



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ESWATINI

Junior Certificate Examination

**Literature in English (120)
Examination Report for 2024**

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Paper 120/01

General Comments

In the year 2024, about 16500 candidates sat for this examination. This is a decline from the previous year(s) as 32 schools are taking the piloted four-year programme, which means they do not sit for this examination. There was a slight decline in candidates' performance as compared to the previous year (2023). Out of a total of 60 marks, the highest score was 50 and the lowest score was 1. Candidates' knowledge of the text was in doubt, so question demands were not always met.

It was noted that rubric infringement is on the rise again. This is because candidates mostly went for the passaged based question, ignoring the rules of choosing questions. Moreover, a few of them responded only to the traditional and empathy questions, ignoring the passaged-based questions. It was also noted that candidates would use the given passages to respond to the traditional essays or even the empathy questions, even though the passage had very little information to assist in responding to those questions. Candidates failed to adhere to the correct approach in responding to questions; they tended to number their responses, yet this was an essay in which paragraphs are not to be numbered. For the empathy tasks, they would write a one-way conversation with the character instead of sharing their thoughts on the situation presented. For the passage-based task they would choose one part and ignore the other part, thus rendering their work incomplete. They would maybe respond to part (a) and ignore (b) or respond to (b) and ignore (a).

Popular questions among candidates in this examination were:

Section A – Question 4, 6

Section B – Question 7, 8

Section C – Question 10, 12, 13, 15

Least popular questions amongst candidates in this examination were:

Section A – Question 1, 2, 3

Section B – Question 9

Section C – Question 11, 14, 18

SECTION A: DRAMA

Candidates' performance in this section was good. Most candidates choose Question 4. This question was a pleasure to mark as candidates understood the question's demands. However, some candidates would confuse feelings with personality. It also seemed like candidates lacked the appropriate vocabulary to describe personality. Candidates did not explore the passages fully they concentrated on one or two characters. The popular text was *The God's are Not to Blame* as compared to *Pygmalion*.

Comments on specific questions.

Pygmalion

Question 1

(a) What does the passage reveal about Mr Doolittle's personality? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This was one of the least popular questions in this section and the responses were unsatisfactory. Candidates who chose this question seemed to create their own question and described personalities of the other characters and not that of Mr Doolittle. Other candidates confused Mr Higgins with Mrs Higgins; therefore, they gave the character of Mr Higgins, thinking it was Mrs Higgins. Very few candidates seemed not to have even read the question, thus they merely gave comments on the given passage.

They were expected to see Mr Doolittle as aggressive and rude in the way he addressed both Higgins and his mother, unappreciative of being elevated to middle class society, irresponsible for not wanting to take care of his daughter and other relatives, a con man as he enjoyed touching people for money. On the other hand, others may see him as honest and bold for his ability to face Mr Higgins and be honest with him and intelligent for seeing the world as it is.

(b) What are your feelings as you read the passage? Support your answer with details from the passage.

In this question, candidates' responses were unsatisfactory, though they were better than for part (a). The question required candidates to express feelings for all the characters found in the passage. Candidates mostly focused on one or two characters and even then the feelings were not efficiently expressed.

They were expected to express feelings of admiration for Mrs Higgins for standing by her son, surprise at Mr Doolittle for being unappreciative for the elevation to the middle class, annoyance at Higgins' insults towards Mr Doolittle, pride at Doolittle for standing up for himself and presenting his case honestly, anger and annoyance for not wanting to be responsible father and citizen, saddened by the ways of the world and anger at Pickering for looking down upon Doolittle among other feelings.

Question 2

For what reasons would you admire Mrs Higgins in the story? Support your answer with details from the play.

This was the most unpopular question among candidates in this section and in this examination, and it was poorly done. Poor knowledge of text content was the major contributory factor. This is evident by the fact that candidates used the passage for Question 1 to respond to this question, yet in the passage Mrs Higgins appears very briefly in the opening line. Candidates were expected to find reasons to admire Mrs Higgins and give support that is rooted in the play.

They were expected to admire her for being a loving mother and supporting her son in his work, opening her home to Eliza to see if the transformation had been successful and, when she had left Mr Higgins, defending and protecting her from her son, her ability to set her son straight, being fair and calm at all times among other reasons for admiring her.

