

CHAPTER 14

SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE HOME LANGUAGE

The following report should be read in conjunction with the South African Sign Language Home Language question paper of the November 2018 examinations.

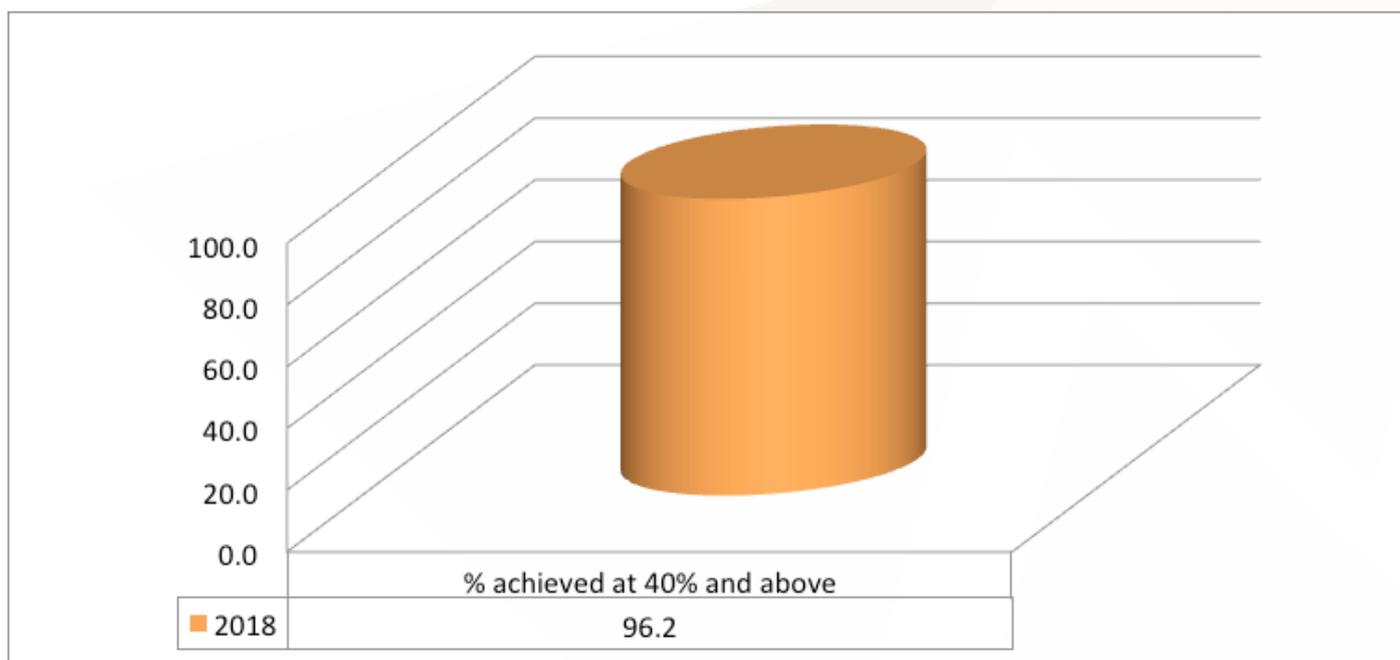
14.1 PERFORMANCE TRENDS IN PAPERS 1–3

Table 14.1.1 Overall Achievement Rates in South African Sign Language Home Language

