provide learners with examples of how direct speech must be written. In cartoons or comics, these words are enclosed in bubbles.

Example: **Mama Taxi-**



Mama said, "It's a wonder some taxis get anybody to ride with them."

- Teach learners how to punctuate the sentence correctly, using inverted commas.
- Teach learners the different ways that direct speech can be written.
- Ask learners to write a paragraph using direct speech.
- The importance of spending an equal amount of time on the construction of both direct and indirect sentences, is imperative in order to reinforce the changes that occur either way

Appropriate texts must be chosen to illustrate the correct use of both direct and indirect speech. This skill requires a lot of practice before learners can become confident with its application.

i) Identifying Topic Sentences and Main clauses

A key ability that learners are required to have is to understand and use a main clause and topic sentences. The purpose of assessment is to test whether learners can pick out the main idea in a sentence. They were expected to identify the topic sentence.

A specimen of typical learner responses has been presented below.

20. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Identify the topic sentence in the sentence below.

Drinking cold water in winter often isn't appealing, as a result your fluid intake may decline in the cooler months.

A Drinking cold water in winter often isn't appealing. < O

B Drinking cold water in winter might decline because it isn't appealing.

C Because drinking cold water in winter is not appealing.

D Because drinking cold water in winter might decline. (1)

Since 59% of the learners answered this question incorrectly, it can be deduced that the learner struggled to identify and select the main clause. If the learner could identify the topic sentence, it would have assisted in picking out the main clause.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the perceived misunderstandings:

- Teach learners that a main clause conveys a single idea. A clause is suitably arranged in a sentence and can stand alone as a sentence. A clause always contains a finite verb (does not need an auxiliary verb).
- Ask learners to identify all the finite verbs in a given sentence. This will give them an indication of how many clauses there are in that sentence.
- Teachers need to spend more time in entrenching the skill of identifying the topic sentence / main clause. Learners must be encouraged to read widely in order to hone the skill of identifying the topic sentence or main idea.

4.8.2 Reading and Viewing – Visual Literacy (Advertisement and Cartoon)

In this content area, it was observed that learners performed fairly well in identifying purpose, distinguish between fact and opinion, drawing conclusion, summarising main points, identifying topic sentence, similarities, antonyms, and main idea. Specific weaknesses were experienced in interpreting and analysing an advertisement and cartoon, inferring meaning and assonance.

a) Use of font size, identify the target market/audience

Grade 9 learners are expected to understand and interpret the purpose and intention of advertising. Learners were required to explain why a particular font size is used and who the intended target market for the advertisement is.

Specimens of typical learner responses have been presented below to illustrate the common misunderstandings.

The image shows two photographs of learner responses. The left photograph shows a question: "22.2 Circle the letter of the correct answer. Who is the target market for this printed advertisement?" with four options: A) People who are hungry, B) People who prefer to eat a wholesome chicken meal, C) People who prefer to eat a wholesome vegetarian meal, and D) People who eat chicken on a doctor's advice. A learner has circled 'A' and 'D' and written '(1)' next to the options. The right photograph shows a question: "22.3 In the advertisement, the phrase 'Keep-Off Fried Chicken' is printed bold and in large fonts. Why do you think it is written in this format?" A learner has written: "because it is a really really good chicken on a doctor's advice" and written "(20)" next to the answer.

In the specimens above, the learners could not correctly identify the reason for a particular font and they struggled to identify the target market. It is evident from the poor response that the learner struggled with the interpretation of the advertisement. Possible reasons could include unfamiliarity with advertising, jargon and advertising techniques used to manipulate the target market.

Remediation

The following are suggested to assist learners in improving their vocabulary:

- Teach learners the **AIDA** principle when analysing advertisements.
 - **A** – attract attention through colour/font/illustrations or pictures
 - **I** – determine your target market by researching interests
 - **D** – identify the desire (need) e.g. safety, security, popularity, love, etc.
 - **A** – how advertisers urge consumers into action (Buy one get one FREE)
- These techniques need to be practiced regularly using a wide range of texts, e.g. posters, magazines, advertisements, etc.
- Engage higher order thinking skills when teaching Visual Literacy. Application of Barrett's / Blooms Taxonomy is essential in this context.
- The importance of figurative language should be taught. Denotative, connotative and implied meaning should be addressed when teaching visual literacy.
- Emotive language skills need to be taught in visual literacy: subjectivity and objectivity, fact and opinion, bias/prejudice, propaganda and sensationalism.

c) Interpreting a Cartoon

At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to understand and interpret the purpose and intention of cartoons. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners were sensitive to the styles of writing and how it conveys meaning. They were required to explain why the cartoonist chose to use capital letters. Specimen of typical learner responses have been presented below to illustrate the common error and a good response.

Specimen 1

23.1 Refer to Frame 1 and give a reason why the word 'NEW' is written in capital letters.

because it's the first time he was eating the food. (1)

specimen 2

22.2 Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Who is the target market for this printed advertisement?

A People who are hungry.

B People who prefer to eat a wholesome chicken meal.

C People who prefer to eat a wholesome vegetarian meal.

D People who eat chicken on a doctor's advice.

In these examples, one learner understood how and why the cartoonist chose to use capital letters, while another learner (specimen 2) could not apply the skill required. It is evident from the poor response that the learner struggled with the interpretation of the cartoon. A possible reason could be unfamiliarity with features of cartooning.

Remediation

The following are suggested to assist learners in improving their vocabulary:

- In instances where learners struggle with cartoons, teachers should revisit features of cartooning. Concentrate on vocabulary to explain body language, facial expressions, implication of movement lines, etc.
- Emotive language skills need to be taught in visual literacy: subjectivity and objectivity, fact and opinion, bias/prejudice, propaganda and sensationalism.
- The importance of figurative language should be taught. Denotative, connotative and implied meaning should be addressed when teaching visual literacy.

d) Inferring Meaning

By Grade 9, learners are expected to apply their understanding of how language can create and maintain power relationships between text producer and reader. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether the learners can read a passage and then make inferences. Learners were expected to analyse the sentence and make an inference. They were given a clue that the inference could be made by reading paragraph 3.

3.2 "... during winter we crave warm and comforting foods to keep us warm and feel good". (Paragraph 3)

What is the writer saying about the winter habits of people?

Choose the best explanation.

A People like to eat in comfortable places where it is warm and cosy.

B People feel the desire to eat, which brings comfort during winter.

C People feel disappointed when served cold food during winter.

D People become overweight when eating food they are not supposed to.

(1) 00.

Since 75% of the learners answered this question incorrectly, it can be deduced that the learners could not analyse or interpret what the writer was saying and thus was unable to apply the skill correctly. The learner was expected to re-read paragraph 3 and work out the cause and effect relationship in the sentence quoted.

Remediation

The following are suggested to assist learners improve their vocabulary

- Inference is a difficult skill to teach. Source texts where learners need to pick up meaning behind what is stated and deduce all implications. Learners need to predict and infer meaning in order to apply the skill in various contexts. This skill should be practiced on an ongoing basis for it to be internalized.

- Learners need to be taught how to:
 - Identify and discuss emotive language;
 - Identify and discuss assumptions and explain their impact; and
 - Identify and discuss implied meaning and inferences.
- Read a paragraph (short story) to the learners but do not read the ending. Ask learners to predict the ending. Expose learners to a variety of texts from which to infer meaning.
- Provide learners with pictures to predict or infer from where it was taken by following clues.
- Use a practical example to demonstrate this skill: Ask learners what one can infer from the following: If Zandi was late two mornings in a row and she is not at school yet, what does this mean?

e) Figures of Speech / Sound Devices / Assonance

In Grade 9, learners are expected to read, evaluate and respond to the aesthetic qualities of a literary text. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners can identify literary devices in a poem. They were expected to identify and explain figurative language.

24.2 Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Identify the figure of speech used in line 12, "And it would do you good".

A Onomatopoeia
 B Assonance
 C Rhythm
 D Simile

(1)

Since 65% of the learners could not answer this question correctly, it can be deduced that the learners did not understand the required metalanguage. The terminology used to describe the literary devices may have been unfamiliar to the learner.

Remediation

The following steps might help to overcome the shortcomings regarding the metalanguage:

- Literary analysis must be taught while working with the prescribed genres. Provide learners with a literature analysis template that can be used across genres. Elements like plot, characters, characterisation, setting and themes should be included.
- Ensure that critical language awareness is taught during the teaching of all the genres.
- An element of creativity can be included in the methodology when teaching literature e.g. poetry set to music. The poem can be recited where learners will be able to listen to tone and mood. The prescribed poems may be recorded to enhance understanding and appreciation.

4.8.3 Writing and presenting: Letter of Appreciation

At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to write for a variety of reasons and purposes. The purpose of this assessment was to test whether learners could write a letter of appreciation on advice given on healthy eating habits, using all the conventions of grammar and writing taught throughout the year. Learners were expected to construct thoughts and ideas coherently, following a set format for a specific genre of writing. They were required to write a letter of appreciation. Furthermore, they were directed to pay attention to the purpose and register of the letter. They were also encouraged to pay attention to main and supporting ideas, sentence types and the use of pronouns.

P.O. Box 1002
 Savenango 8137
 9102
 17 September 2014

My sentence
 longer or short

my sentence longer or short in the sentence are
 short are you know of that the long sentence
 are sentence that are usually greater your
 family but if you start the formal letter you
 may not disassociate to it. the letter to your
 friend you may use long sentence to you do
 not use short sentence to the comparison
 passage to the start or long sentence to start a
 letter you may use the short sentence or the
 short sentence you may use the letter that
 are usually disassociate to your answer so you
 that for the last sentence that are usually
 connected to the purpose of the sentence
 the first sentence that are usually

Dear My friend

I thank you for giving me a good advice on the
 healthy eating habits. I'm so grateful that you suggested
 that I should use healthy eating habits because they
 helped me a lot. Now I can see that my weight
 is not gaining anymore and that is what I wanted.
 Thank you again my friend if there is anything you need
 just call me because you have just made my problems
 go away. First I thought that these healthy eating habits
 would not help me but I was wrong my friend about
 not trusting you, now I can see that you are my real
 friend. I never believed in healthy eating habits my friend but
 now I believe in them and I could help other too as you
 helped me. I am very pleased that you insisted that I
 should use healthy eating habits. I hated the body that I
 have had now I just love the new one I have now. Thank
 you my friend, knowing that body really made me feel good
 and sick now I'm gonna enjoy the new body and weight that

what you may use long sentence that are positive
 to negative numbers you have been asked
 your friend examination to your texture message
 so you give the reason for the question
 to the negative to the positive number so you
 may use the formal letter your friend
 so I say to you a good thing you with the different
 that things to be in letter to your all my friend
 so you may use formal letter so you
 not short sentence to create your texture
 you can use the structure of your letter in the
 (structure of the bar) please to all my friend good
 love to all my friend to go by Marcus Marcus
 the my friend Hluya to you have been helped
 me with your knowledge

to my friend Hluya
 to go by Marcus

The healthy eating habits have helped me a lot and I will
 not stop using healthy eating habits my friend because they
 just my day let me not say my day they made my life.
 ☺

Your friend
 Lazola Juel

In the specimen above, examples of poor formatting and unrelated topic writing are reflected. In specimen 1, the learner did not adhere to the topic, and in specimen 2 the learner made a number of format errors. The learner responses above displayed that learners either did not pay attention to the format, especially the address and paragraphs or they did not adhere to the instruction.

Remediation

- Teach all transactional writing (functional writing) genres required in Grade 9
- Teach learners the steps involved in the writing process:
 - Planning/pre-writing;
 - Drafting;
 - Revising;
 - Editing;
 - Proofreading; and,
 - Presenting.
- Provide learners with a writing frame if formatting is a problem. The frame will show learners how to write a proper

letter with address, salutation and an ending based on register and purpose.

- Examples of correct paragraphing skills and topic sentences must be demonstrated.
- Instruct learners to write friendly letters to one another in class to practise format.
- Teach learners how to interpret and understand topics. Provide them with a range of topics and ask each child to select one. Ask them to write down their experiences linked to the topic, their thoughts and feelings about the topic and finally what the topic is really about (denotative and connotative meaning). This should teach them that topics have nuances that must be addressed before writing can begin.
- It is vital to tap into and use the prior knowledge of a learner during the writing process.

5. CONCLUSION

Some weaknesses identified in 2013 (finding the main idea and punctuation) remained as a problem in 2014. Learners had great difficulty in expressing an opinion, and in poetry; the main weakness was in rhyming words.

However, it was encouraging, to see good progress generally in so many sections of the assessment. Learners coped well in many aspects of comprehension including the comprehension of poetry.

The questions using prepositions as a base were particularly well handled and this in itself shows promise for the future.

**PART A:
FRAMEWORKS FOR
IMPROVEMENT**



COMPREHENSION

| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | Responsibility | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | DBE | Province | District |
| <p>Ø lack of understanding of a text (e.g. main idea and details in a text, cause and effect, characterization; setting)</p> <p>Ø inability to make inferences and give an opinion to open ended questions.)</p> <p>Ø lack of familiarity with different figures of speech and rhyming structures.)</p> <p>Ø Insufficient active vocabulary to comprehend meaning, understand the question or the text;</p> <p>Ø inability to write a summary.</p> | <p>➤ Plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>Ø Plan structured language lessons focusing on the teaching of reading with comprehension</p> <p>Ø Teach comprehension skills so learners know how to analyze different text types, sequence events in a story, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations and give a reasoned opinion.</p> <p>Ø Teach and provide practice using different figures of speech</p> <p>➤ Provide more opportunities for learners to read a variety of texts</p> <p>Ø Ensure schools with Grades 4-6 learners order approved Core Readers and sets of Graded Readers from the National Catalogue</p> <p>Ø Teach reading strategies, including phonics and word attack skills in the FAL</p> <p>Ø Include daily reading time so learners read a minimum of one book per week throughout the year</p> | <p>Use the Departmental structures e.g. Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons.</p> <p>Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and subject advisors on the gaps identified in curriculum coverage and the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons</p> | <p>Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS and form School Literacy Teams</p> <p>Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons</p> <p>Workshop teachers on teaching reading comprehension using different text types</p> <p>Monitor if teachers are implementing what they have learnt at workshops and track learner performance to check whether there is actual improvement</p> | <p>SMTs to ensure schools order and use core readers and graded readers to improve teaching of reading and reading comprehension</p> <p>SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school to ensure that reading is being given the appropriate attention.</p> <p>Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured reading comprehension lessons:</p> <p>to analyze a range of different text types, sequence events in a story, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations, give a reasoned opinion and provide practice using different figures of speech</p> |

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | | | Responsibility | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| | DBE | Province | District | School | |
| <p>∅ Poor understanding and use of different parts of speech.</p> <p>∅ Inability to rewrite sentences in a different tense.</p> <p>∅ Inability to punctuate a sentence or paragraph and apply capitalisation.</p> <p>∅ Poor knowledge of spelling rules.</p> <p>∅ Weak story writing: skills based on given mindmap.</p> <p>∅ Poor grammar and spelling skills.</p> <p>∅ Inability to change a positive sentence into its negative form</p> <p>∅ Inability to give synonyms and antonyms.</p> <p>∅ Inability to form the degrees of comparison.</p> | <p>• Use the Departmental structures e.g. Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS requirements.</p> <p>• Monitor curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons, daily written work.</p> | <p>• Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS.</p> <p>• Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons</p> <p>• Ensure learners write different text types on a weekly basis using writing frameworks and the process approach</p> | <p>• Support schools to order readers, use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured Language lessons as per CAPS and form School Literacy Teams.</p> <p>• Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons.</p> <p>• Workshop teachers on teaching language and using process writing to produce different text types using writing frameworks.</p> <p>• Organize spelling competitions.</p> | <p>• SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school.</p> <p>• Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured language lessons on tenses, subject verb concord, different parts of speech, use of correct punctuation and spelling.</p> <p>• Teachers to provide learners with opportunities to write different text types on a weekly basis using writing frameworks so they are familiar with different formats and requirements as per CAPS.</p> <p>• Teachers to use the process approach to writing so that learners plan and edit their writing.</p> | |
| <p>➤ Plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>∅ Plan structured lessons focusing on the teaching of Language and Writing</p> <p>∅ Teach focused lessons and give more practice in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify and use different parts of speech; o rewriting sentences from one tense to another; o rewriting sentences and paragraphs using correct punctuation and capitalisation.; and o using the correct subject verb concord. <p>∅ Familiarise learners with metacognitive language.</p> <p>∅ Ensure learners write different text types on a weekly basis so they are familiar with different formats and requirements as per CAPS.</p> <p>∅ Use the process approach to writing and support learners by providing writing frameworks.</p> <p>∅ Use the grammar, punctuation and spelling errors from learners' writing to inform focused Language lessons.</p> | | | | | |

COMPREHENSION

| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | Responsibility | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | DBE | Province | District |
| <p>Ø inability to analyse an advertisement and determine the target audience or uncover specific persuasive techniques by making inferences and give a reasoned opinion.</p> <p>Ø inability to identify topic sentences and main clause.</p> <p>Ø lack of familiarity with different figures of speech/ sound devices in poetry and insufficient vocabulary to comprehend their meaning:</p> <p>Ø inability to deduce meaning through inference.</p> | <p>➤ Plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>Ø Plan structured language lessons focusing on the teaching of comprehension</p> <p>Ø Teach comprehension skills so learners know how to analyze a wide range of different text types, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations and give a reasoned opinion.</p> <p>Ø Teach and provide practice using figures of speech</p> <p>Ø Teach 3-5 words daily and provide opportunities for learners to use the vocabulary orally and in writing</p> <p>➤ Provide more opportunities for learners to read a wide variety of texts</p> <p>Ø Ensure schools with Grades 7-9 learners order approved Core Readers and novels from the National Catalogue</p> <p>Ø Teach reading strategies and word attack skills in the FAL</p> <p>Ø Provide opportunities for learners to read and analyze a wide range of texts and genres of increasing complexity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Departmental structures e.g. Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading comprehension Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers, the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements Monitor and report on curriculum coverage and the teaching of structured reading lessons Workshop teachers on teaching reading comprehension using a range of different text types | <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMTs to ensure schools order and use core readers and novels to improve teaching of reading and reading comprehension SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured reading comprehension lessons: to analyze a wide range of different text types, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations, give a reasoned opinion and provide practice using different figures of speech <p>Ø Teachers to teach 3-5 words daily and give learners to use the vocabulary orally and in writing</p> |

**PART B:
DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS**



4. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from the analysis are summarised for the Intermediate and Senior Phases in two formats, firstly, in a histogram (bar graph) that shows how learner scores in each grade were distributed and the emerging patterns of score distribution across the grades and, secondly, in a tabular form that shows the areas of strength and weakness displayed by learners in each grade.