Question 3

You are Mrs Pearce, after finding out that Eliza will be staying at Higgins' house for the duration of her lessons. Write your thoughts.

Again, this was another unpopular question in this section and in the examination, and it was poorly done. Candidates did not recognise the role of Mrs Pearce as a housekeeper to Mr Higgins, and they seemed to confuse the relationship between Eliza and Mr Higgins; they seemed to think they were dating or in some kind of love relationship. They also seemed in doubt of the moment. They did not appreciate the fact that Mrs Pearce was privy to the negotiations between Eliza and Mr Higgins.

They were expected to reflect feelings of annoyance to the added burden of taking care of another person, frustration at Higgins' obsessive nature towards his work and his crude attitude, doubt in Eliza's ability to be successful in her lessons, irritation at the work she has to do with Eliza, reluctant admiration at Eliza's grit among other thoughts and feelings.

The Gods Are Not to Blame

Question 4

(a) What does the passage reveal about Alaka's personality? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This was the most popular question among candidates in this section and in this examination, and it was well done. Candidates were able to see Alaka as respectful and considerate towards Ojuola. He is amusing and caring towards Odewale, he is clean and takes good care of himself, he is loyal, trustworthy and affectionate.

(b) What are your feelings as you read the passage? Support your answer with details from the passage.

Candidates' responses in this question were slightly above average. This was due to the fact that candidates would focus on only one character, yet the question expected them to express their feelings to all the characters portrayed in the passage.

They were expected to express feelings of admiration for Alaka for being well-mannered and respectful, admiration for Ojuola's hospitality, pity and worry about Odewale, curious to know why Alaka is here, pride for Alaka's loyalty and trustworthiness, amused by Alaka's wit and humorous nature and shock and surprise at the news brought by Alaka among other feelings.

Question 5

For what reasons would you admire the Chiefs in the story? Support your answer with details from the play.

This was not a popular question among candidates, and it was poorly done. Candidates exhibited poor knowledge of text content and would then poach from the passage given for question 4. Others decided to negate the question, writing, "I do not admire". Others still treated this question as argumentative question as they wanted to show both sides of the argument. Such affected them negatively.

Candidates were expected to admire the Chiefs for being supportive towards Odewale even though they thought he was a stranger to the land. The Chiefs are also loyal. They helped Odewale to find the cure to the unknown sickness respectfully, protected Odewale when Baba Fakunle called him a murderer. They are understanding and not power hungry and they showed empathy when the truth was finally revealed.

Question 6

You are one of the townspeople, seeing Odewale exile himself at the end of the story. Write your thoughts.

This was another popular question in this section among candidates. However, it was poorly done. Candidates failed to capture the moment accurately, and they seemed not to understand the significance of Odewale exiling himself. Responses were limited to the act of exiling himself and did not develop to address the reasons for the exile and the impact of the act on the townspeople. Other candidates did not assume the character fully, while others wanted to treat it as an argumentative, showing sympathy for Odewale on one side and stating how he deserved this fate on the other side.

Candidates were expected to express feelings and thoughts of shock at his downfall, awe and surprise at his keeping the oath and exiling himself, worry and empathy over the children as they are part of the curse, amazed at his bravery in honouring the oath, pity at Ojuola and understanding of her predicament thus the suicide, sympathy for Abero and Aderopo, pain at losing yet another king, curious and anxious about their future, relief of the ending of the sickness and lifting of the curse, marvel and renewed trust in the gods and their powers.

SECTION B: POETRY

When Fishes Flew and Other Poems

In this section, the performance was satisfactory. Candidates showed good knowledge of poems. They were able to remember the poems in good detail, particularly in Question 8.

Question 7

What is the speaker's attitude towards her lover in the following poem?

This was the most popular question in this section among candidates. However, the performance was below average. Candidates failed to give the attitude of the speaker to the lover. Instead, they paraphrased the poem giving a general analysis of the poem.

They were expected to see the speaker as having true and unconditional love. They were expected to note that the speaker's love is immeasurable, divine and unending.