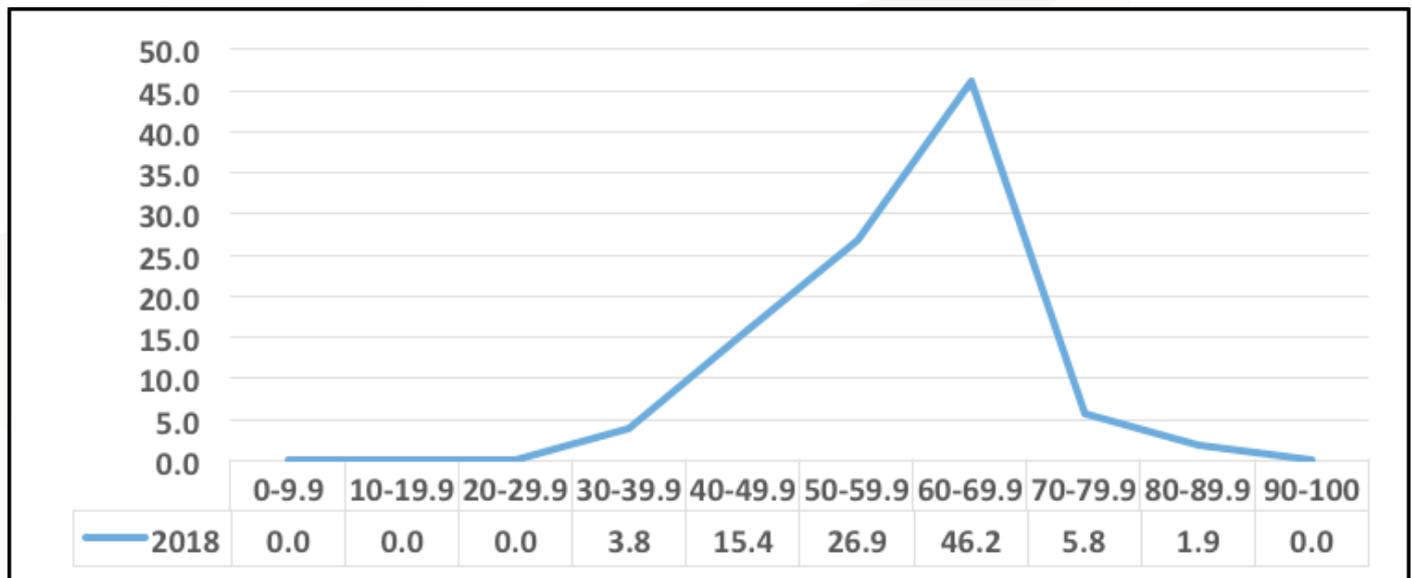
Year	No. wrote	No. achieved at 40% and above	% achieved at 40% and above
2018	52	50	96,2

The number of candidates who sat for the examinations in SASL HL was 52 and 50 of the candidates obtained 40% and above. This represents a 96,2% achievement.

Graph 14.1.1 Overall Achievement Rates in South African Sign Language Home Language (Percentage)



Graph 14.1.2 Performance Distribution Curves in South African Sign Language Home Language (Percentage)



Graph 14.1.2 outlines candidates' performance in percentage. 26,9 % of candidates obtained a level 4 pass (50 - 59%), while 46,2% of the candidate obtained a level 5 pass (60 - 69%).

14.2 OVERVIEW OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 1

General comments

- Most candidates were challenged by the way in which questions were signed as there were variations in the dialect, which impacted negatively on the overall performance.
- Generally, candidates were not attentive to the specific requirement of the question. As a result they gave incomplete or irrelevant responses.
- There was a tendency among candidates to respond using the exact language from the given texts instead of articulating the responses in their own signs ('words'). Hence there was little evidence of understanding of the texts.
- Candidates were challenged with questions that required higher-order thinking. They succeeded with level 1 and level 2 questions but had difficulty as the cognitive levels progressed.
- The performance of candidates in Language Structures and Use was of concern. It would appear that the teaching of basic syntax concepts was not given sufficient attention.

14.3 ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 1

QUESTION 1: Comprehension

- Most of the responses were incomplete as candidates answered only part of the question.
- Responses lacked details as specified in the marking guidelines.
- Most candidates tended to be repetitive in their responses.
- There was a tendency among candidates to sign the entire question before signing the answer. This must be avoided as it is time-consuming and unnecessary.

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. Q1.1, Q1.6, Q1.9 and Q1.10, required more than one fact/reason. The majority of candidates provided only one fact/reason.
- b. A description of a process was required in Q1.5 and Q1.7. Only part of the process was indicated in the responses.
- c. Certain signs were not understood by candidates, hence the responses given were incorrect, e.g. in Q1.5 storm drain and Q1.12 intentional and accidental littering.
- d. Several questions were misinterpreted owing to variations in dialect.
- e. In Q1.13, candidates did not respond accurately to the question on comparison of a chunk in the text to a picture. They were required to describe each text first and thereafter deduce information from both texts. Candidates were unable to link the picture to the text and deduce the relevant information.