4.1 GRADE 4 HOME LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Adequate achievement” level (average of 56.4%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

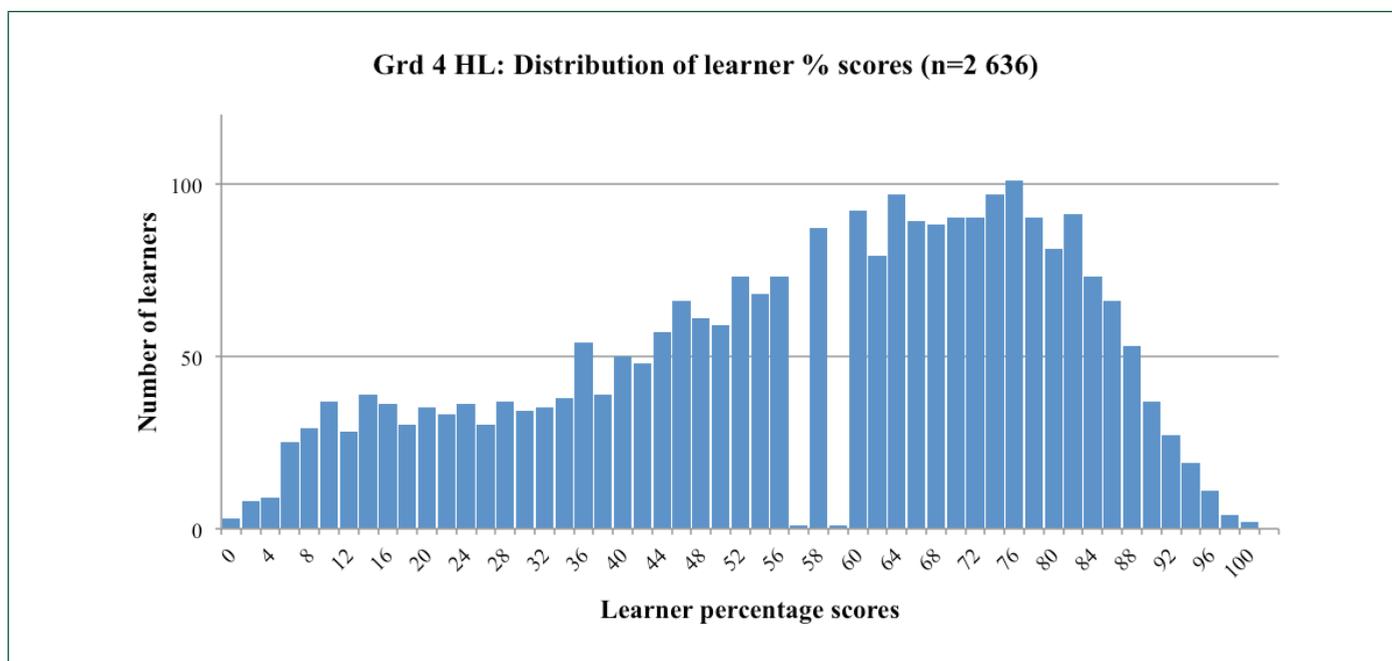


Figure 1: Distribution of Grade 4 learner scores in HL.

Figure 1, shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 100% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 76%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 4 learners have been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of learner strengths and weaknesses in Grade 4 Home Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|--|--|
| <p>The following were identified as areas of weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions based on a text that required analysing information, expressing an opinion and giving a reason; • Giving appropriate synonyms and antonyms for the underlined words; • Rewriting sentences from one tense to another; • Identifying adjectives ; • Structure of a dialogue or writing a dialogue; and, • Story writing for the purpose of testing all writing conventions. | <p>Questions on the following areas were reasonably well answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features of a newspaper article; • Identifying parts of speech (prepositions, verbs, adverbs, pronouns and conjunctions); • Writing nouns into plural form; and, • Identifying basic features of an invitation and the ability to complete the essential information of an invitation. |

4.2 GRADE 5 HOME LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Adequate achievement” level (average of 58%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

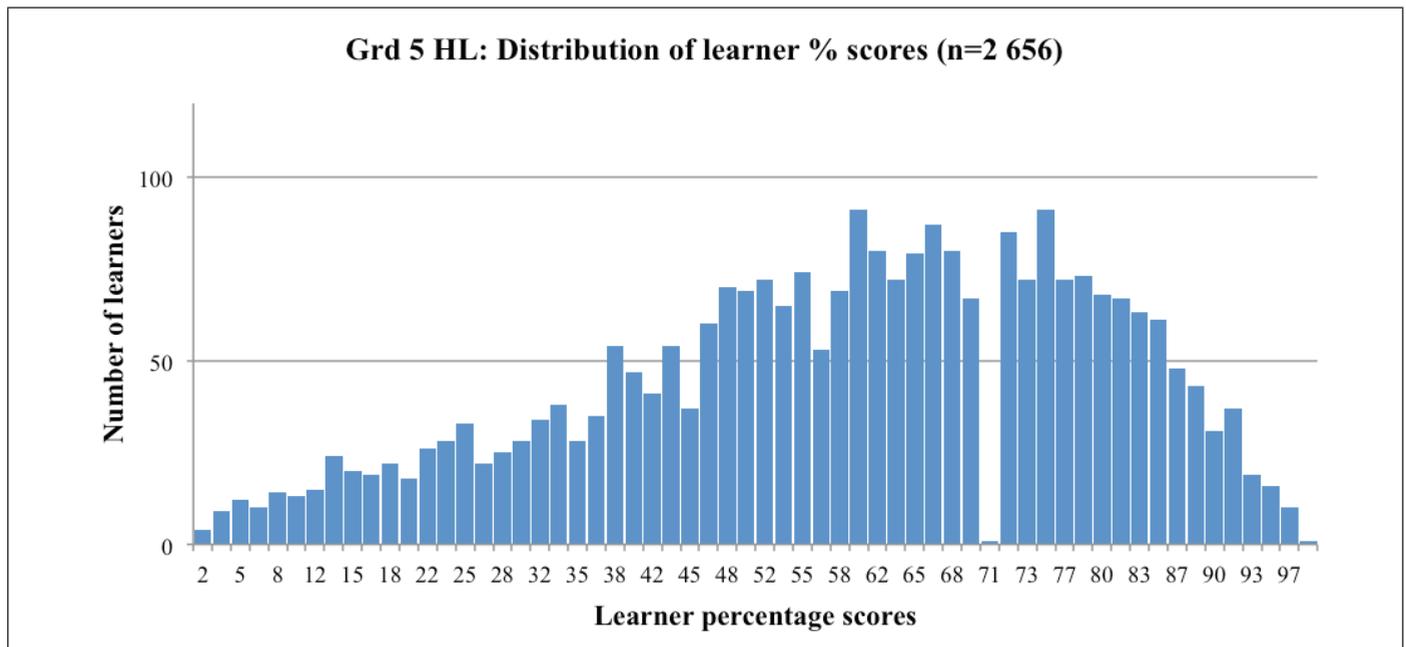


Figure 2: Distribution of Grade 5 learner scores in HL.

Figure 2, shows that learners scores in ranged from 2 to 98% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 75%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 5 learners are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of learners’ strengths and weaknesses in Grade 5 Home Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|---|---|
| <p>The following were identified as areas of weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving synonyms for words; • Answering True/ False questions with motivations (reasons); • Applying spelling and punctuation rules; • Writing abbreviations out in full; • Changing a sentence into either the negative or question form; and, • Rewriting a sentence from direct into indirect speech. | <p>Questions on the following areas were reasonably well answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing the best title for a given text from options given; • Identifying the correct preposition to complete sentences; • Visual literacy (Answering questions on a graph); and, • Identifying rhyming words in a poem. |

4.3 GRADE 6 HOME LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Substantial achievement” level (average of 63%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

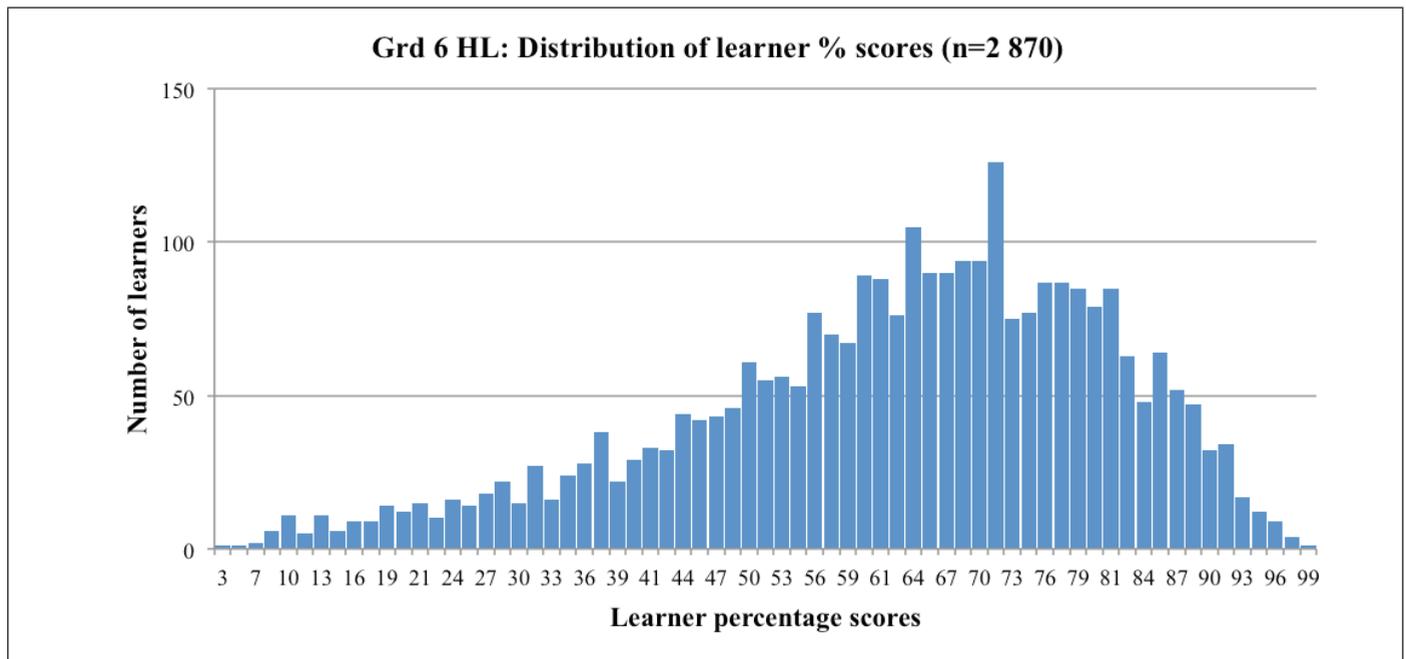


Figure 3: Distribution of Grade 6 learner scores in HL.

Figure 3 shows that learners scores ranged from 3 to 99%, and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 71%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 6 learners are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of learners’ strengths and weaknesses in Grade 6 Home Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|--|---|
| <p>The following were identified as areas of weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of the meanings of words in context (using contextual clues); • Identifying suffix/ prefix from a root word; • Identifying figures of speech, (similes, metaphors, personification); • Using reading strategies to summarise a text; • Understanding conditional forms (cause and effect); • Responding to visual texts (advertisement); • Changing direct speech into indirect speech; • Inability to spell and punctuate (lack of knowledge of spelling rules); • Inability to identify parts of speech correctly; and, • Inability to write one complex sentence into two simple sentences. | <p>Questions on the following areas were reasonably well answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding elements of a myth e.g. title; • Giving own perspective based on evidence within a text; • Making predictions based on title or graphics; • Using concord (correct form of the verb); • Learners demonstrated a better response to texts; • Dialogue (format/length, content) was done better than in previous years; and, • Recalling events as listed in a text in the correct sequence. |

Overall, it can be observed that the distribution of learners’ scores in Grades 4, 5 and 6 has increased by at least 3%.

4.4 GRADE 9 HOME LANGUAGE

Overall performance of the sampled learners was at the “Moderate achievement” level (average of 48%). The distribution of learner percentage scores is shown in the histogram below.

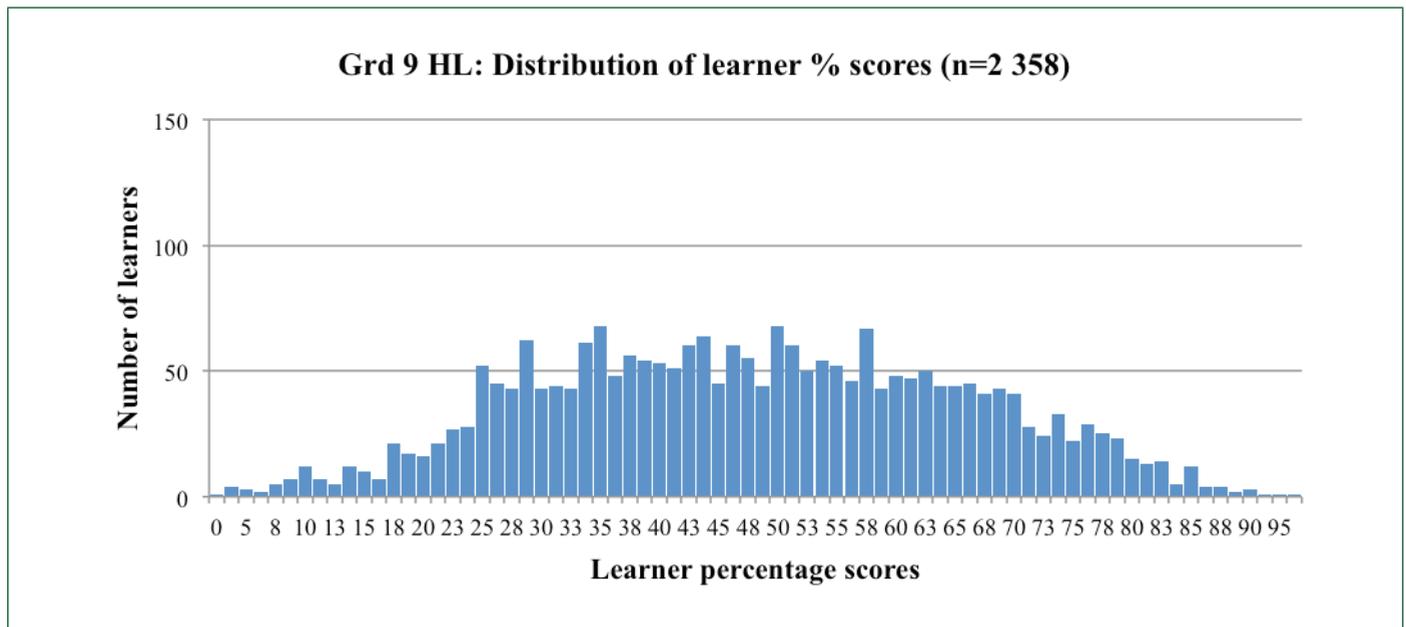


Figure 4: Distribution of Grade 9 learner scores in HL.

Figure 4 shows that learners scores ranged from 0 to 90% and the modal score (the score most frequently attained by learners) was 35%.

The specific areas of strength and weakness displayed by Grade 9 learners are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of learners’ strengths and weaknesses in Grade 9 Home Language.

| AREAS OF WEAKNESS | AREAS OF STRENGTH |
|--|--|
| <p>The following were identified as areas of weakness amongst learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying parts of speech; Identifying figures of speech and other literary devices (rhyme and contradictions); Differentiating between literal and figurative meaning of words; Identifying grammatical errors and editing skills; Identifying topic sentences was poorly done; Stating whether a statement is a fact or opinion with supporting evidence; Deriving meaning of words using contextual clues; Identifying main clauses ; Writing a summary; and, Extracting meaning and message from given visuals. | <p>The following were identified as areas of strength as displayed by learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying adverbs correctly; Identifying the correct verbs in context; Identifying what is advertised in visual text; and, Identifying the main idea in a narrative text. |

5. DETAILED ANALYSIS

5.1 GRADE 4 HOME LANGUAGE

In this section, the skills of Reading and Viewing, Language Structure and Conventions, and Writing and Presenting were tested. Knowledge and competencies related to the Grade 4 Home Language content areas of assessment that were tested are discussed. Typical learner responses are shown to indicate misunderstandings/misconceptions/errors and knowledge gaps which affected their performance.

After discussing learner responses, comments on proposals for interventions are given to support both teachers and learners on how to avoid such errors as well as the acquiring of the relevant skill and knowledge.

CONTENT AREAS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ASSESSED

The following content areas, in terms of knowledge and skills were assessed in the Grade 4 Home Language test:

READING AND VIEWING:

The questions set focused on skills that assessed learner ability to:

- identify the most suitable headline for the newspaper article;
- answer to the questions testing “who”, “when”, “where”, “why” and “what”;
- reflect on emotional response to information in the text read;
- use information in the text to make a prediction;
- use contextual clues to work out the meanings of words;
- study the given text to find specific details;
- identify the type of text being used; and,
- write the instructions in the correct order.

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND USE:

Learners were expected to demonstrate that they had the skills to:

- use punctuation marks correctly in a sentence;
- rewrite sentences in the tenses required;
- write the plural form of a word correctly;
- give the correct form of the adjective;
- complete the sentence using the correct preposition;
- choose the correct prefix to change a word to the opposite meaning;
- choose the verb for subject-verb agreement in a sentence;
- form an adverb from a word in brackets;
- identify the adjective in the sentence;
- choose the appropriate possessive pronoun to complete the sentence; and
- choose the appropriate conjunction to complete the compound sentence.

WRITING AND PRESENTING:

The following skills were tested:

- completing the conversation from a given scenario.
- using appropriate content and language to write a story with two paragraphs of 5 -6 sentences each on a given picture.

Figure 5 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according to the skills assessed

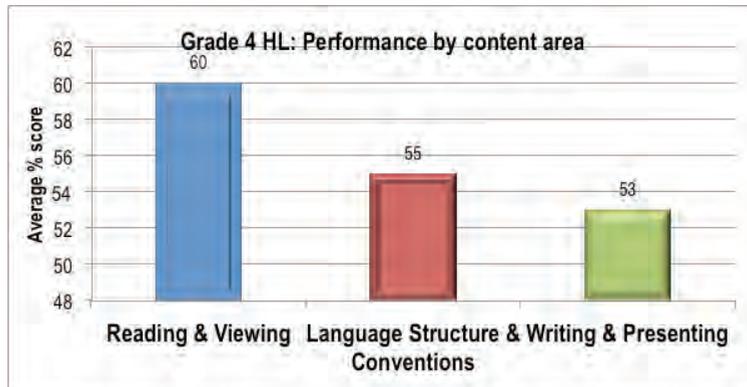


Figure 5: The average scores for Grade 4 HL according to the skills assessed.

5.1.1 Reading and Viewing

The learners were expected to read various types of texts and answer questions based on the text. The comprehension skills of learners were tested using a newspaper article, an invitation and sequencing a recipe. Learners were required to read the texts and answer the questions set, either as an open ended question or to choose the correct answer from the list provided. Learner performance on the whole with regards to reading and viewing indicates that learners were able to achieve at an above average level as indicated in Figure 5.

a) Interpret meaning and analyse information

The Grade 4 learners were expected to analyse information from the text that required deeper understanding (making an inference), expressing an opinion and giving a reason. The learners were required to make a connection between the word special in the question below and the part of the text that would lead to making the inference as to why the success was special. The learners were expected to write the sentences in full and demonstrate an ability to extract relevant information that forms part of their response from the text.

The specimen below projects typical errors that learners made when responding to the question.

6. Write your answer in a full sentence.

What makes Harold's success special?

He is successful because he had read the most books in his school (2)

The learner response above shows that the learner could make reference to the “success” part of this question. However, the part of the question about what made it “special” could not be explained. In the specimen above the learner acknowledges the success made by Harold; however, the learner does not make/draw inference that the success was related to some events in the text. This suggests that the learner failed to see the relationship between the success and the events; the implied associations were not understood by the learner.

Remediation

The following strategies are suggested to assist learners to develop the skill of drawing inferences and linking cause and effect.