Question 8

With close reference to either *Those Winter Sundays* by Robert Hayden or *My Scars Run Too Deep* by Beata da Sales, discuss the speaker's experiences on father and son relationships.

This was another popular question in this section and both poems were equally popular among candidates. However, the performance was below average. Though learners had excellent recall of the poems they were unable to explore the father and son relationship. They merely analysed the poems giving characters of the fathers and expressing their feeling towards the different fathers.

In *Those Winter Sundays*, candidates were expected to identify the relationship as a good and loving relationship, a sacrificial and protective relationship. The son is seen being regretful for not being appreciative to his father for his selfless dedication to him.

In *My Scars Run Too Deep*, candidates were expected to identify the relationship as abusive, cruel, conflicted and fearful. The son is wounded, and the relationship is full of tension.

Question 9

Choose one of the following poems and show how the speaker's words make you feel very sad.

***Once Upon a Time* by Gabriel Okara**

***My Story Is On the Leaves* by Sarah Mkhonza**

This was an unpopular question among the candidates and the performance was slightly below average. Both poems were equally popular among those who chose this question. Candidates exhibited good memory of the poems. Unfortunately, they did not address the question demands, but rather tended to narrate the poems.

In the poem *Once Upon a Time* the poem was not fully explored and responses were not rooted in the poem. The sadness in the poem is in the moral decay of society, the hypocrisy. People are mean and hostile towards each other, cold and inhumane. The speaker has succumbed to the fake society/peer pressure, and he envies the young man and wants to revert to a time when he was genuine.

In the poem *My Story Is On the Leaves* candidates tended to give general commentary on Gender-Based Violence and their feelings towards it, thus rendering their responses below par. The sadness in the poem

is in the death of the persona at the hands of her husband, who is supposed to be her protector. She died in a brutal manner. She couldn't tell her story whilst she was alive and now she wants the whole world to know that she died young and she is not at peace as she did not get justice. She lived a contained life, and now she is free, she feels betrayed by her husband and society. She wants her story to be written in red.

SECTION C: PROSE

In this section candidates' performance was found wanting as they tended to respond to one part of the question, especially in the passage based questions. The question demands for traditional and empathy questions were not fully met. The most popular text was **The Mending Season** and the least popular was **The Amaryllis**.

The Amaryllis

Question 10

(a) What does the passage reveal about Tana's friends? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This was one of the popular questions in this section and the performance was average. Candidates' responses were mostly one-sided as they only saw the negative side of Tana's friends. They also tended to encourage the negative behaviour of being interested in boys.

They were expected to see her friends as loving, honest and straight-talkers as they kept no secrets from her and told her about Reuben's cheating. They are also caring and supportive as they comfort her and give her space to process and deal with the information they have just given her. Tana's friends could also be seen as too forward and callous in the way they deliver the news to Tana and uncaring as they both leave her alone and go for tea.

(b) What are your feelings towards Tana as you read the passage? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This part of the question was very well done. Candidates were able to express their sympathy towards Tana for her betrayal by the love of her life and the way in which she received the news, pity for her for being a laughing stock around campus, sad for her heartbreak and proud of her for her inner strength and attempt to comfort herself. Happy for her for having such honest, and caring and supportive friends.

Question 11

With close reference to Zakhe, discuss the lessons you have learnt about the results of bad behaviour? Support your answer with details from the text.

This was not a popular question among the candidates in this section, and it was poorly done as the responses did not address the question's demands. Responses did not explore the results of bad behaviour and lessons learnt; instead, candidates merely explored the bad behaviours.

Candidates were expected to highlight results such as making bad decisions such as; committing abortion, loss of a bright future as she dropped out school, failure at school as she failed Form 2, loss of parental love when she ran away from home and her name was forbidden at home. She also felt unloved and unwanted by her parents. Tana was left to take care of all the household chores, leads a difficult and abusive life, she tolerates an abusive relationship, she is left with 3 children, possible disfigurement as she has lost her teeth.

Question 12

You are Tana, after welcoming your prodigal sister back home from Botswana. Write your thoughts.