Suggestions for improvement

- a. Teachers should teach learners to do the following:
 - * View/Read the question at least twice
 - * Deconstruct the question and identify what is required
 - * Respond accordingly to the question to prevent irrelevant and incomplete responses
 - * Avoid repetitions in their responses
- b. Teachers should use texts signed in other provinces for visual reading to introduce learners to varied dialects. This would alleviate the challenge with variations in signed dialects that has impacted on performance.
- c. Higher-order thinking skills must be taught. Teachers should create opportunities for learners to engage in high-order or critical thinking. This will enhance performance when confronted with such questions in examination situations.
- d. Teachers have to be rigid about the 40/40/20 rule for cognitive levels when setting school-based assessments. This will ensure that learners are aware of the different cognitive requirements and are exposed to such a way of answering.
- e. Learners must be familiar with the signs and meanings of instructional verbs such as explain, discuss, motivate, compare and evaluate.

QUESTION 2: Summary

As per the instructions, candidates are required to produce the summary in point format. Candidates lacked understanding of this format.

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. There was no evidence of planning so as to ascertain the main point in each chunk.
- b. Candidates did not remember all the points when recording their answers as they did not note them during planning. It was clear from the recordings that they did not remember as they tended to repeat points or digress.

- c. Candidates tended to repeat verbatim what was signed in the main text, rather than express the summary point in their own signs.
- d. Owing to compromised understanding of certain signs, the number of points that candidates signed was less than the number required.

Suggestions for Improvement

- a. Learners can practise summarising skills using shorter texts and extend progressively to longer texts.
- b. Learners must be taught that a summary requires only the main point to be extracted from each chunk.
- c. Learners must be encouraged to plan by noting/writing the main points before commencing with the signing of the summary. This will facilitate a fluent and coherent presentation.
- d. Teachers should encourage learners to express the main point using their own signs rather than signing verbatim from the text.
- e. The summary is an important aspect of learning and should be taught and practised.

QUESTION 3: Analysing an Advertisement

- a. Learners were seriously challenged with questions that required higher-order cognitive applications. Learners must be given opportunities to apply higher-order critical thinking skills to analyse advertising.
- b. As with all comprehension exercises, learners must be careful not to disadvantage their performance by not responding to the specific requirements of the question.

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. In Q3.1, candidates were required to give the full name of the advertised product, i.e. Apple iPad Air 2, but instead gave partial responses such as tablet/Apple.
- b. Candidates did not respond to the question requirements correctly. They were required to name two careers in Q3.3 and two benefits in Q3.4 but instead they only gave one response.
- c. It would appear that the candidates had not been sufficiently exposed to analysing advertisements and hence were unable to answer questions on advertising techniques as required in Q3.5.

Suggestions for improvement

- a. Learners should be offered frequent opportunities to analyse advertisements using products that are popular and of current interest to them as the youth.
- b. Teachers must teach aspects of advertising such as brand names, target-group appeal, the advertising medium, duration of the advertisement, the setting, etc. and the reasons thereof.
- c. Learners must be taught concepts associated with advertising such as the purpose or effectiveness of certain special effects and how these effects enhance the intention of the advertisement.
- d. The key instruction words such as substantiate, motivate, give reasons for your answer should be identified in questions. Learners should be familiar with these signs.

QUESTION 4: Analysing a Cartoon

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. In Q4.1, candidates spontaneously signed an opinion on what was happening in the cartoon instead of addressing the differences in work situations.
- b. In Q4.2, candidates did not understand that the instructional phrase “account for” is the same as explain. This led to incorrect responses. Some candidates responded by describing the body language rather than the non-manual features.
- c. In Q4.3, some candidates were unable to present a dialogue by using role-shift and head-turn techniques.

Suggestions for improvement

- a. Teachers must train learners to view/read the questions carefully.
- b. Teachers should teach the various skills as indicated in the CAPS, for example non-manual features (NMFs) (p 32) and dialogue techniques (p 30).
- c. Teachers must ensure that learners get sufficient exposure to the study of cartoons to elucidate how cartoon features, such as satire and humour, are achieved. This skill can only be acquired through regular exposure.
- d. The impact and effectiveness of techniques used in visual literacy must be taught and highlighted in analysing cartoons.
- e. Learners may be encouraged to alter or add sketch lines and other visual features to cartoons being analysed and note how these change the impact and effectiveness.

QUESTION 5: Language and Editing

- a. Candidates were challenged by questions that required higher-order thinking. They succeeded with level 1 and level 2 questions but had difficulty as the cognitive levels progressed.
- b. The performance of candidates in Language Structures and Use was a concern.