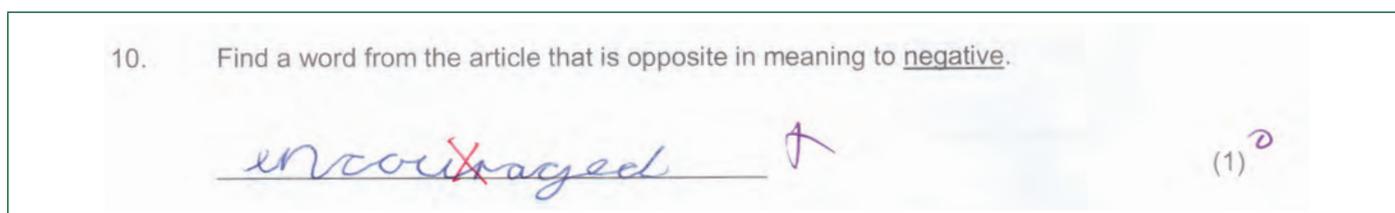
- Choose a variety of information texts that develop the learner’s analytical thinking skills where questions beginning with words such as “why”, “how”, and “what” are phrased. These questions will lead a learner to a deeper understanding of the passage. Read, use, and identify the characteristics of informational texts, documents such as sets of directions, science investigations, atlases, posters, flyers, forms, instructional manuals, menus, pamphlets, rules, invitations, recipes, advertisements and other functional documents.

- Cooperative group work should be encouraged. Teachers should employ a model of teaching learners to work together in small groups on a range of problems to develop their social and intellectual skills, so that different viewpoints can be expressed and examined.
- Teachers are encouraged to provide sufficient practical exercises that allow learners to find answers by linking words from the question to words in the text.

b) Understanding vocabulary

In this skill, the vocabulary of the learners was tested. This type of skill requires learners to know the meaning of the given word so that they can easily connect it to the requirement as presented in the question. If the meaning of the word “negative” is unknown to learners, they may not be able to find a relevant connection to its opposite. It is a skill that requires learners to have accumulated vocabulary within their level of development.

The specimen below shows an example of a learner who could not find the opposite in meaning to the word “negative” in a given text.



The specimen above shows that the learner followed the instruction by choosing a word from the text even though it was incorrect. The choice made by the learner could be due to either a lack of understanding of the given word, “negative” or a limited vocabulary. Most learners identified incorrect words as opposite to the word, “negative”.

Remediation

The following are suggested for teachers to use to assist learners to improve their vocabulary:

Teach vocabulary in an explicit, systematic way:

Identify the basic vocabulary that learners need to know, in order to support their reading development and content area learning and, plan for adequate repetition in order to ensure mastery. When introducing new vocabulary be sure to provide learner-friendly definitions for words important to the task at hand.

Teach vocabulary thematically:

Organize vocabulary around a common theme, and choose reading materials that reinforce that vocabulary in context.

Teach vocabulary by focusing on common root words and affixes to expand word knowledge:

Learning about roots, prefixes, and suffixes is a great way to reinforce and expand understanding of English words. Breaking the words down into smaller parts makes unfamiliar words more comprehensible.

5.1.2 Language Structures

Generally learners performed at an average level of 55% as indicated in Figure 5. The following are areas that need remediation.

a) Tenses

Learners are required to rewrite sentences from one tense to another. A sentence in the simple past tense was given to learners to change into the simple present tense. Learners were expected to identify and change the verb in the sentence. In language development, verbs receive a lot of attention with emphasis on changing from one tense to another. The observation made with reference to learner responses is that they were not able to modify the verb to provide a correct response.

18.1 Write the following sentence in the Simple Present Tense.

Harold received a trophy.

Harold is receiving
a X trophy (1)0

In the example above, the learner's response was in the present continuous tense, instead of the simple present tense. It is evident that the learner knew that the verb had to change hence the learner wrote is receiving. However, the learners did not appear to know what was required of them or showed a lack of understanding of simple present tense. Changing tenses from one form to another was identified in 2013 as a weakness and continues to be an area for development.

Remediation

Given the observed weakness in understanding tenses, the following are some remedial measures that teachers can use:

- Learners need to first understand what changes are necessary to change the sentence into the Simple Present Tense, i.e. as shown in the specimen above, the verb "received" changes to "receives" to elicit a correct response.
- Simple tenses need to be understood before learners can understand the continuous tenses.
- When proceeding to the continuous tense, the use of oral language games is effective in teaching this tense.

Example:

- I **am going** to the shop to buy a loaf of bread.
- I **was going** to the shop to buy a loaf of bread.
- I **shall be going** to the shop to buy a loaf of bread.
- Emphasis on adding "**ing**" at the end of the verb for the continuous tense.

Use similar examples to teach other tenses.

b) Parts of Speech

Grade 4 learners should be able to identify adjectives.

They were expected to identify an adjective from a list of words. The function of a word within a sentence is taught by breaking them into the different parts of speech as they appear in the context of the sentence. From the nine parts of speech, the identification of adjectives was assessed. The learner could not identify the adjective in the sentence as demonstrated in the example below.

25. Circle the letter of the correct adjective in the sentence below.

The children drew a yellow truck.

A children

B yellow

C truck

D drew

X

(1)

The learner chose an incorrect word, showing an inability to make a link between an adjective (yellow) and a noun (truck). The learner interpreted/understood/identified the word “drew” as the adjective, which was incorrect. This suggests that the learner did not know what an adjective is, and probably did not have knowledge of parts of speech.

Remediation

When teaching parts of speech it is recommended that it is taught in context and the process of identifying the functions of the words be emphasized. The following is recommended when teaching the identification of adjectives:

Adjectives should be taught in context.

As prior knowledge, teachers are encouraged to start off by revising adjectives, and asking learners to explain what an adjective is. Avoid teaching adjectives in isolation; rather provide or ask learners to give simple sentences wherein adjectives can be added. Give learners the definitions and functions of the different parts of speech, so that they can identify the role played by each word in a sentence.

5.1.3 Writing

At Grade 4 level, learners are expected to use the language skills acquired to create extended pieces of writing. They are expected to use the conventions of formal grammar to express thoughts based on a topic in a coherent manner. Learner performance in this skill was the weakest as revealed in Figure 5.

Learners had to complete a dialogue by responding to the questions posed by the first speaker in the conversation. They were expected to write full sentences of at least four to five words each. Although there has been an improvement since 2013 in the writing skills component of the paper, many learners struggled to cope with the demand of completing a dialogue. Furthermore, the skill of writing also tests the conventions of grammar.

Teacher: What do you want to become when you finish school?

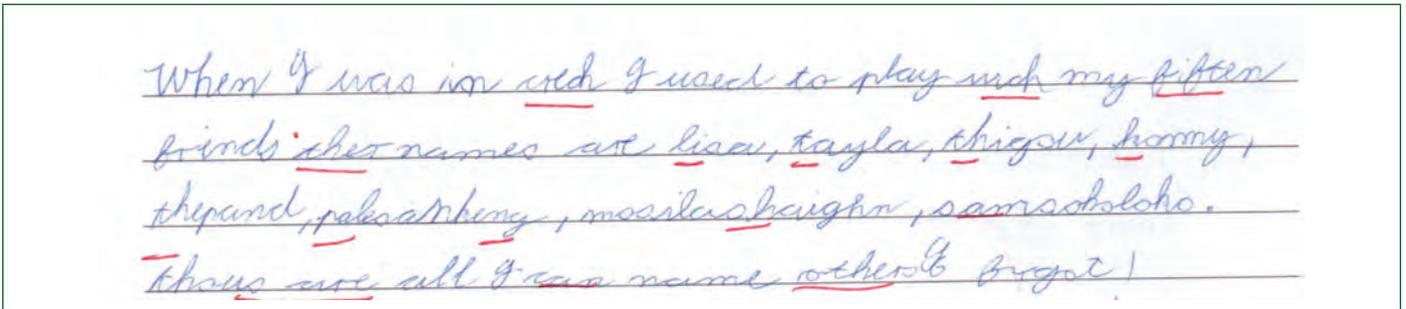
Learner: when I finish the school class teacher say

clean the class (5)01

Learners needed to make a connection between a career choice (want to become) and finishing school. Failure to do so shows that the nuances of the language have not yet been internalised. The response also shows that the learner failed to construct a grammatically correct sentence. The response is linked to a part of the topic and not the topic in its entirety. It appears that learners misinterpreted what was required of them; their misinterpretation is with “to become” and responded to “finish school”.

Story

The writing skills of the learners were assessed in this question. Learners were expected to use the given picture as a guide to write a meaningful story of two paragraphs using conventional grammar.



As shown in the specimen above the typical response indicated that learners made grammatical and spelling errors and sequenced the story illogically with incoherent sentences. The learners were not able to write a meaningful story, nor could they comply with writing two paragraphs. Only the first word is written with a capital letter. There is a limited use of punctuation marks, and there is no evidence to show that the learner understood the conventions of grammar that are relevant for a Grade 4 learner.

Remediation

An important part of writing an extended piece is to use the principles of process writing. The following are suggestions for teachers on how to implement the various stages of process writing:

- **Steps in writing a sound, sensible and meaningful text.**
 - Teach learners to brainstorm (write down all thoughts that come to mind) on the given topic. This will keep learners within bounds on a topic. E.g. use a mind map. Then, group thoughts/ideas as required by the topic. Thoughts/ideas that are not related to the topic should be discarded. Arrange thoughts/ideas into paragraphs;
 - Write a **draft** based on the mind map. Link the topic to a series of questions to guide their writing. (What did I see, hear, etc); and,
 - Encourage learners to **edit** their own work. It is ideal to provide guiding questions for this exercise e.g. underline all verbs and then ask the learners if the verbs are in the correct tense.
- Ensure that correct punctuation, grammar and spelling are used when learners write their own texts. Point out the relationship between the grammar lesson and the ability to write using conventional grammar. Then get learners to allow their peers to check their work. Grouping learners of different ability levels is also helpful at this stage.
- Ensure that learners write texts for different purposes on a regular basis even if it is not going to be assessed.

5.2 GRADE 5 HOME LANGUAGE

In this section, specific skills, knowledge and competencies related to the content of Grade 5 English Home Language are analysed and discussed. Typical learner responses are shown to indicate misunderstandings/common errors and 'knowledge gaps' which affected learner performance.

After discussing learners' responses, there are comments and proposals for interventions given, to support both teachers and learners on how to avoid such misunderstandings/common errors and 'knowledge gaps' in future.

In 2014, the average percentage achieved was 57.1% and this represents an improvement of 11.1% from 2013.

CONTENT AREAS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ASSESSED

The following content areas, knowledge and skills were assessed in the Grade 5 Home Language test:

READING AND VIEWING:

The questions set focused on skills that assessed learner ability to:

- identify the most suitable title for a text;
- respond to questions based on a visual text;
- respond to questions on literary devices in poetry; and,
- use notes to summarise information.

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND USE:

Learners were expected to demonstrate that they had the skills to:

- fill in the correct Preposition;
- fill in the correct form of the word/noun;
- identify the correct spelling of a word;
- fill in the correct punctuation and use capital letters;
- join the two sentences using the correct conjunction;
- add a prefix to form an antonym;
- fill in the correct synonym;
- write down the correct word for the given abbreviation;
- rewrite a sentence from the Simple Past to the Simple Future Tense;
- rewrite the sentences into the negative form;
- convert a statement sentence to a question sentence; and
- rewrite a sentence from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech.

WRITING AND PRESENTING

- At Grade 5 level, learners are expected to write a well sequenced and coherent set of instructions. The learners were expected to use a frame to write instructions.

Figure 6 below is a graphic representation of learner performance according to the skills assessed

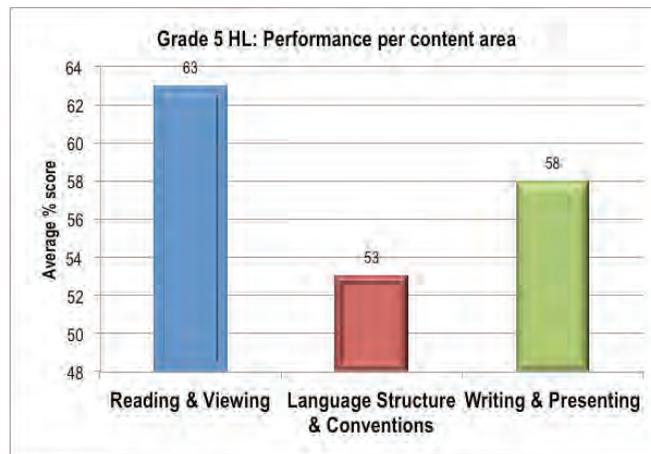


Figure 6: The average scores for Grade 5 HL according to the skills assessed

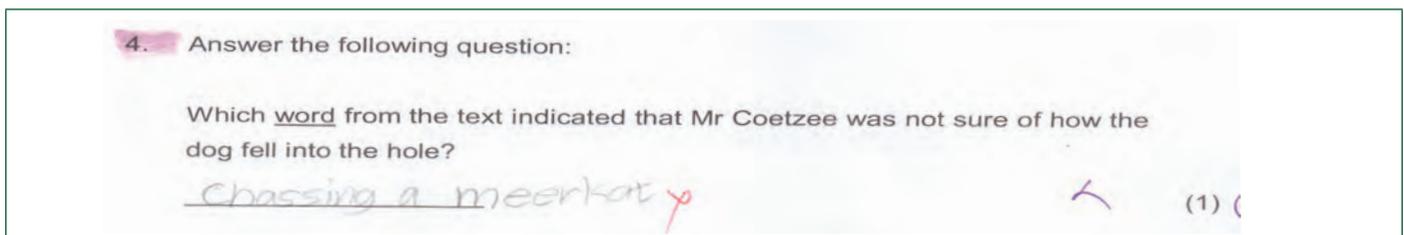
5.2.1 Reading and Viewing

This is the skill in which learners performed well, scoring an average of 63% (Figure 6). To show mastery of this skill learners were expected to demonstrate the skill of using contextual clues to determine meaning and make inferences, to express and justify their own opinions with reasons, as well as to identify poetic devices such as alliteration.

Learners were tested on their comprehension of a newspaper report and a poem.

a) Using contextual clues to determine meaning and make inferences

At Grade 5 level, learners should be able to use the hints or clues that are often included in a passage to help them expand their vocabulary (understand the difficult words) and grasp the meaning of the passage. This requires learners to have the skill of understanding not only what is said (literal) but also what is implied (inferred). Often learners are asked to give one word from the passage which indicates feeling, etc. They are also required to work out the meaning of a word using contextual clues.



In the example above the answer is written as a clause instead of one word. The response indicates that the learner could not use the clues in the text to identify the correct word. This could be due to a limited vocabulary or lack of knowledge to infer contextual meaning, or that the learner is unfamiliar with this type of question.

Remediation

An important comprehension skill that learners are required to demonstrate is that of using contextual clues to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. The following are suggested to assist learners to develop this skill:

- Prior to using a dictionary learners should try to work out the meaning of the word using contextual clues.e.g.The learner may encounter the word “agitated” in a text: “The man was agitated.” Look at sentences preceding the word as well as the sentences immediately after the word.
- Learners should be encouraged to re-read texts that they find difficult, and identify words that they do not understand. After trying to work out the meaning of the word using contextual clues, they should then use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word and write it in their personal dictionaries(An exercise book(small 72 page) in which learners record all the new words and meanings). They should check how close they were to working out the meaning

without the use of the dictionary. If they are far from the correct response, they should try to find possible reasons for their misconceptions and try to connect words each time they work through these exercises.

- Learners can use word attack skills (meaning of prefixes, suffixes and roots) to infer meaning e.g. triangle = tri + angle and since 'tri' means 3, a triangle is a figure with three angles.
- Expose learners to different types of question structures in everyday assessments to ensure that they know exactly what the questions require of them.
- Impress upon the learners the importance of following the instructions in test papers. If only one word is asked for, then only one word should be supplied.

b) Expressing and justifying own opinion with reasons

By Grade 5, learners are expected to motivate their answers. The motive (reason) should be supported with evidence from the text. Where an opinion is given it must have relevance to the text and question asked. In this question the learners were expected to choose between true or false and give reasons for their answers.

5. Say whether the following statement is TRUE or FALSE. Tick (✓) the correct answer.

Give a reason for your answer.

Dogs often fall into the Big Hole.

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| TRUE | <input type="checkbox"/> | FALSE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|------|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|

They said animals not dogs only. (2)

In the example above the learner chose the correct answer (false) but failed to provide relevant motivation. The learner seemed more set out to note a detail that was not required of him/her, which may suggest that he/she lacked the ability to infer from evidence in the text.

Remediation

Remediation should focus on asking learners the type of questions that allow learners to support their answers with evidence from the text.

As such, the following are some suggestions for teachers to use/apply:

- Ask learners to motivate their answers when doing comprehension exercises in class;
- Give close procedure exercises (clues that help learners to infer or make educated guesses about the meanings of unknown words), so that comprehension may be improved;
- Play inference games (show objects that would not be part of learners' daily lives – they think about what the object represents and what it might be used for – discuss their inferences); and,
- Show the link between the object (cause) and the inference (effect). This would strengthen learners' ability to provide reasons for answers.

c) Identifying alliteration and its effect

Grade 5 learners are expected to know the term "alliteration". They need or should be able to identify alliteration and its function in a poem. In the specimen that follows the learners were given a poem and were expected to give words that show alliteration in stanza 1.

11. Alliteration is when the same sound is repeated. Example. The boy reads a book on the beach.

Write down only the words that show alliteration in stanza 1.

Once in plucked a seed. (2)

The above example shows a typical response where the learner writes line 1 from the poem instead of choosing the words with the same sound. A possible reason may be that the learners were unfamiliar with metalanguage of sound devices (e.g. alliteration, rhyme) and features of poetry (stanza and line). The learners could not identify the alliteration even though the area of focus (stanza 1) had been given, possibly because of unfamiliarity with the literary terms.

Remediation

The identification and explanation of literary terms is a critical ability that is required throughout the study of language. The following steps are recommended to assist Grade 5 learners to begin their mastery of this skill:

- Sensitise learners to sound devices found in every day speech, newspaper headlines and other text types over and above poetry.
- Use metalanguage in context (e.g. alliteration, rhyme, stanza and line etc.) when doing poetry on a regular basis so that the terms and their definitions may be internalised.
- Let learners perform simple rhymes and poems, using their own sound devices and let them describe those sound devices with metalanguage. Draw attention to how the sound devices enhance one's appreciation of the poem.

5.2.2 Language Structures and Convention

At Grade 5 level learners are required to have mastery of the following language conventions: singular and plural; spelling and punctuation rules; giving synonyms for words; writing abbreviations in full; writing sentences into the question and negative form; and, writing a sentence from the direct to the indirect speech. Language Structures and Convention proved to be most challenging for learners with the average score (Figure 6) for this section being the lowest.

The following are areas of weakness that were identified in relation to Language Structures and Convention:

a) Word level work – singular and plural

Grade 5 learners are expected to draw on spelling rules to write plurals i.e. if the word ends in a consonant – y (e.g. baby, jelly and berry) in the singular then “y” changes to “ies” in the plural. In this question the learners were expected to write the plural form of the word “puppy”.

16. Write down the plural form of the underlined word provided.

The dog's puppy looked for a mouse to eat.

puppys

The typical learner response showed that learners understood what the question required. However, the learners over-generalised the spelling rule where – “s” is added to most plurals. The over-generalisation of spelling rules happens when learners are not yet familiar with other spelling rules.

Remediation

Correct spelling is critical for language acquisition. It is therefore suggested that spelling rules be taught. Below are recommendations of how spelling rules can be taught:

- Start with basic spelling rules and build up to more complex rules, and with each rule point out the exceptions to the rule;
- Choose examples that will make the patterns and generalizations for a rule apparent; and,
- Learners should know the rules and then do exercises to consolidate their knowledge, and apply the said knowledge to various contexts. When exercises are given, allow learners to point out the rule being implemented. Also teach how the exceptions to the rule are applied.

b) Spelling and punctuation – quotation marks, capital letters and full stops

Grade 5 learners are expected to use punctuation marks such as full stops, exclamation marks, question marks, commas, colons, semi-colons and quotation marks, with success. Learners were expected to rewrite a sentence with correct punctuation marks.