This was another popular question among candidates, yet it was poorly done. The moment was not accurately captured, candidates forgot how Tana got to know of her sisters' return. Character was not accurately captured. Tana was presented as very judgmental and the empathy approach was flaunted. Responses were a one-way conversation to Zakhe. Others began: "I would think..." "I would also think..." "Another thought I would have..."

Candidates were expected to express feelings and thoughts of relief for the safe return of their sister, empathy for what she and her children have been through, sadness for Zakhe having to learn the hard way, marvel at her father's forgiveness and swift action to bring Zakhe back home quickly, surprise and hope at the change of behaviour in their sister and that the family business will be in good hands.

The Mending Season

Question13

(a) What does the passage reveal about the Masemola family and their relationship with the neighbours? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This was a popular question in this section and in the examination, however, it was poorly done. This is a two-pronged question that demanded that learners explore the Masemola's relationship with their neighbours and also their personality as a family. Mostly, the candidates attended to one side of the question; they mostly explored the relationship with the neighbours.

Candidates were expected to explore them as having a difficult relationship; they are treated as outcasts: 'home of witches', they are despised and hated, they are alienated: mothers warned their children to keep away from Matshidiso, they were the subject of gossip, the neighbours were judgmental. The sisters themselves were aggressive and hot-tempered, they were protective, demanding, bold and fearless, they were confrontational and united, they were unconventional, among other traits.

(b) What are your feelings towards Mmamane Malesedi as you read the passage? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This question was also poorly answered as learners failed to identify Mmamane Malesedi's character from the passage to allow them to express the relevant feelings. Feelings of anger and shock at her behaviour of chasing men naked, proud of her independence, not wanting to be taken for granted, pity that she is a subject of gossip, sad that they still talk of her nakedness and proud of her protectiveness, among other feelings.

Question 14

With close reference to the story, discuss what you have learnt about the effects of racism. Support your answer with details from the text.

This was the least popular question in this section and in the examination. The performance was way below average. Candidates did not show understanding of racism, and they used the passage given for Question 13 to respond to this question.

Candidates were expected to discuss effects of racism including the unfair treatment of the minority group forced evictions, unequal opportunities, especially educational opportunities, division within the classroom set-up, insults and biased treatment of the minority group during the netball court incident, among others.

Question 15

You Tshidi, at the end of the first day in the new school in town. Write your thoughts.

This was a popular question among candidates in this section; however, it was not well done. The moment was not fully captured as candidates expressed thoughts of the morning on the way to the new school and not those of the afternoon after school. The character was also accurately captured; some candidates went as far as regretting the opportunity granted to Matshidiso. They tended to narrate the events of Tshidi's life. Candidates were expected to express feelings and thoughts of being excited about her first day at the new school, though she may express embarrassment about being caught staring and her rough accent, worried about her home-made relaxer and envious of the professionally salon treated hairstyles, determination to improve her accent, grateful to her mother's for the opportunity, determined to make new friends, surprise at the culture shock; the relationship between learners and the teachers and may also be anxious about the undertones of racism still evident in the classroom and with some other teachers.

Africa Kills Her Sun

Question 16

(a) What does the passage reveal about Tengetile's father? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This was a popular question among candidates in this section, the performance was slightly below average. They failed to discuss Tengetile's father's character fully as exposed in the passage. They did not use the passage fully.

Candidates were expected to see Tengetile's father as loving to Tengetile as he appreciates her beauty, yet he was manipulative at the same time as he was grooming her to be a chief's future wife. He was selective as he treated her differently from her other siblings, he was selfish as he didn't share his food with the others, he was discriminative as he refused to pay school fees for the girls and cruel as he insulted his other daughters among other traits.

(b) What feelings do you have towards Fikelephi and Hleziphi? Support your answer with details from the passage.

This question was also poorly done as candidates only saw sympathy towards Fikelephi and Hleziphi. They failed to recognize the mother's contribution.

Candidates were expected to express feelings of sympathy for being overlooked by their father, pity for having to bear Tengetile's bragging, happy for the chance of getting an education, empathy for starting school late and sad for not being beautiful, among other feelings.

Question 17

With close reference to the story *Tomorrow is Forever* by Modison Magagula, discuss what you have learnt about love. Support your answer with details from the story.