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. Most candidates responded incorrectly to questions on syntactical structures, e.g.
 - * Q 5.1, lexicalised fingerspelling;
 - * Q 5.2, classifier groups, e.g. body part classifier and how these are used in syntax;
 - * Q 5.4, verbs and its use in varied contexts; and
 - * Q 5.6, adverbs.
- b. Candidates were unable to identify and correct the grammatical errors in the text. In their responses they repeated the content with the same error. This shows strong English language influence.

Suggestions for improvement

- Learners should be taught the syntactical structure of SASL and how this varies from the structure of English.
- Learners should be exposed to texts with errors. They should be able to identify and correct the errors. This can be done with both live and recorded signing.
- The CAPS document lists the language structures and conventions which are to be taught. Learners should be familiar with the various aspects, e.g. syntax and its use in different contexts as listed in CAPS, p 34.
- Learners must also be taught the relevance of semantic features in SASL (CAPS, p 35) such as metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, etc. and how these are used to achieve meaning and effect.

14.4 OVERVIEW OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 2

General comments

- Most of the candidates did not perform well in the literary essay questions. They did not comply with the requirements as set out in the CAPS. The content in the responses lacked correct interpretation of the topic, depth of argument, justification and grasp of the text. Candidates did not understand the genre and the text. Structure, logical flow of presentation as well as the presentation style used in the essays was also challenging. Candidates were retelling the poem and the short stories.
- The questions testing poetic devices were also a challenge to many candidates. Most of the candidates could not answer these questions. Responses revealed that learners did not understand poetic devices and how these function in the interpretation of poetry.

14.5 ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 2

SECTION A: POETRY

Common Errors and Misconceptions

- In the essay question, Q1, very little analytical skill or critical discussion was evident. Instead of an argument being developed in response to the set question, many candidates paraphrased the poem. No reference was made to what the question required which was *personification*, the way the poet signs and how the poet expresses his identity as a Deaf person.

In Q2.3, most candidates were unable to respond effectively to the question and could not identify the symbolism which is a requirement to score marks.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Teachers must ensure that they teach learners to avoid repetition and retelling of the poem.
- Teachers should assess learners' essays against the rubrics provided for literary essays. This includes references to interpretation of topic, depth of argument, justification and grasp of text.
- Learners must be able to understand and interpret the topic to be able to present the argument required by the topic. Teachers should not expect learners to analyse poems without the texts being taught and sufficient guidance given to learners.
- All the poetic devices should be taught and teachers need to ensure that learners understand and know the signs for the different poetic devices, e.g. symbolism, setting, effect, symmetry, etc. Learners must be taught the skills to critically discuss the key message that the poet communicates to the viewer.

SECTION B AND SECTION C: SHORT STORIES

Common errors and misconceptions

- a. In Q6 (essay question), many candidates did not analyse the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* which extensively encompasses the internal and external conflicts in the text. Many candidates were not familiar with the concepts of internal and external conflict.
- b. In Q8 (essay question), many candidates were retelling the story instead of using contextual evidence to support the author's views with reference to Deaf education. Essays consisted of only a few unrelated facts.
- c. In Q9.5, candidates had difficulty in explaining the two types of conflict evident in the story as they did not understand the concepts of internal and external conflict.

Suggestions for improvement

- a. Teachers should use the poetry and literary essay rubrics to inform their teaching of the literary essay. Emphasis must be given to the structure of the essay (introduction, body and conclusion), as well as the appropriate register (formal) and language.
- b. Learners' attention should be drawn to the criteria specified in the assessment rubrics and should be encouraged to develop essays based on the criteria in the rubrics.
- c. Teachers must ensure that learners have a thorough understanding of the genre and text.
- d. Learners should be taught to use quotes or specific references to support their arguments. An essay requires a focused and critical discussion. Specific references and relevant quotes must be used to support arguments in a literary essay.
- e. Teachers must ensure that they teach learners to avoid repetition and retelling of the story.
- f. Critical thinking skills should be developed in order for learners to respond to questions that require higher-order interpretations. The skills include interpretation of the topic and a range of arguments supported from the text.
- g. Teachers must give learners multiple opportunities to practise answering these types of questions.
- h. Teachers should ensure that the content of prescribed texts is properly taught.
- i. Teacher should not expect learners to analyse stories without the texts being taught and sufficient guidance given. Candidates cannot acquire insight into the texts without having mastered knowledge of the content.