Rewrite the following sentence using the correct punctuation.

only you can prevent bush and veld fires said Deon
*only you can prevent bush and veld fires, ✓
said Deon ✓*

The general learner response showed a failure to change the first letter at the beginning of the sentence to a capital letter. The direct words spoken were not put in quotation marks, and the sentence did not end with a full stop. The possible reason could be that learners were not familiar with the term “punctuation” or that the rules have not yet been thoroughly consolidated.

Remediation

A mastery of the use of punctuation is a critical skill that is required throughout the study of language as well as for everyday use. The following steps are recommended when teaching punctuation:

- Point out the use of punctuation when reading different texts e.g. newspaper articles, cartoon strips and poetry. Good use of punctuation must be modelled by the teacher and learners should always follow punctuation rules even in informal every day writing.
- Give learners a hand-out on punctuation marks, name, definition, its function, an example of its use in context and then give activities for reinforcement. It makes the abstract concept of punctuation more concrete when the use of punctuation is seen in practice (context).
- When reading aloud, take note of the punctuation and apply the rules thereof, e.g. when reading, pause at a comma. The pause at a comma is shorter than the pause at a full stop.

c) Synonyms

The vocabulary development of Grade 5 learners is expected to be at such a level where they are able to provide a synonym for a given word. Learners were asked to give a synonym for the word ‘tried’, in which case they were expected to know that the word “synonym” means a word with similar meaning.

Give a synonym (word with the same meaning) for the underlined word.

ER 24 tried to rescue the dog.

want _____

Give a synonym (word with the same meaning) for the underlined word.

ER 24 tried to rescue the dog.

attempt _____

The examples above were two general scenarios where learners responded to this question. The examples above depicts the two scenarios. In the first example a word is written for 'tried'. Even though it is not a synonym it makes sense even though it changes the meaning of the sentence. In the second example, the learners knew what the synonym is, but wrote it in the incorrect tense "attempt" instead of "attempted". A possible reason for this error may be unfamiliarity with the metalanguage of language structure i.e. synonyms. Additionally, the vocabulary development of the learners may not be at the required level. The learners were not aware in example two that when the word is changed, the tense of the sentence must be adhered to. It is important for learners to remember that the meaning of the sentence must not be changed.

Remediation

The following are recommended in order to teach synonyms:

- Learners need to know the distinction between a word with the same meaning (synonym) and a word that could be used to replace a word in the sentence, that will alter the meaning of the sentence (as shown in the first response).
- Learners need to be aware that synonyms (if a verb is asked) should be given in the same tense as the original word. Learners should be told to guard against unnecessary changes.
- Use the correct metalanguage for language structures when teaching e.g. refer to synonyms and not words with the same meaning. If the term "words with the same meaning" is used it should be done to clarify what a synonym means.

d) Abbreviations

Grade 5 learners are expected to write abbreviations in full. They need to understand that even though a word may be contracted (made shorter) formal grammar requires the learner to write the word out in full.

Write the underlined abbreviation in the following sentence out in full.

Mr Venter works for rescue services.

Mr Mrs _____

Write the underlined abbreviation in the following sentence out in full.

Mr Venter works for rescue services.

Mr Miss He _____

In the first response the learner wrote 'Mrs' which is the opposite gender of 'Mr'. In the second response the learner knew that 'Mr' written in full is 'Mister', but got the spelling wrong.

The possible reasons for these errors could be the uncertainty with the meaning of the word 'abbreviation'. Hence the learner chose answers from two different aspects of grammar. Needless to say, spelling is important and should be taught.

Remediation

The ability to use abbreviations (contractions) could be taught using the following strategies:

- Always use metalanguage in context when teaching language;
- Explain abbreviations in full as and when encountered during reading;
- Use examples from every day, informal grammar to show learners that they use abbreviations in their daily speech e.g. bro=brother. This contraction is not acceptable in formal grammar.

e) Understanding and using the negative form of a sentence

Grade 5 learners are expected to understand and use negative forms in sentences. In this question, learners were expected to change a sentence from a positive to negative form.

Change the following sentences into the negative form.

They rescued the dog from the hole.

I did rescued the dog from the hole.

As per the provided example, the word 'not' was not inserted to show change into the negative. The verb (rescued) was also still in the past tense instead of present tense. The pronoun was also changed from 'they' to 'I' which then altered the meaning of the sentence. The possibility for not getting the sentence correct could be due to inadequate knowledge of tenses and pronouns, and changing sentences from negative to positive and vice versa.

Remediation

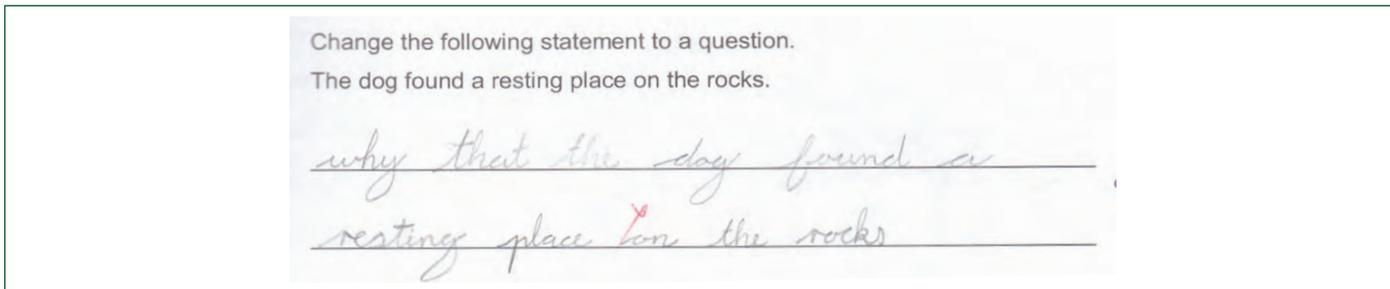
When teaching learners to convert from positive to negative, the teacher should follow a step by step approach since tenses and other language conventions may also change. The following are suggested:

- Learners should know tense rules e.g. verbs change back to the base form after the use of 'did' in a question or negative sentence.
- Consolidate the ability mentioned above after each new tense has been taught. It is very important not to move on to a new tense before the previous tense has been mastered;
- Teach learners how to change a statement from the positive to the negative and vice versa; and,

- Discuss with learners when pronouns change. Ask learners to guard against unnecessary changes.

f) Writing a sentence into question form

Grade 5 learners should have the ability to change a statement into a question. In this question, the learners were asked to change a statement into a question



Generally learners used an interrogative pronoun (why) to write a question; instead of changing the statement into a question (Did the dog find a resting place?). No question mark was inserted at the end of the sentence indicating that punctuation rules were not followed. Possible reasons for the incorrect responses could be a lack of ability/knowledge about, and practice in changing statements into questions.

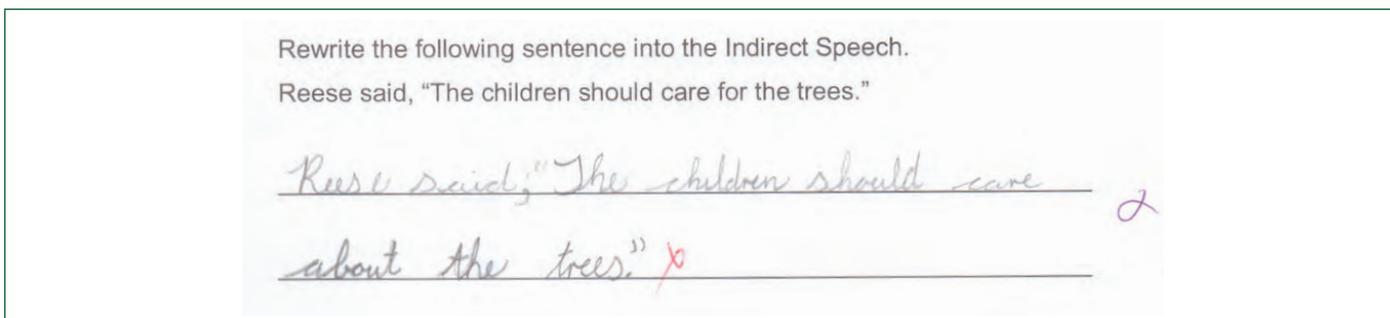
Remediation

Learners need to know the different types of sentences and how to recognize each. When this has been internalised it will be easier for learners to change a sentence from one type to another. The following are suggested:

- Impress upon learners the difference between changing a statement to a question, and creating a question using an interrogative pronoun. Also emphasize that a statement is usually punctuated with a full stop at the end of the sentence, whereas question takes a question mark. Teach that punctuation is also an indicator of the type of sentence.
- Learners should know tense rules e.g. verbs change back to the base form after the use of 'did' in a question or negative sentence.
- Consolidate this skill after each new tense has been taught. It is very important not to move on to a new tense before the previous tense has been mastered.

g) Writing a sentence from direct to indirect speech

In Grade 5, learners are expected to know how to change a sentence from direct speech to indirect speech. In this question, learners were asked to rewrite a sentence into indirect speech.



Learners simply copied the direct speech question as it is. A possible reason for such a response could be that learners were unfamiliar with the term 'indirect speech'. They may not have been aware of the rules when changing direct speech into indirect speech.

Remediation

The following is recommended when changing to the indirect speech:

- Teachers should use metalanguage (indirect speech) while teaching language conventions so that learners are familiar with the terminology.

- Use everyday examples to teach direct and indirect speech, and use everyday conversations such as gossip. Give a break down model of how the process works such as:
 - First the direct speech punctuation must be removed (quotation marks etc.);
 - Identify and change the pronouns;
 - The tense should change as indicated by the introductory verb;
 - Give a summary as to how tenses change after a past tense introductory verb;
 - Give a list of how modal verbs change after a past tense introductory verb; and,
- Do not teach direct and indirect speech in isolation. Show examples in everyday texts. Learners should start applying direct speech in their writing, and it must be punctuated correctly.

5.2.3 Writing and Presenting

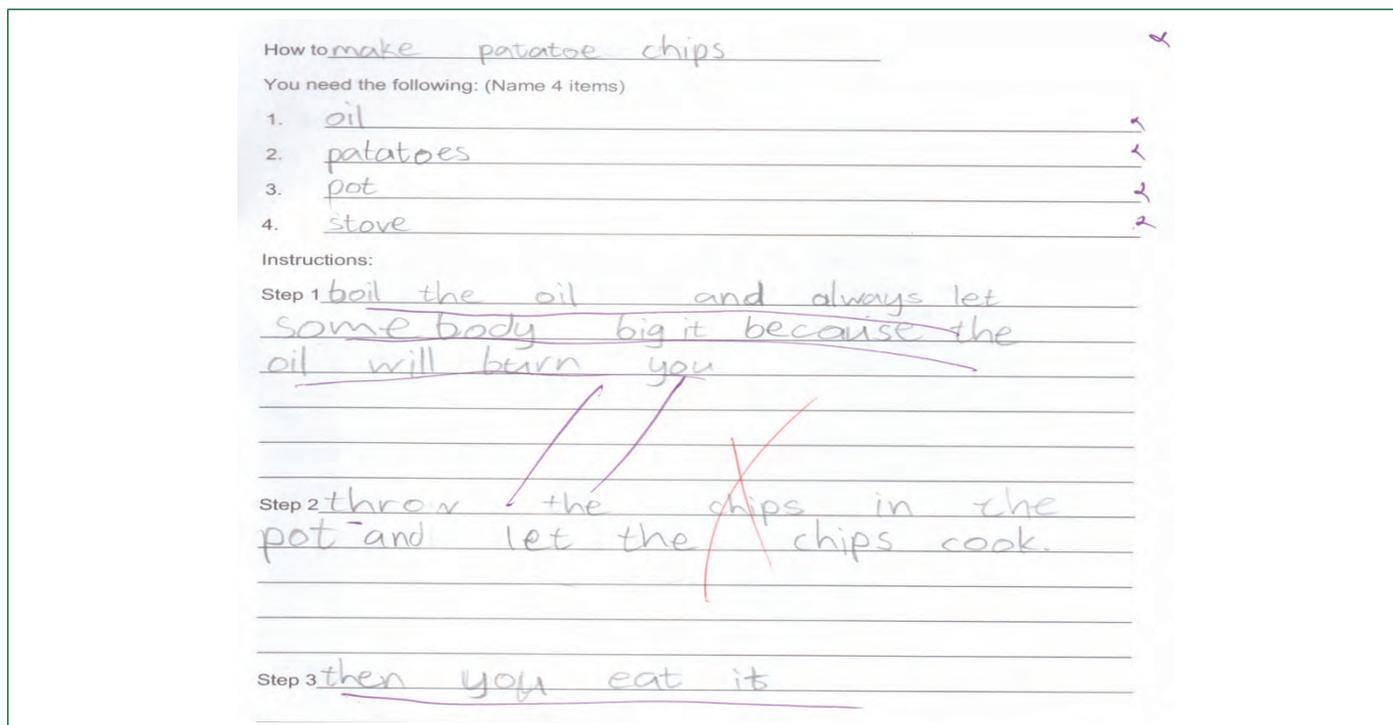
Learner performance in this section was at an above average level (Figure 6).

Grade 5 learners are expected to have the ability to write an instructional text. Guiding questions may be given to direct learner responses. The conventions of language must be applied so that grammatically correct sentences are constructed.

a) Using a frame to write a set of instructions

Learners were expected to write a set of instructions with a clear title, using command verbs. The instructions had to consist of three well-linked steps of four sentences, each in a logical sequence. The correct spelling, punctuation and sentence construction had to be used.

Common errors included the rewriting of a set of instructions which were unrelated to the topic given (e.g. making potato chips, making a cup of coffee etc.). Inadequate grammar skills, unclear organisation, illogical sequencing and incoherently linked sentences were also observed errors.



The example above is a typical response.

In the response above, the learner could not write a set of instructions to the given context.

Possible reasons for this response could have included: reading without comprehension (the given instruction and topic), and a lack of practice of the writing mechanics (grammar, sentence structures and spelling). It appears that learners

were not competent in organising their ideas effectively. Also, learners could not transfer skills into a new context (from a grammar lesson to a writing task). The response suggests that the learner did not know how to write an instructional text, possibly because the instructions in the question were not understood.

Remediation

Writing and Presenting is a consolidation of all language skills. Therefore teach this skill using a methodical approach. The following are recommended:

- Expose learners extensively to different text types e.g. if learners are going to be expected to write a set of instructions, use a set of instructions for each of the four skills (Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Language Structure and Conventions and Writing and Presenting).
- Giving continuous feedback to learners about writing done is very important. Errors from the writing tasks should form the basis of grammar lessons.
- Communicate the value of writing e.g. why do we write instructions or letters etc. Get one group of learners to write instructions and another to try to follow the instructions exactly as they are written to show the importance of cohesion and sequencing.

5.3 DETAILED ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Grade 6 Home Language

In this section, specific skills, knowledge and competencies related to the content of the Grade 6 Home Language are discussed. Typical learners' responses are shown to indicate misunderstandings/misconceptions/errors/knowledge, gaps' which affected learners' performance.

After discussing learner responses, there are comments on proposals for interventions given to support both teachers and learners on how to avoid such misunderstandings/misconceptions/errors/ 'knowledge gaps' in future.

The National performance in Grade 6 English Home language shows an upward trend from 2012 to 2014.

CONTENT AREAS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ASSESSED

The following content areas, knowledge and skills were assessed in the Grade 6 Home Language test.

READING AND VIEWING

The questions set focused on skills that assessed learner ability to:

- explain interpretations and overall response to text;
- explain elements of myth/story;
- recall events in the correct sequence;
- understand words within context;
- explain the message in the text, use of reading strategies, skimming and scanning;
- predict and make inferences about results or endings;
- understand figures of speech;
- give own perspectives based on evidence within the text;
- predict based on title/graphics;
- answer questions on text and visuals; and,
- summarise text in about five to six sentences.

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND USE:

Learners were expected to demonstrate that they had the ability to:

- use connecting words to show addition and reason;
- build on understanding and use of tenses;
- spell familiar words correctly;
- punctuate using punctuation marks such as capital letters, commas, full stops, question marks and colons etc;
- use prepositions that show time and position;
- give antonyms (words that are opposite in meaning.);

- supply synonyms (words that are similar in meaning.);
- identify different types of sentences;
- identify parts of speech e.g. nouns and verbs;
- Add prefixes or suffixes to a base word;
- use direct and indirect speech; and,
- begin to use pronouns.

WRITING AND PRESENTING

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to write a well sequenced and coherent set of instructions. The learners were expected to complete a conversation from a given scenario.

Figure 7 below is graphic representation of learner performance according the skills assessed

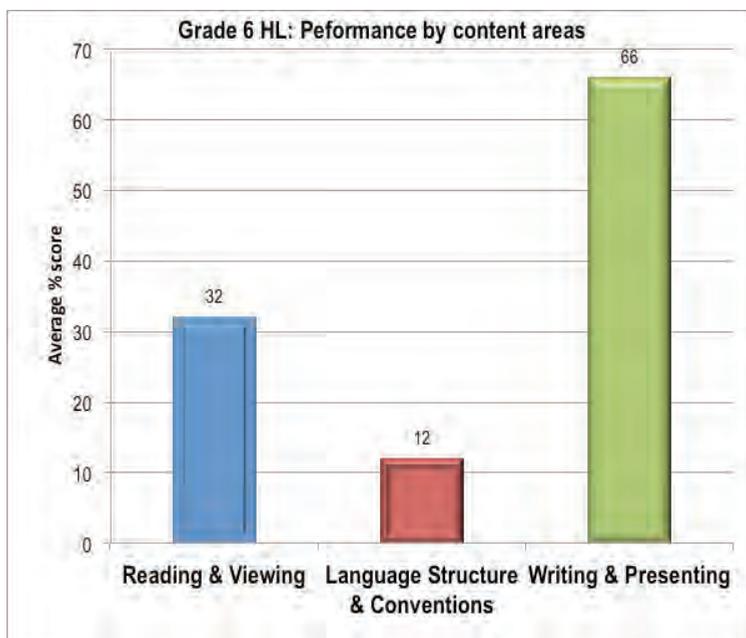


Figure 7: The average scores for Grade 6 HL according to the skills assessed

5.3.1 Reading and Viewing

Learner performance in this skill was weak (32% average score as revealed in Figure 7). At Grade 6 level learners are expected to have skills in Reading and Viewing that show that learners can derive the meanings of words using contextual clues. They are expected to read narrative texts and respond to questions set. They are also expected to see the cause and effect relationship in a text.

a) Understanding words within context

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to demonstrate understanding of words within a context and be able to provide a single word for a given explanation.

In this question learners were asked to find one word from paragraph 5 that told how leopard forced jackal to go home.

Find one word from paragraph 5 that tells how leopard forced Jackal to go home. they arrived wearily at home.

In the example, the correct word from the text to explain how leopard forced jackal to go home was not provided. The learner failed to identify the word from the passage that would provide a clue to determining the correct response. Instead the learner wrote an answer which was out of context. It is evident that learners did not understand the text

because of possible limited vocabulary and therefore had difficulty identifying the single word that explicitly defined how leopard forced jackal to go home. The learner therefore responded with more than one word.