This was also another very popular question among candidates in this section and the performance was above average. Candidates mostly commented on the love relationship. Some candidates, however, confused this story with *The First Christmas without My Mother*.

Candidates were expected to identify love as patient and persistent as Bayeni spent 3 months proposing to Thandi. Love as being commitment and loyalty as Bayeni did not lose focus and pursue other girls but he focused only on Thandi, love was self-controlled and disciplined for both as Thandi didn't give in easily/quickly, love was tested, love is protective as Thandi's mother wanted to protect her from the dangers of the and let her sleep in so she can get enough rest and there was also the love of culture.

Question 18

You are Lungi in *A Young Man's Anger* by Nomsa Zindela, just after confronting your father about the family issues. Write your thoughts.

This was the least popular question among candidates in this section, and it was poorly done. Candidates failed to capture the character fully. In their responses, Lungi was too angry and frustrated.

Candidates were expected to express feelings and thoughts of regret in her approach, sad because she had to be careful on what to say, disappointment that her father is not receptive, self satisfaction that at least she was able to say what was on her mind, pity over her mother and his other wives and siblings, relief at her attempt to save her mother, at loss on what to do next and anger at her father's lack of protection among other thoughts she may have.

Recommendations

- Teachers are advised to cover all texts as required by the syllabus, as poor knowledge of the texts' content becomes the major contributory factor to poor performance in the examination.
- Candidates must be trained to choose questions correctly; adhering to the instructions of the component, as failure to do so results in rubric infringement, which greatly disadvantages some of the candidates in the examination.
- It cannot be emphasised enough that, in the traditional essays, candidates should be reminded to expand to the whole text for support.
- Teachers are requested to advise and train candidates to follow the requirements of the examination in choosing questions. The requirement is that candidates should choose a question from each section and of these there should be a passage-based question and an essay question. It can be two passage-based questions and one essay question **OR** it can be one passage-based question and two essay questions.
- In poetry teachers are commended for the continual improvement of candidates' performance and are encouraged to continue to give focus to the language and its effect, not on the mere interpretation of the poems, as these interpretations tend to be vague and out of context and misleading. Also, learners have to be trained to use the whole poem when giving support.
- Teachers are also advised to give candidates ample time to practise the different types of questions so that they can respond accurately to the different genres. Candidates should be exposed to the full paper long before they sit for the final examination, so they get used to the different questions; to reduce the excitement of seeing new and interesting texts and questions as they sit for the final examination.

Paper 120/02

General comments

The candidature was less than the previous year this time around. The performance unfortunately declined significantly this year. This may be due to the fact that in question one candidates listed feelings instead of explaining how the stated feelings are evoked in them as they read the passage. In their quest to respond to the set task, most candidates were tempted to narrate, paraphrase, use bullet points or create their own questions. For question two, where they were expected to discuss the speaker's memories, they discussed a variety of feelings, which was regrettably not the requirement here. For this reason, teachers are encouraged to expose candidates to this kind of paper as early as possible and give as much practice as possible. Candidates need more practice in text appreciation, question analysis and essay writing skills.

Structure of the paper

The paper had two questions. Question 1 was a prose question; question 2 was a poem. Candidates were required to respond to **one** question, either question one or question two, in 1 hour 30 minutes. Each question carried 20 marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Explore how the writer's use of language makes you emotional as you read the passage?

Candidates who performed well are those who clearly named or stated the specific feeling to show how emotional they are, quoted relevant evidence from the text, and explained how the selected moment (example) evokes the stated feelings. Candidates were expected to also name a variety of emotions and be able to demonstrate that they are heightening. These feelings may be worry, pity, disappointment, admiration, annoyance, shock etc. Better candidates were even able to discuss the characters' feelings and how they make them feel as readers.

Candidates were expected to show a clear and sustained understanding of the passage and task through their in-depth understanding and awareness of emotional moments and situations. Their discussions would not just pick relevant examples from the text, but they were expected to clearly explain how the teacher, Zani, the drunkards, the men before the holes, Busi, Mimi and MaButhelezi ignite the feelings mentioned. All this was expected to be done with sensitivity to the writer's choice of words. Weak responses were those that showed a vague or elementary understanding of the passage. Narrations, paraphrases, listing and a variety of feelings with irrelevant examples also did not score much. Responses that were a mere appreciation of language and ignored the main task of feelings also did not earn high marks.

