

# PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA  
EXAMINATIONS  
COUNCIL

## JCE ENGLISH 2025



## INTRODUCTION

This marking report constitutes feedback on candidates' performance from the 2025 JCE English examination that was made up of 4 components: Multiple Choice questions (Paper 1), Continuous Writing (Paper 2), Literature (Paper 3), and Listening Comprehension and Summary (Paper 4). The report is meant to help centers to acquaint themselves with what the expectations of the syllabus were and how candidates fared in the different domains of assessment.

## PAPER 1: MULTIPLE CHOICE

### General Comments

Paper 1 was a 40-item multiple-choice paper assessing candidates' understanding, interpretation, analysis, language use (implied meanings, vocabulary contexts) and reference skills. The candidates' performance was about average in this paper. The mean mark was 25.84, which was slightly higher than that of the previous year, with the maximum score being 40 and the lowest mark recorded at 2 out of 40 available marks.

Candidates are encouraged to look for items that provide them with more opportunities to interact with the application of the skills through exposure to a variety of reading texts to develop reading efficacy and to move from at-risk-readers, dependent readers to independent readers, as outlined in the assessment guide. The feedback on each item is given in the form of a table as indicated below, to include key information which would help in understanding how candidates reacted to the different items:

Prop.            the percentage of candidates who selected the option as their answer

Key            the option that was taken as the answer for the item

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Question 1

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.45	A	The majority of the candidates attained the correct answer which was Option A. A significant number of candidates also chose B, which was a strong distractor but not the correct answer.
B	0.40		
C	0.08		
D	0.07		

#### Question 2

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.18	D	Only a few candidates managed to get the correct answer. They were mainly drawn to the Option C as they tended to be lured by the word "respect" without understanding the erroneous ending of the statement.
B	0.10		
C	0.47		
D	0.25		



Question 3

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.09	C	A significant number of candidates managed to get the correct answer. They were able to determine the correct noun which was represented by the pronoun "they". Other candidates guessed option B as their response while a few chose options A and D.
B	0.23		
C	0.61		
D	0.07		

Question 4

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.62	A	This question called for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of information about friendship having no boundaries. The majority of candidates chose the correct answer as Option A to confirm that males and females can have ordinary friendships.
B	0.11		
C	0.14		
D	0.12		

Question 5

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.14	B	Candidates did well on this item and were able to identify the statement which was false as demanded by the task.
B	0.76		
C	0.05		
D	0.05		

Question 6

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.16	C	This item required candidates to understand the meaning of the word "Self-worth". Performance by candidates was satisfactory since only some of them were able to interpret self-worth as something where someone has high regard for themselves.
B	0.09		
C	0.50		
D	0.25		

Question 7

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.14	D	This item assessed candidates on their ability to demonstrate understanding of the gist of the passage. The item was satisfactorily attempted and candidates chose Option. A quarter of the candidature however chose C while a few others were confused between A and B.
B	0.11		
C	0.25		
D	0.50		

Question 8

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.14	B	This item was well answered with most candidates choosing the correct answer as B. However, others hazarded a guess and opted for A or C. while a select few chose D.
B	0.57		
C	0.22		
D	0.07		



Question 9

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.72	A	Most candidates understood the statement ' <b>like a lightning strike</b> ' and chose the correct answer, Option A. Few other candidates were confused and opted for C and D.
B	0.05		
C	0.12		
D	0.11		

Question 10

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.08	D	Candidates performed quite well for this item as they were able to identify the correct answer.
B	0.05		
C	0.06		
D	0.81		

Question 11

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.11	B	Candidates did well on this item, with 72% demonstrating knowledge of the correct factor, which could lead to the termination of friendship as demanded by the task. Other candidates struggled and appeared to guess their responses.
B	0.72		
C	0.09		
D	0.08		

Question 12

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.65	C	Candidates performed poorly on this question as they were unable to identify the correct response. However, the majority of candidates selected Option A, which was a strong distractor but incorrect as a way of overcoming obstacles in friendships.
B	0.08		
C	0.21		
D	0.06		

Question 13

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.70	A	Most candidates answered this item well, as they displayed a good understanding of what it means to be 'the friend you would like to have'. A few who were clueless appeared to guess from the different response options.
B	0.05		
C	0.13		
D	0.12		

Question 14

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.28	D	A good number of candidates identified the correct answer, recording a 62% rate. A few other candidates chose Option A, which was incorrect, while others appeared to guess their responses.
B	0.05		
C	0.05		
D	0.62		