Remediation

When teaching learners how to work out the meaning of a word using contextual clues the following are suggested:

- During the guided reading session, the teachers may demonstrate what is meant with inferring the meaning of new words and how to use contextual clues to assist in working out the meaning of an unknown word in a text. The following steps should be followed:

The teacher **pauses the reading** and chooses the appropriate question to ask.

“What do you think the word means considering (a certain action or event) has happened?”

“How do you know what the word means (insert definition)?”

“What part of the text helps you make this inference?”

“Where can you find other clues to help you understand?”

“If you substitute what you think is a similar word, would the sentence still make sense?”

Teachers can create activity sheets to give learners practice with inferences. Create a list of sentences and have learners infer the meaning by choosing from a list of possible meanings.

- **Dictionary work:** Learners look up definitions of the spelling words of the week. They should then make sentences with these words to show their understanding of the words.
- **Personal dictionary / word bank:** An exercise (small 72 page) book in which learners record all the new words and meanings that they are learning. They may label the pages (A, B, C). Learners keep these personal dictionaries with them at all times, to use the newly acquired words during writing and speaking activities. By the end of the year, this new vocabulary could be added to their frame of reference.

a) Identifying suffix/prefix

Grade 6 learners are expected to have the ability to identify suffixes and prefixes from a derivative. In the following example learners were asked to identify the suffix ‘less’ in the given word ‘breathless’.

Write out the suffix in the word breathless.

tired x 2

The example above shows that learners could not differentiate between a suffix and a synonym. Instead of writing “less” from “breathless” it appears that the learner attempted to provide a word similar in meaning to ‘breathless’ which is according to the learner response “tired”. The learner could not identify the correct suffix perhaps because of unfamiliarity with the concept of suffixes. It may be that the learner was also unable to break the word into its root (breath) and the suffix (less).

Remediation

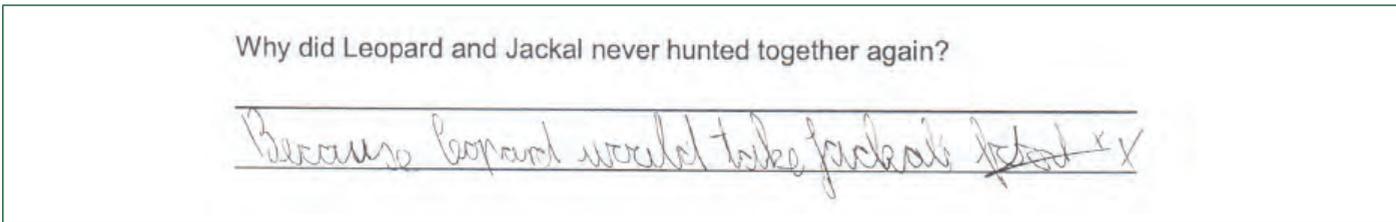
When teaching prefixes and suffixes the following are suggested:

- Effective vocabulary study involves practice. One of the best ways to practice prefixes and suffixes is through **vocabulary games**.
- **For example**
Write derivative words on pieces of paper and cut the prefix or suffix off from the root words. Use a container with different compartments. Each compartment contains either the prefixes/suffixes/roots. Learners play together in groups of about 4. Learners take turns to take a strip of paper from the container. The aim is to form as many derivatives as possible. Learners may use dictionaries to verify that their words are correct.
- The meanings of suffixes must be taught e.g. less means without in the context of the above example.

- **Wall charts:** Provide a table with common prefixes and suffixes with their meanings and examples of words.

c) Overall response to text

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to have the ability to respond correctly to questions related to the text. Learners were asked to answer a direct question based on the text. The question assesses critical thinking and therefore learners are expected to read a text with understanding before answering the question.



The example above shows that learners could not express the reason for the actions of characters presented in the text. This question assessed the critical thinking (higher order thinking and reasoning) that needed the learner to give a reason why Leopard and Jackal never hunted together again. It seems that learners failed to apply critical thinking using processes of elimination and inferences, and therefore could not provide the correct response.

Remediation

In order to foster critical thinking it is recommended that learners:

- Be given sufficient practical opportunities for critical thinking such as debates, during classroom and homework activities and integrate these opportunities within other skills (During Listening & Speaking learners **debate** relevant topics).
- When reading stories, break at intervals, to address the why question. (e.g. Why did the character behave badly? etc.). Allow them to answer these questions and check their responses as the teacher continues to read.
- Give reasons during classroom and oral activities. This would allow them to critically examine/defend responses.

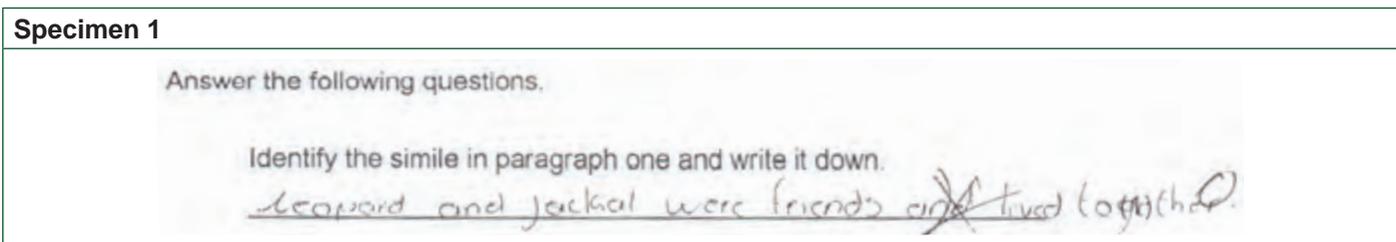
5.3.2 Language Structures and Conventions

The score in this section, as shown in figure 7, is cause for concern. It also suggests that it was the most challenging area.

The following were addressed in Language Structures and Conventions: Figures of speech, summary writing, conditional forms, questions on visual text, indirect speech, spelling and punctuation, parts of speech, correct form of verbs, conjunctions, simple sentences, and tenses.

a) Identifying figures of speech

Learners were expected to identify the simile and alliteration from the given text, and an ability to identify these figures of speech from a given text. They were asked to identify a simile and personification. The typical learner responses appear in specimen 1 and specimen 2.



In the specimen above, the learner just copied an irrelevant sentence from the text. It clearly indicates that the learner did not understand what a simile is and could therefore not identify the correct example of the figure of speech from the text ('as fast as lightning').

Specimen 2

Identify the figure of speech below by circling the correct word within brackets.

"The sun awakened," is an example of (personification (metaphor)).

Also in specimen 2, the incorrect figure of speech was identified. It is possible that this learner was not familiar with the relevant figures of speech and could therefore not identify the correct example from the text (personification).

Remediation

The identification of figures of speech is an ability that is required throughout the study of language. The following are suggested for the internalisation of this ability:

- Figures of speech may be taught as a lesson on its own, where each concept is explained explicitly and notes with examples are provided. Learners study the terms and definitions and are assessed on their understanding of the concepts. This enables them to have sound knowledge of what the concepts mean. Only once this is accomplished, can learners be expected to identify figures of speech from a given text, applying their theoretical knowledge.
- Sufficient exercises, where it is expected from learners to apply their knowledge should be given continuously during class and additional activities (e.g. homework, games, etc.)
- Visual images may be used to illustrate the figures of speech concepts. This may accommodate learners who learn more effectively through visuals/pictures.
- When reading poems, etc. point out the use of literary devices and show how they enhance a message.

b) Using reading strategies / skimming and scanning to summarise

Learners were expected to demonstrate their ability to summarise a text correctly. The example below shows that learners were required to use reading strategies and summarise the story in five sentences.

Summarise the story in FIVE sentences.

As the lion came near Ram, pinched
the child leopard's eyes open wide
in fear he knew the meaning of
that sound from his lion cubs
leopard tried to run.

To summarise effectively, it is necessary to formulate ideas in your own words. In the example above, the learner merely copied sentences from the text instead of summarising the story. The possibility is that the learner did not understand the text which is essential for writing a summary. The summary is supposed to have main ideas and supporting ideas in a paragraph of the required length. Furthermore, sentences need to be organised in a clear and coherent way using the appropriate vocabulary. In this case the essence of the text was not captured.

Remediation

The Grade 6 learner is building on foundational skills for summary writing. The following approach is recommended when teaching summary skills:

- Demonstrate to learners **HOW** to apply easy steps to summarise effectively;
- Demonstrate these steps in the classroom with learners working in groups; and ,

- Memorise steps and practice applying them on single paragraphs first, before moving on to longer and more complicated texts. (Be sure to find examples that have the topic sentence in various positions in the paragraph.)

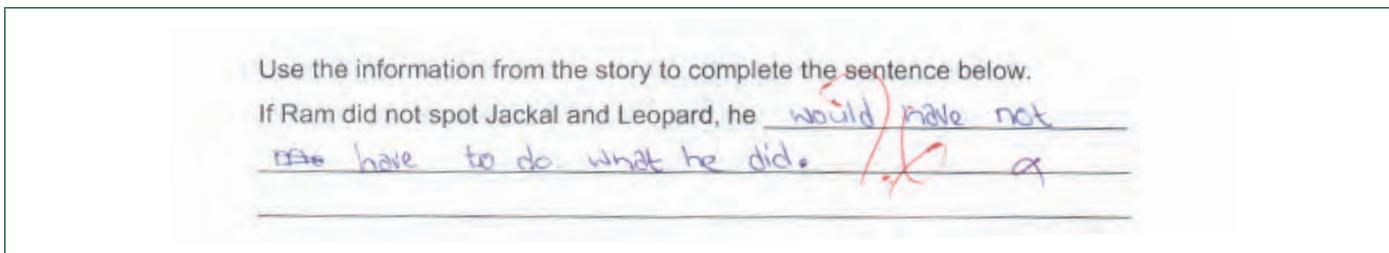
The steps may include:

- Identify key words (nouns and verbs) found within a single sentence;
- Ask yourself what the sentence is about;
- Identify key words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) in a single paragraph;
- Ask yourself what the paragraph is about;
- Determine the **implied** main idea within each paragraph;
- Teach learners how to eliminate unimportant parts of the text; and,
- Provide learners with sufficient practice for writing.

c) Understanding conditional forms

Learners had to demonstrate an understanding of conditional forms (e.g. cause and effect) by correctly completing the effect of a given cause from the text. In the question below the learners were requested to use information from the story and complete a sentence applying cause and effect.

To indicate an understanding of cause and effect, a general idea of the relationship/ link between cause and effect should be demonstrated. Only once this skill is conceptualised, will learners be able to identify a suitable effect to a cause and vice-versa and coherently explain this link.



Although the answer in the above example is incorrect, the response indicates that there was some understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. However, the learner could not express this meaning/link in a coherent manner, which could possibly be due to a limited vocabulary.

Remediation

The following are steps that can help in facilitating the acquisition of this skill:

- Demonstrate to learners the relationship between cause and effect by using well-loved stories as examples. Use probing questions to discuss cause and effects (e.g. Why did the character say...); and,
- Use interesting games to practice cause and effect in the classroom.

E.g. Sentences on 'play cards' have sentences with cause or effect statements written on them.

Each learner receives 5 cards and a table on which to write their answers.

Learners identify the cause and effects for each statement. The learner who finishes his/her cards first, is the winner.

- Teach the concepts of cause and effect using graphic organisers.

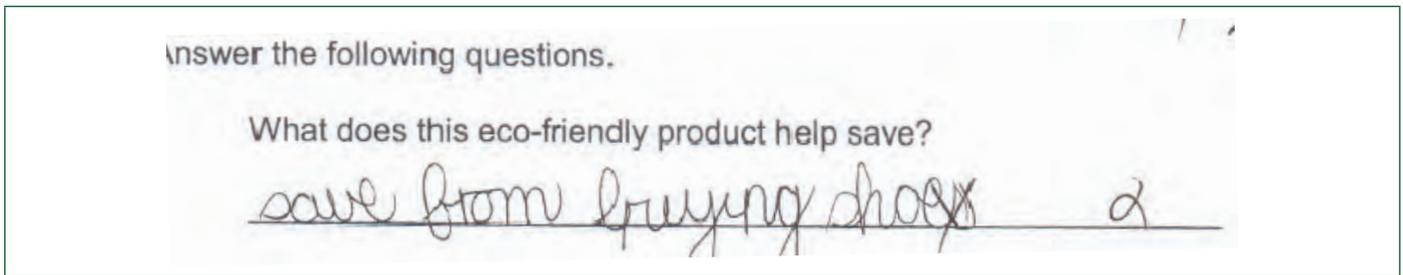
Example

| CAUSE | EFFECT |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ The baby was hungry. | ➤ The baby cried. |
| ➤ Mom fed the baby. | ➤ The baby stopped crying. |

- Instead of writing out the text, learners may use cut outs or draw pictures to illustrate cause and effect (visual stimuli).

d) Answering questions on texts and visuals

Grade 6 learners are expected to demonstrate the ability to answer questions from visual texts (advertisement). Learners were asked to find an answer in the text that indicated what the eco-friendly product helped to 'save'.



In the above example, it seems that the word 'save' was contextually misunderstood. The above example indicates that, although the learner's answer was within the context of the advert, an incorrect answer was extracted from the text. It shows a possibility that the learner lacked the ability to interpret information from a visual text, or that the learner was not exposed to different types of texts.

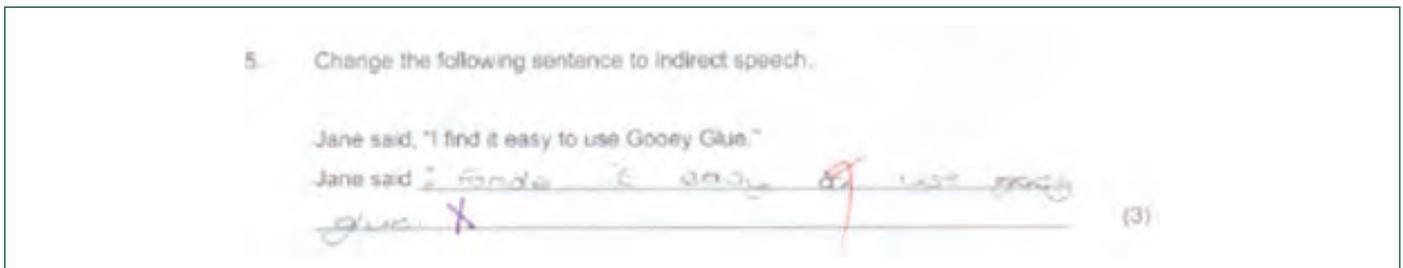
Remediation

In teaching learners the techniques for mastery of visual texts the following are suggested:

- Reinforcement of the basic characteristics of visual texts (advertisement) through the introduction of terminology (slogan, logo, image, informative text and symbols) and the visual message analysis should be taught extensively; and,
- After teaching these characteristics of an advert to learners, they may work in groups to study different types of adverts and point out these elements when examining a variety of visual text.

e) Using indirect speech

- Grade 6 learners are expected to have the ability to use direct and indirect speech correctly. Learners were required to rewrite a sentence from the direct to the indirect speech.



In the example above, the tense form of the verb 'find' was not changed to 'found' in the indirect speech according to the rules for indirect speech. The personal pronoun "I" was not changed to "she". It shows that the learner did not adhere to the indirect speech rules. The learner failed to convert a sentence into indirect speech, which shows a possible lack of understanding of the grammatical metacognitive language.

Remediation

The following steps are suggested to teach direct and indirect speech:

- Drill: Basic substitution could be done regularly in class;
- The rules for conversion from direct to indirect speech should be taught;
- The teacher can simply read out a sentence and ask the learners to rephrase it beginning with "He said..." "She said..." E.g.
 - Teacher: I don't like it.
 - Learners: He said he didn't like it. He said that he didn't like it.
 - Teacher: I hate it.

- Learner: He said he hated it/ He said that he hated it.

Games: Use games (broken telephone) to practice direct and indirect speech.

f) Parts of speech (Identify the type of noun).

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to identify parts of speech. The question below requires learners to name the underlined nouns, from the options given to them.

Identify the underlined nouns from the options in the box below.

proper noun; common noun; collective noun

Giraffes can defend themselves very well.
Collective noun (1)

Giraffes are mainly found in Africa.
Common noun (1)

A herd of giraffes consists of about twelve animals.
Proper noun (1)

In the example above, the incorrect nouns were identified possibly because of a lack of knowledge of various noun types. To be able to identify the correct noun types, the concepts of these noun types must be understood.

Remediation

When teaching noun types the following is recommended:

- Display wall charts with explanations/notes and examples of parts of speech (specifically noun types) already taught on the walls which learners may view daily. This may lead to unintentional learning.
- Review understanding of the concept regularly to detect and remediate misconceptions and learning gaps and provide sufficient learning opportunities to practice the identification of the different noun types.

g) Write the correct form of the verb

Learners need to display the ability to change a verb form correctly to suit the different tenses. Learners were asked to provide the correct form of the verb in the past tense. Specimen 1 and 2 show the responses from the learners.

Specimen 1

19. Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

The lion has catched (catch) the giraffe. (1)

Specimen 2

19. Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

The lion has caught (catch) the giraffe. (1)

Specimen 1 reveals an incorrect application of the spelling rule (to add – “ed” to every word to change it into the past tense) e.g. ‘catched’ instead of ‘caught’. This reveals a general lack of knowledge in application and use of spelling rules when changing from present to past tense.

The exception to the spelling rule has not been understood. The learner over generalised the change of the verb to past tense by adding "ed".

Also in specimen 2, the learner knew the correct verb form but failed to spell it correctly e.g. 'cought' instead of 'caught'. In general it was evident that learners could correctly capture the tense of the verb form, however, they failed to correctly spell the verbs.

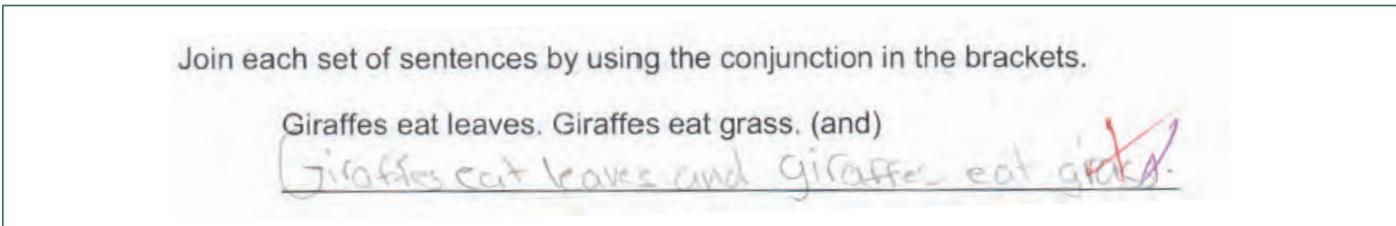
Remediations

When teaching tenses the following is recommended:

- Teach learners the conventions needed to change verbs into the tense required;
- Teach learners the relevant spelling rules early in the term, exposing learners to both the spoken and written words. Visual memory and spelling memory must work in tandem for the child to learn spelling;
- Conduct regular spelling tests (weekly) to assess learner competence;
- Wall charts may be used to expose learners to general spelling rules; and,
- Exceptions to spelling rules must be taught.

h) Using conjunctions in the correct way.

Learners need to demonstrate an ability to use conjunctions correctly. Learners were asked to combine sentences using the conjunction provided.



In the example above, the word 'giraffes' and 'eats' were incorrectly repeated, suggesting that the learner was not familiar with the rules that apply when using conjunctions. When combining two sentences which have verbs and nouns in common, these words are not repeated when the sentences are combined.