Factors Affecting Performance

- Not writing one whole essay instead they addressed the bullet points in isolation. Such a method of responding limits the flow of ideas, hence affecting the candidate's development of the response.
- Some candidates were clearly unfamiliar with the key word 'emotional'.
- Responses narrating Zani's story instead of engaging with the task.
- Discussing irrelevant feelings.
- Some candidates wrote lengthy responses which resulted in generalisations.
- Naming feelings, quoting examples but failing to develop them into meaningful and persuasive paragraphs through explaining the stated points convincingly.
- Naming feelings and quoting irrelevant examples.
- Focusing on Zani and the teacher, yet there are other characters in the story.
- Repeating one feeling throughout the essay.
- Failure to understand the plot of the story, which resulted in flawed responses.
- Candidates often misunderstood who Zani was and what the teacher did.
- Misconceptions about the characters involved in the passage.

Question 2

Explore how the speaker expresses memories of his home.

A great improvement was noted in the number of candidates who chose this question. The manner in which the poetry question was handled showed that teachers have put a lot of effort into training candidates. However, it was poorly done by a majority of our candidates.

Candidates who performed well in this question were able to state and clearly explain the memories of the speaker and give relevant examples to support their claims. As they discussed the speaker's memories, they would also comment on the use of language.

Weaker responses were those that displayed a vague or little understanding of the poem. A majority narrated the story of the poem without stating specific memories. Others discussed emotions evoked in them as they read the passage and totally ignored the set task. A few focussed on merely identifying figures of speech. Sadly, others incorrectly quoted them. For example, they would quote: '... like some old bachelor' as a metaphor, yet it is a simile. Another challenge was that some candidates failed to understand that the speaker is no longer in exile. Candidates also misunderstood and misinterpreted some aspects of the poem and some words. For example, the phrase '...poor nurse' was interpreted as showing the speaker's poverty-stricken background. Others assumed that the speaker was in exile because his family disowned him, thus, he was prohibited from coming home, hence he started a new life in another country. Another common flaw was the presumption asserting that the speaker was stressed and depressed therefore, sitting by the sea contemplating committing suicide. Gross irrelevance was noted where some candidates shared their personal experiences of being suspended or expelled from school.

Factors Affecting Performance

- Not writing one whole essay instead they addressed the bullet points in isolation.
- Lack of question analysis skills
- Responses merely analysing the poem instead of real engagement with the task.
- Discussing feelings instead of memories.
- Some candidates wrote lengthy responses which resulted in generalisations.
- Stating memories, paraphrasing details from the poem but failing to develop them into meaningful and persuasive paragraphs.
- Assuming that the speaker is still in exile
- Wrongly identifying literary devices
- Making unfounded assumptions
- Flawed understanding of key moments

Expectations

- The expectation is that the memory or what the speaker remembers is stated or named. It should be accompanied by a relevant example and clear explanations; why, how, and what makes the speaker remember this event, place, sound, scenery etc. Close reference should be made to the texts to justify or exemplify the moments or situations that are the reason for such.
- Explanations for claims should be related to the claim mentioned.
- Echoing question in every paragraph instead of mere narrations or lifting from text.
- Literary devices should be identified, and their effect explained in relation to the set task.

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers:

- Teach question analysis skills to help learners to focus on the task or question requirements.
- Teach candidates how to develop responses, i.e. paragraph development.
- Expose learners to different question types.
- Teach text analysis and how emotions are evoked as opposed to giving learners lists of feelings which they will merely regurgitate and use out of context. Learners should be able to give appropriate feelings and support them with relevant examples as well as explain how the selected example evokes the said feeling. In the case of personal responses, learners need to know that they are required to respond effectively to the set question first before giving their opinions.
- Explain to candidates the purpose of the synopsis, bullet points and glossary.
- Encourage candidates to echo question in each and every paragraph.
- Encourage candidates to respond to **one** not two questions
- Encourage candidates to explain the effect of literary devices instead of merely identifying them from the text.