14.6 OVERVIEW OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 3

General comments

- a. Candidates performed better in the essays than in the transactional texts.
- b. Candidates deviated from the topics and lacked sufficient detail in the content to support the topic.
- c. The topics were mostly not interpreted correctly. Variations in dialects contributed to misunderstanding of the topics.
- d. Most candidates did not comply with all the criteria for an essay as indicated in the *CAPS*, p 27 - 31, and specified in the rubrics, i.e. content, planning, language, style and structure.

14.7 ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN PAPER 3

SECTION A: ESSAYS

General comments

Most of the candidates responded to Q1.2 which was a lower-order question and none of the candidates chose Q1.5 which was a more challenging topic.

Common errors and misconceptions

- In Q1.1, candidates understood the topic but did not conclude effectively which was the crux of this topic. Essays lacked the proper structure.
- The majority of the candidates responded to Q1.2. Candidates' essays lacked appropriate content and planning. Candidates repeated the same ideas throughout the essay.
- In Q1.3, candidates lacked content and deviated from the topic. The content of this topic should have been about the value of education. Instead, candidates signed about Mandela and his experience during apartheid. The quotation was misinterpreted by most learners because of the dialect that the signer used.
- In Q1.4, a description of why sign language is the preferred language for the Deaf was addressed instead of issues of Deaf pride and identity.

Suggestions for improvement

- There should be compliance with the recording/signing processes as set out on page 27 of the CAPS, i.e. recording process, planning/pre-recording, drafting and final recording.
- The planning stage of the essay is crucial. Planning and editing should be an integral part of drafting the essay. Learners must re-read essays and eliminate incoherence and other errors before recording their final essay.
- Learners need to be taught how to sign and record an essay and be given sufficient time to practise the skill of essay writing.
- Learners should be familiar with the criteria specified in the assessment rubrics. Teachers should teach the learners to develop their essay presenting skills based on the rubrics.
- Coaching learners on examination technique, e.g. identifying the essence of the topic is essential. Learners should also be encouraged to explore all the possibilities contained in a topic so that their writing is more original and authentic.

SECTION B: TRANSACTIONAL PIECES

General comments

The time specified for the length of the transactional text is 3 – 6 minutes. However, it was noted that when candidates answered the transactional texts, they only had relevant responses up to about 2 minutes after which candidates often repeated themselves or deviated from the topic.

Common errors and misconceptions

- The majority of the candidates (78%) chose Q2.1. Most of the candidates signed a narrative/descriptive account of the topic instead of signing a congratulatory message.
- In Q2.2, candidates did not include all the information required for the formal request. The content lacked detail and proper planning.

- c. More than half of the candidates responded to Q2.3. Most of the candidates did not know the presentation requirements for the obituary. As a result, the language register was often inappropriate.
- d. In Q2.4, candidates' responses did not contain sufficient details and the format of the formal report was incorrect. They also misinterpreted and deviated from the topic.
- e. In Q2.5, candidates did not give details of the campaign; instead they signed a narrative of Deafness and sign language.
- f. In the interview, Q2.6, some of the candidates were not familiar with the dialogue techniques, e.g. role-shift.

Suggestions for improvement

- a. Transactional writing should be taught and included in the teaching programme. Learners can do reasonably well in this section if they are familiar with the various categories of texts.
- b. The register should match the intention and audience of the text, e.g. formal language should be used for formal requests and reports whereas informal language is appropriate for congratulatory messages.
- c. Formats should be taught correctly and learners should know how to sign and record transactional texts.
- d. Learners should be familiar with the criteria specified in the assessment rubrics. Teachers should teach the learners to develop their presenting skills based on the rubrics.
- e. Learners should be given varied opportunities to practise these texts.

14.8 GENERAL COMMENTS FOR PAPERS 1, 2 AND 3

- a. Teachers should attend regular cluster meetings to share knowledge, resources and address challenges.
- b. Teachers should develop their own resource packs (DVDs and workbooks) to improve the skills of learners.
- c. Schools should adhere to the guidelines for the implementation and conduct of examinations in South African Sign language Home Language to ensure that learners' responses are saved and copied correctly.
- d. Learners should ensure that the video clips are renamed according to the numbering in the question paper.
- e. Schools should upgrade their equipment (webcams) in preparation for SASL HL examinations to ensure that images are clear, signing is distinct and video quality is not compromised.
- f. Teachers should be trained on IT aspects in order to support learners with the use of computers, using editing software, saving responses, uploading and downloading texts, labelling responses.
- g. Teachers should acquire live recording techniques, such as camera positioning, for effective lighting and maximizing signing space