Remediation

It is recommended that the following steps be used to teach conjunctions:

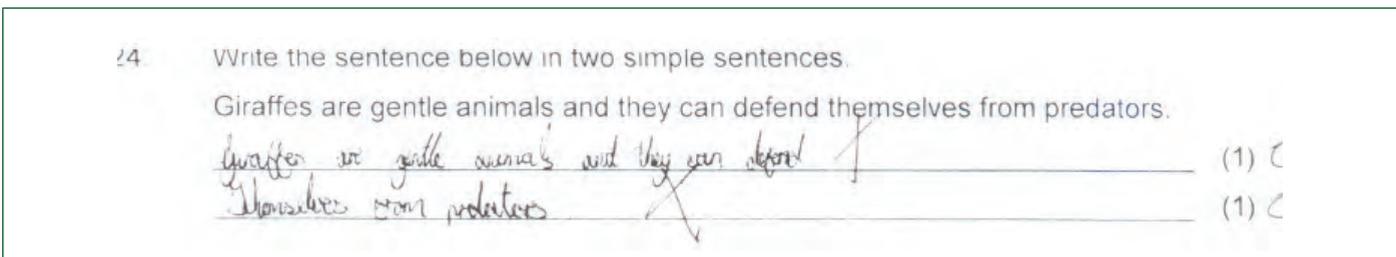
- Put up a wall chart with the different examples of conjunctions after the lesson on conjunctions;
- Provide learners with sufficient examples and practice exercises to form one cohesive sentence applying grammatical rules (e.g. omitting common words found in both sentences); and,
- Address the use of conjunctions across all language skills.

i) Rewriting a complex sentence into TWO simple sentences

To show their ability to separate a sentence into two simple sentences, the learner needs to be able to indicate the basic parts of a sentence namely, subject, verb, and predicate. This can be done by identifying the various verbs. Thereafter, the learner should identify the conjunction and then proceed to break the complex sentence into simple sentences.

Learners were expected to separate the complex sentence into two simple sentences.

The sample below shows the common errors as reflected in learner responses:



The skills necessary to formulate two simple sentences from one sentence, require identifying the verbs and identifying the conjunction. The conjunction will indicate where the sentence needs to be 'split'. Each simple sentence must have a finite verb. The sentence was incorrectly divided indicating that the learner did not know what a simple sentence is.

Remediation

The following are suggested when teaching the rewriting of a complex sentence into simple sentences:

- Ensure that learners have a sound knowledge of the sentence types (simple, compound and complex);
- The rules of sentence structure determine which word combinations are allowed, and which word combinations are not allowed;
- Learners need to identify verbs that indicate whether the sentence is classified as simple or complex; and,
- The concepts of simple and complex sentences should be taught and reinforced through regular writing activities; and,
- Teach learners simple steps to form two simple sentences from one complex sentence, e.g. Giraffes are gentle animals. They can defend themselves from predators. - each sentence must make sense on its own.

j) Rewriting sentence in different tense (simple past tense)

Simple present to simple past tense

Grade 6 learners are expected to demonstrate their competence in rewriting sentences in different tenses. The question below required learners to rewrite a sentence in the past continuous and simple future tenses. Specimen 1 and 2 show the learner responses.

Specimen 1

25.2 The giraffe is stretching its long neck. (past continuous tense)
The giraffe did stretch its long neck. (1)

Specimen 2

25.3 Giraffes move in small herds. (simple future tense)
Giraffes moves in a small herds. (1) 0

In specimen 1 the learner failed to change the sentence correctly. The auxiliary verb should indicate the past tense and the suffix -ing must be added to the verb, to indicate the continuity of the action. It shows that the learner lacked the necessary understanding to convert the sentence to the required tense form.

Also in specimen 2, the verb 'move' was incorrectly converted in the simple future tense ('moves'), which indicates that the learners did not apply the correct rule. When writing a sentence into the simple future tense, the auxiliary verb 'will', must be added to the verb.

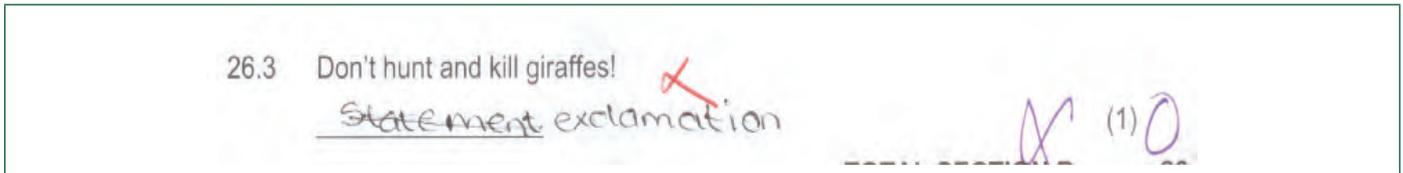
Remediation

The following is suggested when teaching tenses:

- Before teaching tenses, ensure that learners are familiar with the use of verbs.
- Teaching tenses requires basic knowledge of the rules that apply to a specific tense. These rules must be correctly demonstrated/ taught to learners; and,
- After teaching a specific tense, e.g. Past Tense, put up a word wall of verbs and how they change in that specific tense. In this way, learners will identify patterns (adding the -ed to the verb in the past tense).

k) Identifying the types of sentences

Grade 6 learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to identify the various sentence types. In this example below, learners were asked to indicate the correct sentence types for each of the sentences provided.



In the example above, the learner failed to indicate the sentence type correctly, by failing to identify the 'clue word' ('don't') which indicates the sentence type (command). To be able to identify a sentence type correctly, the concept of each sentence must be understood. In the case of a command sentence, specific 'clues' (e.g. demand words such as 'don't') are provided to assist in identifying the sentence type.

Remediation

The following are recommended for teachers to use to assist learners to be able to identify sentence types:

- Explore grammatical metalanguage by asking probing questions to determine what learners already know about sentence types, namely, commands, statements, questions and exclamations and what they still need to know;
- Introduce learners to or revise the sentence types through role playing;
- Encourage the development of an understanding of sentence types across all four skills, namely Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Language Structures and Conventions and Writing and Presenting; and,
- Review and remediate regularly.

5.3.3 Writing and Presenting

Learners performed best in this area scoring an average of 66% as per Figure 7.

The aspect addressed in writing was to write a dialogue. Learners had to use the conventions of language to write grammatically correct sentences.

Writing a dialogue of eight to ten sentences

At Grade 6 level, learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to write a dialogue. The example below required learners to complete a dialogue using a frame as guidance.

Study the picture and read the paragraph below.



In a deserted street Cat is being chased by his worst enemy, Dog. Cat tries to escape but ends up trapped in a dead end.

- Complete the dialogue below between Cat and Dog.
- Write 5 exchanges each between Cat and Dog.
- Use the correct dialogue form, punctuation, spelling and language.

Cat: (shaking in fear) Please don't harm me!

Dog: (coming closer) Why not?

Cat: don't coming closer because how will makes fear

Dog: I will howe how fee good

cat: No, I how coming but with the dog

Dog: Why will I come with how?

cat: because I how how to come with the because

are going howe please or how and I don't

like how are how do you

me what I how of how the how how

This is only for use by teacher/marker. Mark allocation for QUESTION 27

| Criteria | Total | Mark |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Format | 3 | 13 3 |
| 2. Sentence structure and language usage | 3 | 10 0 |
| 3. Content | 3 | 11 0 |
| 4. Conventions | 3 | 0 0 |
| 5. Length of text | 3 | 12 2 |
| TOTAL | 15 | (4) 5 |

In the above example, numerous language and spelling mistakes were made. Very little continuation was evident from the introductory sentences. Sentences lacked coherence and the required length of the writing piece was not adhered to. However, the format of the dialogue was adhered to, possibly because the frame was provided. To be able to write a dialogue, a specific format needed to be followed. The sentences should be logical and well-structured, with relevant content and a specific length. Attention should be given to language and spelling rules.

Remediation

The following are recommended in order to assist learners write extended pieces:

- Demonstrate the writing process in the classroom as part of your lesson. Allow learners to work in groups to apply the processes before attempting it on their own;
- Encourage learners to apply this process in all writing pieces;
- During the brainstorming activities, provide learners with possible vocabulary to use in their writing pieces;
- It is recommended that, during the interaction of the other skills (Language Use and Reading and Viewing), the same text or text type should be used over a two week cycle. In this way, a vocabulary and content bank is developed, which the learners can use/apply during their writing sessions;
- Create a writing wall to display good examples of learners' work to encourage other learners to model good practices; and,
- Encourage learners to write in daily journals to reflect on their thoughts and activities.

5.4 GRADE 9 HOME LANGUAGE

Specific skills that were assessed, a detailed analysis, the findings, examples of learner responses, possible explanations for observed performance and recommended remediation interventions per high frequency error are presented in this section.

CONTENT AREAS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ASSESSED

The following content areas, knowledge and skills were assessed in the Grade 9 Home Language test:

READING AND VIEWING:

The questions set focused on skills that assessed learner ability to:

- identify the type and purpose of text;
- identify the main idea and explain how the details support the main idea;
- respond critically to texts: evaluate own point of view;
- identify the topic sentence in a paragraph;
- evaluate reliability and accuracy of information from print or other media sources;
- evaluate the writer's point of view;
- infer meaning;
- analyse cause and effect;
- summarise a text;
- demonstrate the understanding of a text recognising main idea/ product;
- identify and explain emotive language;
- identify the target audience;
- identify manipulative language;
- identify the theme of the poem;
- identify character and setting;
- explain the use of the font; and,
- what emotion is expressed by the person.

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE AND USE:

Learners were expected to demonstrate that they had the skills to:

- explain the purpose of the punctuation mark (inverted commas);
- identify the correct abbreviation (example – e.g.);
- use conjunctions (make a compound/complex sentence);
- give synonyms for words;
- understand and use direct and indirect speech;
- identify phrases and clauses;
- identify the parts of speech (At least 3);
- choose the correct plural form;
- use of concord (form of the verb);
- use knowledge of spelling and grammar to edit;
- choose the correct form of the adverb;
- preposition – choose the correct preposition;

- identify a literary device; and,
- identify the figures of speech (personification/metaphor etc/what is being compared to what – and why do you think the comparison is appropriate?).

WRITING AND PRESENTING

At Grade 9 level learners are expected to write a well sequenced and coherent set of instructions. The learners were expected to write a descriptive /narrative essay (150 - 200 words / 3 - 4 paragraphs).

Figure 8 below is graphic representation of learner performance according the skills assessed

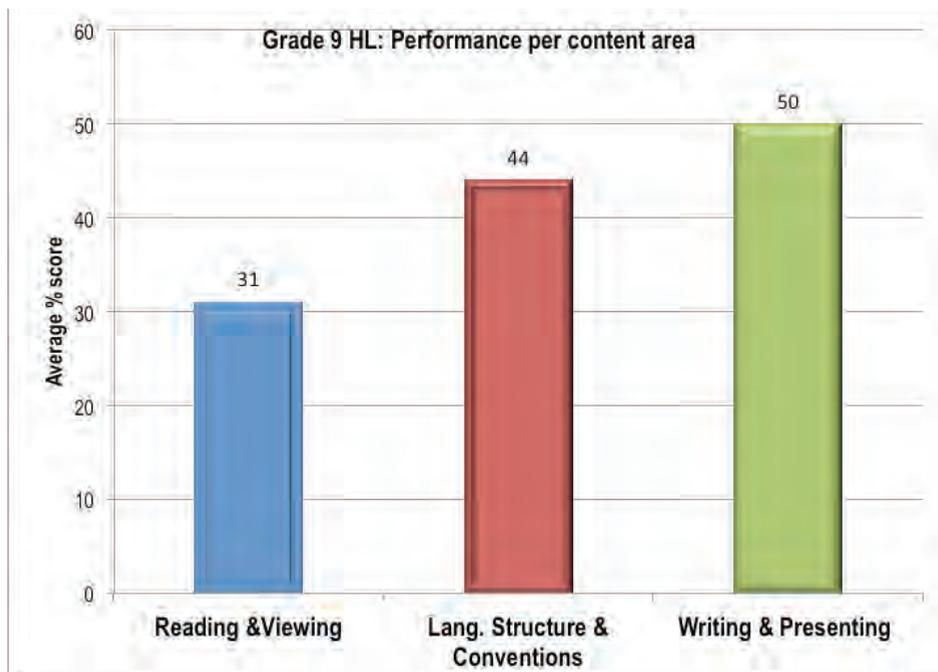


Figure 8 is a graphic representation of learner performance in the three skills assessed.

5.4.1 Language Structures and Conventions

Learners scored an average of 44% in this area, as shown in Figure 9. There is a need for learner performance in this area to improve.

a) Punctuation

At Grade 9 level, the learners are expected to understand and explain the purpose of punctuation marks – specifically inverted commas. In this question, learners were expected to explain the purpose of the inverted commas in: “Even heaven was crying”. The learners were expected to respond by stating that the words within the inverted commas were the actual words spoken (direct speech).

“Even heaven was crying,” one woman in the crowd declared as the heavy rain continued.

Explain the purpose of the inverted commas in the above sentence.

That the heaven could not bear the death of Nelson Mandela.

The learner’s response above indicates that the learner treated the question as that of testing comprehension rather than providing an explanation for why the inverted commas are used i.e. the learner explained the meaning of the figurative expression “heaven was crying”, instead of explaining that the inverted commas indicated direct speech. The learner could not see how punctuation was used to convey meaning.

Remediation

When teaching how punctuation is used to convey meaning, the following are recommended:

- Teach learners all the punctuation marks, including their function, purpose and application, in structured language lessons as well as in other aspects of the syllabus (literature/ writing/ comprehension/ visual literacy/ emotive language).
- Afford learners ample opportunity to engage with the particular vocabulary employed in questions. Learners should become familiar with words such as “purpose”/ “function” so that it is known what these mean in a question.
- Show learners that there is a link between all aspects of language and that the one impacts on the other, e.g. punctuation can affect the meaning of sentence.

b) Language Structure and Conventions: Parts of speech, plurals and/or, identifying grammatical errors

Learners are expected to demonstrate an understanding of parts of speech by identifying specified parts of speech within a given context. They are also required to apply their knowledge of spelling and grammar to identify and correct grammatical errors in a given text, as well to form plurals.

In the following examples, learner responses reflect areas of underperformance.

The learner specimens below demonstrate that learners failed to identify the adjective, preposition and verb correctly.

In the example below the learner makes no reference to any part of speech in the three answers.

Example 1

Identify the underlined parts of speech in the sentence below.

Cyril Ramaphosa, a former labour leader who became a wealthy entrepreneur and, more recently, deputy leader of the governing African National Congress, presided over the ceremony, just as he played a central role when Mr Mandela was released.

- 2.3.1 wealthy – gain something X ✓
2.3.2 over – finishing or in the X ✓
2.3.3 released – He was free X ✓

Example 2

Give the correct plural form of the underlined words in the following sentence.

They sang (2.4.1) that (2.4.2) song in prison.

- 2.4.1 this X ✓
2.4.2 sing X ✓

The learner (in example 1) merely responded by writing something. The responses fail to show any pattern. It can therefore be deduced from the incoherent responses that the learner did not know what was needed to answer the question.

Remediation

The following is recommended to assist learners with mastering Parts of Speech:

Use wall charts to embed skills in respect of parts of speech and the functions they serve in sentence construction. Similar methods could be employed to build and reinforce other aspects of language such as singular and plural/ verb tenses/ changing one part of speech to another/ spelling rules. Be sure to highlight exceptions to the rule or unusual applications of spelling and grammar rules.

c) Plurals

In the question (in example 2) the learners were expected to give the plural form of the underlined words in a given sentence.

The learner response showed a lack of understanding of the concept “pluralisation”. In both instances, the changes made were unrelated to pluralisation.

Remediation

When teaching plurals teachers are advised to implement the following:

Ensure learners are familiar with words/ phrases used in questioning techniques. Draw up a glossary of common terminology employed in questions on language structure and conventions. Use short quizzes/ competitions in class at the beginning or end of every lesson, as “ice-breakers” or “cooling-down” sessions to reinforce vocabulary and spelling rules and build learners’ skills and confidence in responding to questions.

d) Identification of grammatical errors and editing skills

In the example below, learners were provided with a paragraph and they had to identify and correct three spelling and grammatical errors. This question assesses the skill of editing.

The following paragraph has THREE errors. Correct the spelling and grammatical errors and write them in the spaces provided.

In 2013 in a overwhelming response to the Mandela Legacy, hundreds of people mourned with South Africa the passing away of Nelson Mandela, who had inspiring our countrys people.

2.6.1 Mr Mandela X
2.6.2 country X
2.6.3 the are passing away X

The learner answered by inserting key words rather than correcting the errors. A possible reason for this is that the learner was not accustomed to editing and an examination of the learner’s answer (“the are passing away”), reveals that the basic grammar knowledge to identify and correct the errors in a passage was not evident. The learner did not understand the requirements of the question because there was no indication that the terminology/ vocabulary used in the question is understood.

Remediation

When addressing errors in this area the following suggestions should be used by teachers:

- Exploit opportunities, both oral and written, to afford learners practice in applying editing skills (correcting errors of grammar/ spelling/ punctuation). Use newspapers to highlight grammatical errors in print media. Get learners to identify and correct these errors.
- Highlight the correct use of grammar in literary texts and in process writing. Use newspapers/ magazines/ pamphlets/ directions, etc. to immerse learners in the correct use of English.
- Teach learners to make use of punctuation (e.g. the colon introduces expectation/clarification/explanation/ definition/direct speech)/ relative pronouns/ transitional words/ demonstrative adjectives to establish relationships and derive meaning.

e) Language structure and conventions: Sentence construction

Learners are expected to identify the main clauses from the sentences provided. They are required to differentiate between main clauses and subordinate clauses within a sentence. Learners were expected to write down the main clause. In order to arrive at the correct response learners needed to be able to identify the main and subordinate clauses in the sentence provided.

Write down the main clause from the sentence below.

"To the people of South Africa – people of every race and every walk of life
– the world thanks you for sharing Nelson Mandela with us."

People of every race and every walk of life

The learner response above shows that the learner could not identify the main clause. By identifying a phrase in parenthesis as a main clause, it is clear that the learner could not distinguish between phrases and clauses. The learners were unable to deconstruct a sentence into its constituent parts – analysis and synthesis of sentence construction is consequently weak as evidenced in writing tasks, whether these are single sentences, paragraphs or essays.

Remediation

When teaching learners to identify main clauses the following are suggested:

- Teach learners the definition of phrase, clause, main clause, and sub-ordinate clause. Ensure learners have ready access to these definitions in the form of visible wall charts and personal glossaries.
- Give learners guided practice in analysing sentences from literature and comprehension texts as well as other texts across the curriculum. Encourage this type of practice as a matter of course in process-writing and editing.
- Teach learners to identify the difference between a clause and a phrase: the latter has no finite verb, while a clause must have a finite verb and a subject. Thereafter, teach the difference between a main clause and a subordinate clause: a main clause can make sense on its own while a subordinate clause depends on the main clause for its meaning: e.g. The man who was wearing a red shirt ran away. Here the underlined words constitute the subordinate clause as it depends on the main clause (the words not underlined) for its sense.

f) Knowledge and application of Language Structures and Conventions in poetry assessment: Figures of Speech/ Poetic Devices

The Grade 9 learner is expected to show understanding of figures of speech and poetic devices by being able to identify and analyse these. In the question below, Africa was personified. Learners were expected to see the link between 'Africa' and 'her'. The purpose of this question was to assess whether learners could link 'Africa' (an inanimate object) with her (a personal pronoun) thus arriving at the correct response: personification.

Identify the figure of speech used in the sentence below.

"Africa and her long-cherished view"

invented commas

In the example above, the learner was expected to identify the figure of speech (**personification**) in the given sentence. However, from the response, it can be deduced that the learner did not understand the term 'figure of speech' and misinterpreted it with punctuation.

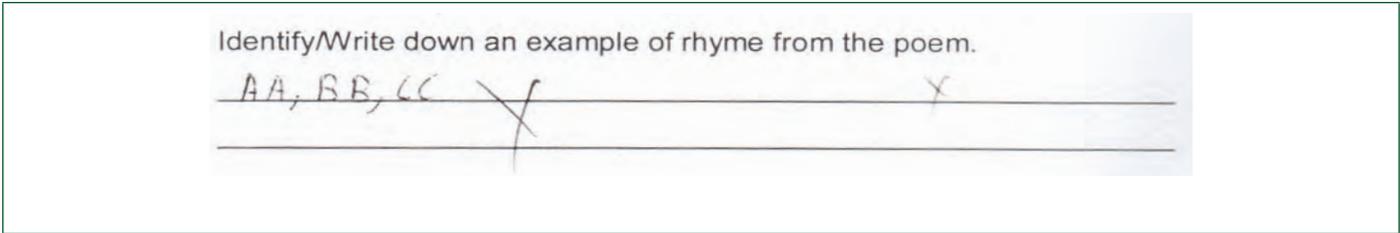
Remediation

The following ideas are recommended when teaching figures of speech:

- Teach learners the difference between figures of speech and parts of speech and emphasise the distinct function of each of these.
- Offer learners frequent and sustained opportunities for applying their knowledge of figures of speech and literary devices via structured written exercises as well as incidentally via references to familiar advertisements/ TV programmes/ radio broadcasts/ lyrics of popular songs, etc.

g) Identification of rhyming words

At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to identify and explain the function of rhyme.



The learner was unable to identify the **rhyme** as indicated above. Here the learner mistook the rhyme scheme for the rhyme. In writing a rhyme scheme the learner showed some knowledge of rhyme but failed to apply the theory to the actual identification of rhyming words e.g. best and rest.

Remediation

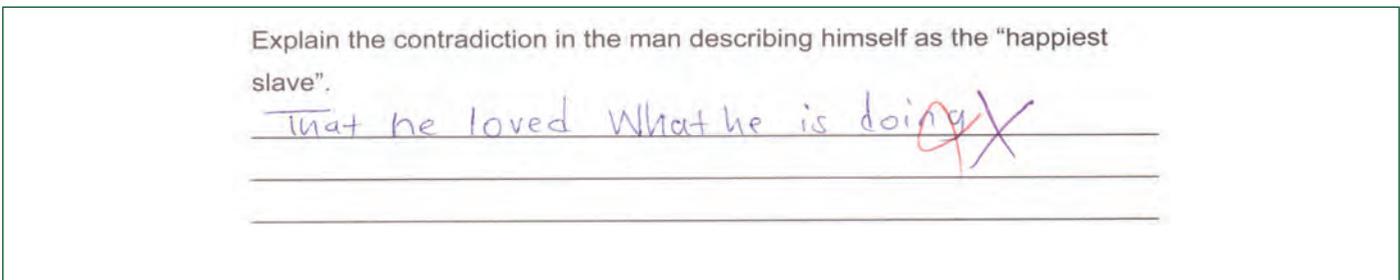
When teaching learners how to identify rhyme the following should be emphasised:

- Teach learners the difference between rhyme and rhyme scheme.
- Poetry lessons should be used to show how sound devices are used to convey meaning.

h) Contradictions

This question tested the learner’s ability to identify the contradiction as expressed in “happiest slave”.

The learner was supposed to infer that a slave is an unhappy person. This implies that he cannot be happy which assists in identifying the contradiction.



In the example above the learner gave a literal explanation, rather than identifying and explaining the contradiction in “happiest slave”. The learner understood that the man was happy which was indicated in his response “He loved...”. However, the learner failed to connect the word ‘slave’ to the response. The contradiction was ignored.

Remediation

Contradictions is a difficult aspect to teach. The following ideas are recommended to assist learners gain mastery in this skill:

- Teach learners the different literary devices by means of dictionary definitions as well as the glossary in the CAPS Policy document. Ensure that these references are readily accessible via charts/glossaries/ etc. so that learners are able to constantly revise/refresh/reinforce their knowledge/skills.

i) Literal and Figurative Meaning

At Grade 9 level, learners are required to know the difference between literal and figurative language.

The learners were required to differentiate between literal and figurative use of language. The purpose of this question was for learners to differentiate between what is said (literal) and what is implied (figurative).

The words “deadly bores” (Line 20) can be used in a literal and figurative context.
Explain both.

Literal: School was so deadly today.

Figurative: I wish my teacher was not so deadly.

In the example above the learner failed to explain the literal and figurative meaning of a phrase. The response indicates that the learner had difficulty understanding literal and figurative language and was unable to explain the difference coherently. The learner identified that the word ‘deadly’ had a bearing on the answer but failed to link it to its literal and figurative meanings.

Remediation

When teaching learners to gain mastery in literary devices the following is recommended:

- Integrate the teaching of literal/ figurative meanings and the denotative/connotative meaning of words into all aspects of the syllabus.
- Teach satire and irony via cartoons/ newspaper articles/ literary and other genres of writing that present opportunities.

5.4.2 Reading and Viewing

Reading comprehension questions

Learner performance in this skill was weak (Figure 9). There is need to make a more concerted effort to improve skills in reading and viewing.

Learners are required to read different genres and respond critically to the texts. A variety of texts should be given and the techniques used to answer each type of text must be taught.

a) Identification of topic sentence

At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to identify a topic sentence within a paragraph of a reading comprehension exercise. In this question, learners were expected to read paragraph 5 of the comprehension text to identify and write down the topic sentence. The purpose of this question was to assess whether learners could identify the main idea in the paragraph.

Write down the topic sentence from Paragraph 5.

Heavens were crying for the only freedom fighter Nelson Mandela.

The example above shows that the learner merely transcribed a part of the sentence and added his/her own words without understanding what the question entailed.

Remediation

The following are recommended when teaching identification of topic sentences:

- Learners must practise accurate identification of the topic sentence, theme and message of a text so as to make an accurate choice in the multiple choice questions.
- Methods on how to derive the topic sentence, theme and message must be taught.

b) Deriving meanings of words using contextual clues

At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to work out the meaning of a word using contextual clues. The learners were expected to explain what is meant by the word 'autobiography'. The paragraph in which the word is found was given so that the learner could use contextual clues to try to work out the meaning of the word.

Circle the correct answer.

What does the word "autobiography" (Paragraph 6) mean?

A A book about a person's life, written by that person

B The life story of a person written by someone else

C A book about motor vehicles

D A love story

The learner could not identify the word 'autobiography' contextually from reading the text, possibly because of limited vocabulary and/or an inability to use contextual clues to work out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Remediation:

When teaching learners how to work out the meaning of a word using contextual clues the following is suggested:

- During the guided reading session, the teachers may demonstrate what is meant by inferring the meaning of new words and how to use contextual clues to assist in working out the meaning of an unknown word in a text. The following steps should be followed:

The teacher **pauses the reading** and chooses the appropriate question to ask.

"What do you think the word means considering (a certain action or event) has happened?"

"How do you know what the word means (insert definition)?"

"What part of the text helps you make this inference?"

"Where can you find other clues to help you understand?"

"If you substitute what you think is a similar word, would the sentence still make sense?"

Teachers can create **activity sheets** to give learners practice with inferences. Create a list of sentences and have learners infer the meaning by choosing from a list of possible meanings.

- **Dictionary work:** Learners look up definitions of the spelling words of the week. They should make sentences with these words to show their understanding of the words.
- **Personal dictionary / word bank:** An exercise (small 72 page) book in which learners record all the new words and meanings. They may label the pages (A, B, C). Learners keep these personal dictionaries with them at all times, to use the newly acquired words during writing and speaking activities. By the end of the year, this new vocabulary could be added to their frame of reference.

c) Reading and Viewing: Poetry(Identification of theme)

A Grade 9 learner is expected to identify the theme of a poem. For this skill a list of themes that could be related to the poem was given. Learners were expected to read the poem and choose the alternative that best describes the theme in the poem.

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Identify the theme of the poem.

- A Job satisfaction is important.
- B Happiness at work brings you joy.
- C Being bored at work leads to laziness.
- D Dissatisfaction at work can drive you mad.



The correct alternative is “A”. The learners were not able to pick the theme of the poem from reading it. A possible reason is that the word theme was not known to the learners.

Remediation

The following are recommended when teaching how to identify themes:

- A variety of genre requiring various comprehension skills should be taught throughout the year so that learners are familiar with a range of texts.
- When teaching poetry point to the theme of the poem and method used to derive the answer e.g. use leading questions to direct learner focus - What is the main idea in the poem? Who/what is the main character, etc.

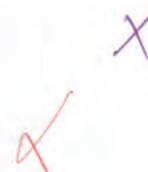
d) Reading and Viewing: Cartoon

Learners were expected to have knowledge of the technique of inferring a message in a given text in order to get the correct answer. The learners were expected to read the cartoon and summarise in one sentence what the message of the cartoon is.

5.3 Circle the letter of the correct answer.

What is the message of the cartoon?

- A It is important to have your eyes tested.
- B Technology is taking over our lives.
- C Eye tests are confusing.
- D The man is blind.



The learner was not able to successfully work out the message that the cartoonist was trying to convey. This could be possibly due to the learner being unfamiliar with visual texts and techniques in responding to this type of text.

Remediation

When responding to visual texts the following is recommended:

- Learners must be given more practice in answering multiple choice questions. Learner scores for question 4.1 and 5.3 was an average of 45%. Learners should therefore be taught the skills of identifying the correct option using prior knowledge of language skills. Teachers need create opportunities for vocabulary enrichment, e.g. dictionary usage, word games, reading clubs, spelling bees, etc.
- Identifying the purpose of cartoons must be taught

e) Fact and opinion

Learners were required to read a comprehension text with understanding, determine **fact and opinion** and explain their choice. Learners were expected to read the statement provided and use the skill of determining whether a statement is fact or opinion and substantiate their answer.

The example below is typical of how learners responded.

State whether the following is a FACT or an OPINION. Explain your answer.

"Cheers greeted President Obama as he rose to offer a eulogy".

Opinion, because Obama is saying that he rose to offer a eulogy. (2)

In the example above, the learner was unable to identify that the quotation was a fact and possibly did not know the difference between fact and opinion. One may attribute the weakness of the response to the learner's inability to explain logically, and with a reason why it is a fact.

Remediation

The following ideas are suggested when teaching fact and opinion:

- Teachers should focus on ensuring that learners understand the difference between fact and opinion. Learners should also practise explaining the reasons for their choices.
- During the language lesson advertisements can be used to elicit facts and opinions.
- Teachers can also reinforce this skill during listening and speaking tasks, for example, when listening to radio broadcasts, news, and television, etc. by asking learners to identify specific facts or opinions.
- Learners should be asked during these activities to explain why they say something is fact or opinion.

f) Reading and Viewing: Interpretation of visual texts focussing on emotive language in multimodal and visual texts in the advert and "the setting" in the cartoon

Learners were expected to read and view visual texts, i.e. the advertisement and cartoons. The learners were required to read and understand the visual text in order to arrive at a logical conclusion in identifying the target audience. They were also expected to predict or infer groups of people who are likely to buy a Mandela shirt. The buyers were not explicitly stated in the given text. Learners were therefore required to use their general knowledge to infer or predict the correct answer. Learners were also expected to recognise and understand how **persuasive/emotive language** is used in advertising. Furthermore learners were required to read a cartoon and identify the **setting**.

The example below shows how learners responded:

Name TWO groups of people who are likely to buy this shirt.

Al Gore and Mr Nelson Mandela

In the example above the learner was not able to identify the target audience. The learner could not correlate "target audience" with "TWO groups of people who are likely to buy" the shirt. The learner simply extracted two proper nouns from the passage and did not interpret the requirement of the question necessitating him to identify **groups** rather than individuals.

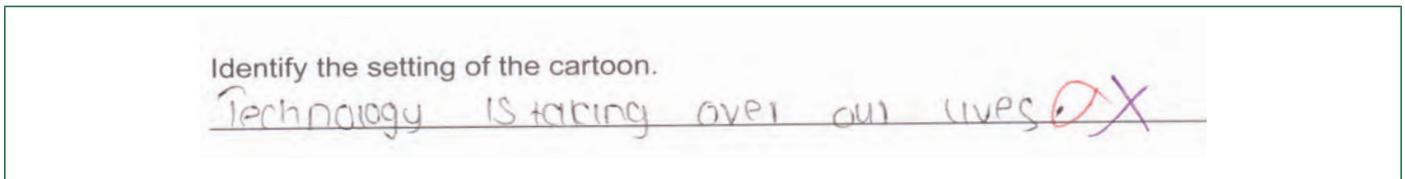
Remediation

The following suggestions should be used by teachers to assist learners in gaining the skills necessary for Reading and Viewing.

- The teaching of persuasive writing must be reinforced. Learners must be exposed to level 3 questions which require insightful identification of the **target audience**.
- Teachers need to focus on equipping learners with the critical language awareness skills (CLA) to understand the emotive impact of persuasive language and become critical consumers. Familiar/ popular advertisements can be used to reinforce the skill.

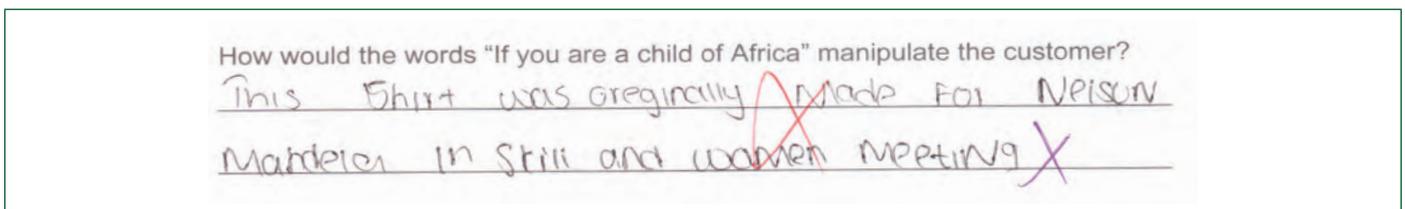
g) Cartoon – Setting

In the question below, learners were required to read the cartoon and identify the setting. The example below shows how a typical learner response:



In the response above it is probably that the learner did not understand the concept “setting”. Instead the main idea of the cartoon “Technology is taking over our lives” was given as the answer. This could possibly be as a result of not knowing what the word setting refers to in the cartoon.

In the following example learners were asked to explain how language in advertising is used to manipulate the consumer. In this case, interpret the words “if you are a child of Africa” in the context of the advertisement. The implication is that if you do not buy the shirt you are not a child of Africa.



The learner demonstrated a lack of understanding of the term “setting” in a cartoon and how to work out inferred meaning. The learner appeared not to have attempted answering the part about manipulation. The possible reason is that the learner did not understand what manipulation meant, or did not understand the context of the quote. Language of persuasion and in particular manipulation is either not understood or could not be identified.

In comparing the three skills on the interpretation of visual texts, learners appear to have performed at the lowest percentage in the question on manipulative language, followed by identification of target audience and setting.

Remediation

These are all questions that require higher order thinking skills. In order to master this skills the teacher needs to expose learners to more of these questions.

- Learners should engage in activities that illustrate that setting refers to time and place. They must understand how the setting provides clues for the intended meaning and how the setting has relevance to the message of the cartoon.
- Newspaper cartoons and literary texts can be used in the classroom where the teacher can orally ask learners questions about setting etc.

h) The summary writing

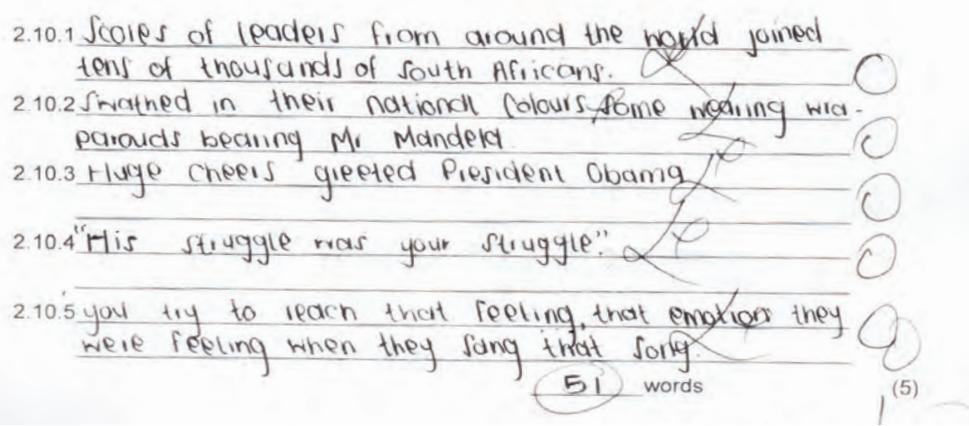
At Grade 9 level, learners are expected to know how to write a summary. Learners were expected to read a passage in order to summarise it into 5 sentences using their own words.

The example that follows shows that the learner did not have the requisite summary writing skills and could not respond successfully in spite of the guidance provided in the instructions.

Write a summary of the following extract from the newspaper article.

Carefully read the text below. You are required to do the following:

- Summarise the passage below in **FIVE (5)** points using about 45 – 55 words in total.
- Use your own words as far as possible.
- Each point must be a full sentence.
- Indicate the number of words used at the end of your summary.



The example above shows that the learner could not write a summary. The learner just copied sentences verbatim from the original text and failed to use his or her own words. The rules for summary writing are not evident. In order to write a summary the learner must understand the text. It is evident that learners did not comprehend what they read.

Remediation

In order for learners to write an effective summary the following suggestions are recommended:

- Summary writing as a tool for learning content across the curriculum is a crucial skill that must be taught. Skimming and scanning are prerequisite skills that must be reinforced for successful summarising. This skill requires that learners get the gist of the passage. The skills can be taught during pre-reading activities (skimming and scanning) where learners are required to focus on text features e.g. title, captions, key words, topic sentences, etc. Learners may be asked to identify the topic/main ideas by skimming the comprehension or literary text and scanning for supporting details in the text. Teachers should then show learners how to synthesise the topic/main ideas identified into a summary of the text.
- Focus on teaching all the conventions of summary writing, e.g. using own words, writing in reported speech, reducing the length of the text and indicating the number of words.

5.4.3 Writing and Presenting

Even though learners achieved an average score of 50% (as per Figure 9) more attention should be paid to this skill so that learner performance can be improved.

Writing a narrative essay

Grade 9 learners are expected to use the conventions of language structure, correct format and register to write extended pieces. In their planning of their writing they are to display the ability to edit their work. Learners were asked to write an essay according to the following criteria:

The skills assessed were:-

- content and planning;

- language style and editing; and,
- structure of writing a narrative essay.

The purpose of this question was to assess learners' writing skills.

FINAL ESSAY

Topic

Using a social media is good and sometimes ~~is~~ bad. Is good when you are talking with people whom you know not just talking with ~~pep~~ people you don't even know.

It was on ~~Friday~~ Friday night when I got an invite on whatsapp. I just accept because on Friday many people will be talking to you. I did not even ask name that person talk to me like he knows me. Language

He said to me tomor come with your friend to play a pool soccer and ~~if~~ I asked him ~~were~~ did you ~~get~~ get my number and he did not answer.

Today I am trying to say ~~social media~~ social media is not good at all, don't just talk to people whom you don't know. One day you will suffer for that.

Since that day I don't accept people that I don't know. If a person knows me he or she will call me first.

154 words

Content/planing - 03
Language/style & editing - 02
Structure - 02

07

Grade 9 English HL Test 20

In the learner response above, there is no evidence of brainstorming ideas, or of using mind maps. The learner interpreted the topic in a generic and simplistic way. The content of the essay was vague. Editing is not evident in this essay. Although the writing was divided into paragraphs, it did not comply with what constitutes a paragraph.

Remediation

The following are suggestions on how to help learners plan and present extended writing pieces:

- Planning should be seen as an essential part of the process of writing since a good essay requires detailed and careful planning. An integral part of planning is deciding on the number of paragraphs in order to adhere to the expected length.
- Give guidance to learners in terms of the interpretation of topics and the linguistic register for a specific audience.
- Ensure that learners know how to write coherent, structured and logically developed paragraphs.
- Encourage learners to join reading clubs or libraries. Adequate reading will promote a more eloquent vocabulary usage amongst learners. Participation in Spelling Bee processes will also enhance vocabulary enrichment.

- Learners need to understand that editing is a critical part of process writing. Thus, editing skills need to be taught in a structured manner.
- Learners should be given opportunities for adequate practice activities based on process writing conventions.- Practise makes perfect.

5. CONCLUSION

The evidence suggests an improvement in comprehension skills. However, many learners still lack the necessary vocabulary required to enable them to have a better understanding of the text and to express themselves coherently.

The summary question was generally poorly answered. Learners could answer some parts of speech questions but still lacked in depth knowledge; this problem persists from 2013. However, these question has been attempted better than in the previous year.

The Language Section yielded the weakest performance.

While learners are visually literate and can read graphs with success they still cannot respond correctly to questions that require analysis of style and purpose for writing visual texts. Literary devices such as alliteration are still not at the level of skill required.

Parts of writing have improved. Learners were able to provide a suitable title for their writing piece, they could use command verbs and sequence steps appropriately. However, sentence construction, spelling and punctuation have not been adequately mastered.

Although the results show that there is an improvement, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done before we can achieve satisfactory literacy levels.

**PART B:
DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS**



FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVEMENT 2015

HOME LANGUAGE

| INTERMEDIATE PHASE (GRADES 4-6): HOME LANGUAGE | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| COMPREHENSION | | | | |
| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | Responsibility | | |
| | | DBE | Province | District |
| <p>∅ Inability to respond to a text, make inferences and give a reasoned opinion or explanation (e.g. complete a dialogue/ respond to an advertisement).</p> <p>∅ Inability to differentiate main points from supporting detail.</p> <p>∅ Insufficient ability to derive word meaning from the context.</p> <p>∅ Lack of understanding of different figures of speech (metaphor, simile).</p> <p>∅ Inability to write a summary of a story or complete a dialogue.</p> <p>∅ Inability to use meta language to explain concepts in poetry.</p> | <p>➤ Plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>∅ Plan structured language lessons focusing on the teaching of reading with comprehension.</p> <p>∅ Teach comprehension skills so learners know how to analyze a wide range of different text types, sequence events in a story, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations and give a reasoned opinion.</p> <p>∅ Teach and provide practice using different figures of speech.</p> <p>➤ Provide more opportunities for learners to read a variety of texts</p> <p>∅ Ensure schools with Grades 4-6 learners order approved Core Readers and sets of Graded Readers from the National Catalogue.</p> <p>∅ Provide opportunities for learners to engage with a wide range of texts and genres.</p> <p>∅ Include daily reading time so learners read a minimum of one book per week throughout the year.</p> <p>∅ Encourage learners to give a summary of the stories they have read (orally and in writing).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Departmental Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS. Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading lessons. Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading lessons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements. Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured reading lessons. Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured reading lessons. Workshop teachers on teaching reading comprehension using a wide range of different text types and genres. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMTs to ensure schools order and use core readers and Graded readers to improve teaching of reading and reading comprehension SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured reading lessons. To analyze a wide range of different text types and genres, extract specific details from a text, make inferences and interpretations, give a reasoned opinion and provide practice using different figures of speech |

COMPREHENSION

| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | | | Responsibility | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--------|
| | DBE | Province | District | District | School |
| <p>Ø Inability to interpret a text, make inferences and derive meaning from a visual text.</p> <p>Ø Lack of differentiation between literal and figurative meaning.</p> <p>Ø Lack of familiarity with different figures of speech, rhyming words and contradictory meaning as well as other literary devices.</p> <p>Ø Inability to differentiate main points from supporting detail.</p> <p>Ø Inability to work on multiple choice questions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Departmental Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading lessons as per CAPS requirements. Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons. Monitor curriculum coverage, procurement of readers, the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured reading comprehension lessons as per CAPS requirements. Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, procurement of readers and the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons. Develop task sheets with exercises on identified areas of weaknesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools to order core readers and novels, use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured reading comprehension lessons as per CAPS and form School Literacy Teams. Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured reading comprehension lessons. Workshop teachers on teaching reading comprehension using a wide range of different text types. Use provincial task sheets on identified weaknesses in the training of teachers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMTs to ensure schools order and use core readers and novels to improve teaching of reading and reading comprehension. SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school. Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured reading comprehension lessons. To analyze a wide range of different text types, make inferences and interpretations, integrate ideas and information across texts give a reasoned opinion and provide practice using different figures of speech. Teachers to teach 3-5 words daily and give learners to use the vocabulary orally and in writing. HODs to use ensure that teaching addresses identified weaknesses. | |

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

| Identified weaknesses | Remedial measures to improve classroom practice | Responsibility | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| | | DBE | Province | District |
| <p>Ø Poor understanding and use of different parts of speech.</p> <p>Ø Inability to differentiate between main clauses and subordinate clauses.</p> <p>Ø Lack of understanding of metacognitive language.</p> <p>Ø Lack of editing skills.</p> <p>Ø Weak summary writing skills: failure to plan the writing process.</p> <p>Ø Inability to identify grammatical errors and apply spelling rules.</p> <p>Ø Inability to construct meaningful sentences to form logical paragraphs on the given topic; lack of a rich and varied vocabulary.</p> | <p>➤ Plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS requirements</p> <p>Ø Plan structured lessons focusing on the teaching of Language and Writing</p> <p>Ø Teach focused lessons and give more practice in:</p> <p>Ø using different parts of speech;</p> <p>Ø rewriting sentences and paragraphs using correct grammar and punctuation; and</p> <p>Ø identifying main and subordinate clauses</p> <p>Ø Familiarise learners with metacognitive language.</p> <p>Ø Ensure learners write a range of different text types on a weekly basis so they are familiar with different formats.</p> <p>Ø Use the process approach to writing so learners plan and edit their writing.</p> <p>Ø Use the grammar, punctuation and spelling errors from learners' writing to inform focused Language lessons.</p> | <p>Ø Use the Departmental Language subject committee, HEDCOM sub-committee to ensure provinces support districts and schools to plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS.</p> <p>Ø Monitor curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons.</p> <p>Ø Ensure learners write different text types on a weekly basis using the process approach.</p> <p>Ø Develop task sheets with exercises on identified weaknesses.</p> | <p>Ø Support districts and schools to plan and teach structured language lessons as per CAPS.</p> <p>Ø Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons.</p> <p>Ø Monitor and report on curriculum coverage, the teaching of structured language lessons.</p> <p>Ø Workshop teachers on teaching language and using process writing to produce different text types.</p> <p>Ø Use provincial task sheets to assist teachers understand and be able to deal with identified weaknesses.</p> | <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMTs to form a School literacy team in the school. • Teachers to use the ANA analysis to plan and teach structured language lessons on passive/active voice, tenses, direct/reported speech, different parts of speech, use of correct punctuation and spelling. • Provide learners with opportunities to write different text types on a weekly basis so they are familiar with different formats and requirements as per CAPS. • Use the process approach to writing so that learners plan and edit their writing • HODs to ensure teachers to be trained on identified weaknesses. |

**PART C:
DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS AT
SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEVELS**



Assessment provides very useful information that must be used optimally to inform effective teaching and promote purposeful learning.

Purpose of assessment and analysis

The primary purpose of assessment should be to improve learning. Schools and districts must be able to do fairly detailed diagnostic analysis of the performance of their learners or schools to identify areas of strength and challenges. After administering a test the educator can do own diagnostic analysis to identify:-

- a) The overall level of performance of the class or school;
- b) Individual learners or schools that need special intervention;
- c) Groups of learners or schools who need special support and
- d) Subject content areas that require priority attention in teaching and learning.

Use of basic statistics for analysis

Basic statistics that can be used to summarize the data from a test include the following:-

- i. Mean (often called average) – calculated by adding the scores of all the learners and dividing the sum by the number of learners. The mean is one score that is used to summarize all the scores obtained by learners in a test. A high mean score represents high performance and a low mean score represents low performance. However, the mean score does not indicate how learner scores are spread from the highest to the lowest and thus is not adequate for identifying individuals who either over-perform or under-perform.
- ii. Median (or middle score) – calculated by first arranging the scores from the highest to the lowest and then determining the score that divides the data into two equal halves. Half of the learners who wrote a test will have scores above the median score and the other half will have scores below the median score. If the number of learners is an odd number the median will be a real score that sits half-way between the extreme scores, e.g. 76, 57, 49, 45 and 39 have 49 as the median score. However, if the number of learners is an even number the median will be a score that may not belong to any of the learners calculated by adding the two adjacent scores that are half-way between the extremes and dividing their sum by two (2), e.g. the median of 76, 57, 49 and 45 is calculated by adding 57 and 49 and dividing the sum by two – $(57+49)/2=106/2=52$. As can be observed, 52 is not one of the four given scores but it is the median score that sits half-way between the extreme scores, viz. 76 and 45.

The median does not show the extreme scores, i.e. the highest and the lowest scores.

- iii. Maximum is the highest score obtained by a learner in a test.
- iv. Minimum is the lowest score obtained by a learner in a test.
- v. Range is the difference between the maximum and the minimum scores. The larger the range, the more diverse the ability levels of the test takers while a relatively small range indicates that the class of test takers has a relatively homogeneous ability profile.

Available tools for data analysis

Tools that are available for analysis of data include pre-programmed computer software such as the SA-SAMS in schools, the Microsoft Excel programme and even hand calculators. The Microsoft Excel programme, which comes

with almost every computer software, is a powerful and reasonably easy-to-use tool for performing item-level diagnostic analysis of test data. An Excel spreadsheet is arranged in columns and rows.

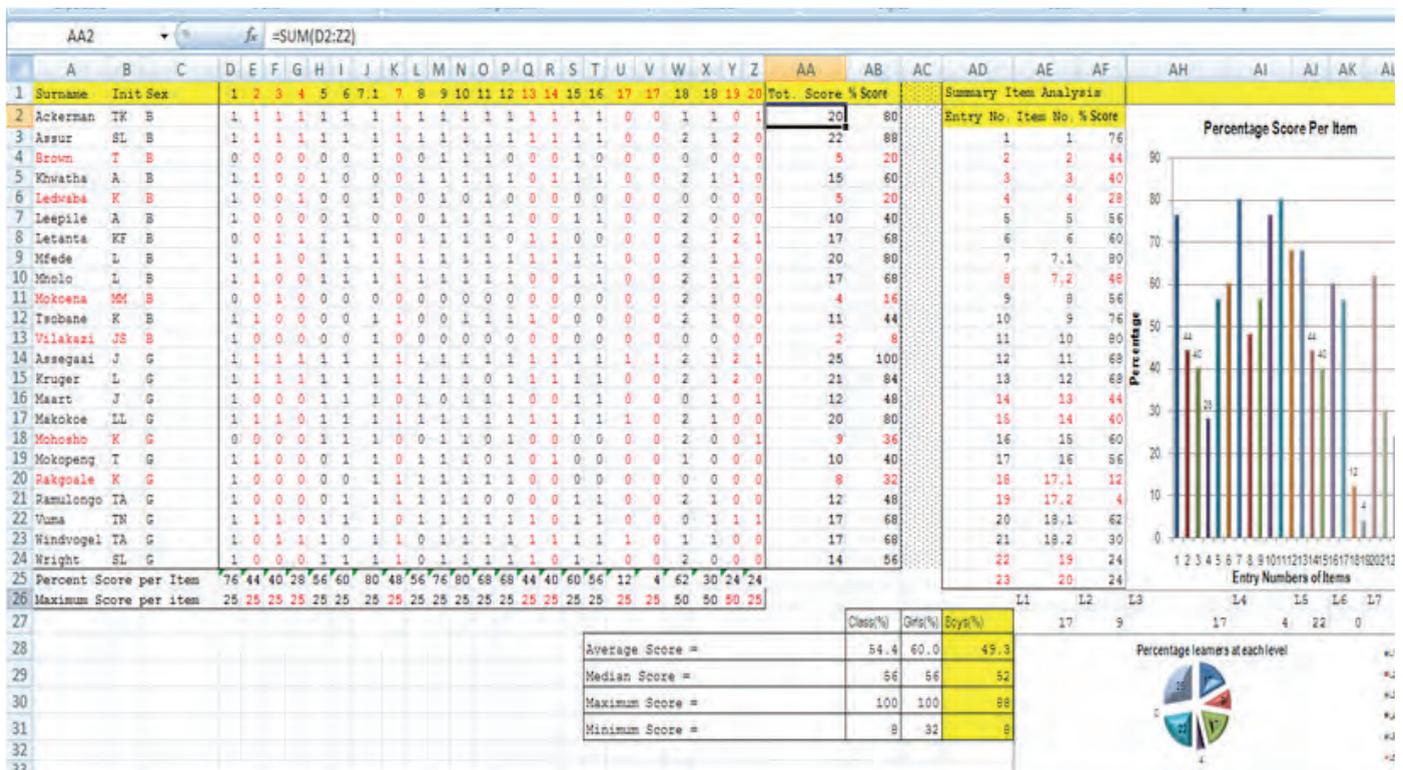
Preparing data for analysis on Excel

To prepare for analysis of data from an administered test, do the following:-

1. Mark the test and write the scores obtained by each learner next to the relevant question/item number in their books or scripts;
2. Enter learner names and other particulars (e.g. the gender of each learner) in the rows, one after another;
3. Enter test item numbers in the columns, one after another;
4. Enter the score of each learner on each item in the correct cell (i.e. where the relevant column and row meet);
5. Check if all data has been entered correctly (i.e. do thorough data cleaning);
6. Use correct formulae to calculate the statistics that you want to use to summarize and analyze the test data; and,
7. Interpret the statistics in terms of what they suggest about performance of individuals in your class, performance of identifiable groups of learners (e.g. males and females) and performance in specific content areas.

An example of test data (Grade 3 Mathematics) in an Excel spreadsheet is shown below. The surnames of learners, their initials and sex were entered in Rows 2 to 24, meaning there were 23 learners who wrote the test in this class. The test item/question numbers appear in Columns D to Z, a total of 23 items.

Example: Data Analysis on Excel Spreadsheet



Excel makes available useful formulae to calculate basic statistics. To calculate any of the common statistics like the ones mentioned above, place the cursor in the relevant cell, enter the “=” sign followed by the first letter of the desired statistic.

A menu of possible options appears and you must select the one that you want. For instance, in the spreadsheet above, to calculate the total score for the first learner in Row 2, Ackerman, TK, enter the “=” sign at the end of all the items in the test, Column AA, Cell AA2 as highlighted in the spreadsheet. Select “Sum” from the Menu, open the bracket, write D2 as the first cell with an item score, insert a colon (:) followed by the last cell with an item score for this learner, close the bracket and press “Enter”. Excel calculates the sum of all the item scores for Ackerman from D2 to Z2 (fx =SUM(D2:Z2)) and places it in Cell AA2. You can repeat this process for each of the learners but you can also use the computer mouse to hold the bottom right corner of the rectangle around Cell AA2 (a cross will appear when you have placed the mouse correctly) and drag the formula from AA2 to AA24 (Little bit of practice will be required here!).

To calculate the percentage score obtained by each learner (i.e. individual learner performance) start with the first learner in Row 2, insert the “=” sign in Cell AB2, type in “AA2/25*100” to divide the score in Cell AA2 by the total score (25 in this case) and use “*” to multiply, followed by 100 for percentage (fx =AA2/25*100). You can also follow the same procedure to calculate the percentage score for each learner or you can use the “dragging” technique outlined above.

To calculate the percentage scores obtained on each item (i.e. performance of all learners on each item), start by typing in the maximum scores per item as in Row 26. To calculate the total score obtained by learners in Item 1 (Column D) type in the “=” sign in Cell D25 followed by “Sum(D2:D24)/25*100”. Excel calculates the sum of learner scores in Item 1, divides it by the Maximum score for this item (25) and multiplies that by 100 to convert the answer to a percentage (76% in this case). Do the same for each of the following items or use the “dragging” technique described above. Note that for items that have a different total (e.g. 50 instead of 25) you must use the relevant total.

Analysis and interpretation

To summarize the data calculate the average percentage score, the median, maximum and minimum score percentages also, do this separately for boys and girls.

To make sense of the analysis it is recommended that different colour codes be used to mark specific observations (Excel provides a wide range of colour codes) and also represent findings with appropriate graphs to enhance visual impressions to aid decision-making on where to focus improvement interventions. For instance, the following observations can be made from the analysis that has been done in the example spreadsheet above:

a) Overall performance

Overall performance in this class, measured through the mean score, was 54,4% which was relatively acceptable but still leaves room for improvement. The median score for the class was 56% which means that half of the learners obtained scores above 56% and another half obtained scores below 56%.

b) Performance spread

Although the mean and median scores were both above 50%, learner scores ranged between eight percent (8%) and 100% which is a fairly wide range that suggests diverse abilities in this class. This implies that intervention strategies will have to be diversified in order to meet the learning needs of different learners, i.e. a one-size-fits-all improvement strategy will not work in this class.

c) Individual learner differences in performance

Individual learners who were identified to be particularly at risk have been indicated with red colour coding. They obtained scores below 40% and thus fall within the “Not achieved” and “Elementary achievement” levels. They require special attention in terms of teaching strategies and learning opportunities.

d) Group differences in performance

Analysis was done at two group levels, viz. boys and girls. All the summary statistics indicate that the boys performed much lower than the girls. Their mean score was 49,3% against the 60% mean score obtained by girls. The median score for the boys was four percent (4%) lower than that of the girls, viz. 52% as against 56%. Boys' scores ranged between eight percent (8%) and 88% while the lowest score for the girls was 32% and the highest was 100%. Boys need intervention to bring them to the level required for them to perform or excel, without neglecting the girls.

e) Performance in specific content areas

The percentage scores per item indicate the items and, therefore, the content areas where interventions must focus.

The analysis and diagnosis (from a to e above) identify

- i. Which learners need special attention; and,
- ii. Which content areas require special focus.

The analysis also suggests materials required to improve on the identified areas, the extra support the teacher will need (if necessary), whether additional time will be required, who else should be involved in the interventions and a host of other possibilities that the data analyzer may see fit in their context.

SUMMARY

In summary diagnostic analysis of assessment data must be conducted regularly at all levels of the system, particularly at the classroom level. The purpose of the analysis and diagnosis is to assess whether learning goals are being achieved by all learners so that every learner has ample opportunity to succeed. Different tools are available for conducting an analysis. In particular, the use of Excel spreadsheets generates simple but powerful statistics for summarizing assessment data. The excel programme also provides graphs and other visual representations of data that enhance the quality of reports and thus aid data interpretation. All analysis needs to be followed by a plan of action on how the identified weaknesses will be addressed. The plan of action will include appropriate improvement plans at classroom, school and district levels.



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