Question 15

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.31	A	The performance of candidates on this item by candidates was poorly done. Responses were scattered between the different options, particularly A, B and D, although the highest proportion of responses was based on B.
B	0.37		
C	0.04		
D	0.27		

Question 16

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.05	B	Candidates did well on this item as they demonstrated the ability to choose the correct form of the verb. The correct answer was B, and almost all candidates were conversant with the infinitive form that had to be used.
B	0.88		
C	0.03		
D	0.04		

Question 17

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.13	C	Candidates were able to identify the need for the use of the superlative adjective and managed to choose the correct answer as C. A few other candidates, however, selected responses among the other options as they resorted to guesswork.
B	0.07		
C	0.74		
D	0.06		

Question 18

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.05	C	This item required candidates to state the verb 'to give' in the infinitive form. Candidates did very well as they were able to identify the correct answer.
B	0.05		
C	0.84		
D	0.06		

Question 19

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.65	A	Given the nature of the item, which began with 'Once people...', some candidates did not remember to choose the third person conjugation form of the verb and treated people as singular, thus choosing C. However, a significant portion of the candidates were able to identify the correct response as A.
B	0.07		
C	0.18		
D	0.10		

Question 20

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.06	D	The candidates' performance was fairly good. They managed to attain the correct response and chose option D, demonstrating their ability to understand the complex sentence.
B	0.28		
C	0.06		
D	0.59		





Question 27

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.87	A	When asked to interpret the meaning of the word 'line' when referring to people who 'stood in a line at the bank', almost all candidates understood that this meant people standing in a queue and therefore chose the correct answer, A.
B	0.05		
C	0.03		
D	0.05		

Question 28

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.60	A	Performance on this item was satisfactory. When interpreting the statement that 'light travels in a straight line', they were able to understand light as an imaginary path between two places. Other candidates seemed to guess between the different responses.
B	0.11		
C	0.08		
D	0.21		

Question 29

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.02	B	Candidates were required to state the correct tense of the verb to be used to indicate that the mother was still cleaning when the visitors arrived. The majority of the candidates were able to select the correct answer.
B	0.86		
C	0.06		
D	0.06		

Question 30

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.09	C	Candidates did well on this item as they identified the correct answer as C for the action which had already happened in the past, therefore requiring the word 'was'.
B	0.05		
C	0.75		
D	0.10		

Question 31

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.10	B	This item required candidates to identify Gil and Sam as the subject in plural form so that they would select the correct plural form of the verb, which was 'have been'. Most candidates were able to get the correct answer although some
B	0.79		
C	0.08		
D	0.02		

Question 32

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.82	A	This item called for candidates to use their inferential skills to determine the missing word to make the sentence complete. Almost all candidates were able to determine the correct answer as A, thereby demonstrating having understood the gist of what was being communicated.
B	0.05		
C	0.10		
D	0.03		



Question 33

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.11	D	Similar to the previous item, candidates were able to identify the missing word as D, even though it was not with the same level of success. A few candidates opted for A while a few others selected C, failing to realise that such responses would render the sentence incomprehensible.
B	0.07		
C	0.13		
D	0.70		

Question 34

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.04	C	For this task, candidates were called to identify the correct preposition to use in filling in the blank space in the sentence. A good number of candidates, about 70% of them, managed to identify the correct answer as C. A few candidates were lured by the preposition 'sitting on the car', which was incorrect. Others appeared to guess.
B	0.05		
C	0.70		
D	0.20		

Question 35

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.09	C	Candidates performed well in this task. They were required to identify the correct reflexive pronoun to use in filling that blank space provided in the sentence by matching 'My sister' with 'herself'.
B	0.04		
C	0.82		
D	0.05		

Question 36

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.08	B	Candidates were required to identify the correct spelling of the word "hurt" so that it is used as a verb to complete the sentence. Candidates managed to get the correct answer, demonstrating their understanding that the other options were presenting nouns and not a verb, although almost pronounced similarly.
B	0.83		
C	0.05		
D	0.05		

Question 37

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.24	B	This item called for candidates to identify the correct tense of the verb with which to complete the sentence. While candidates generally did well in identifying the correct response as one of the past tenses, it was evident that some candidates were ignorant of the phrase 'Last week', which served as a cue in guiding them towards using form of the verb which is in past tense.
B	0.68		
C	0.04		
D	0.04		

Question 38

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.78	A	This item calls for candidates to determine the correct form of the verb which would effectively complete the sentence that was given. Most candidates were able to select the correct answer, although a few candidates failed to understand the response demanded the use of the word which would compliment the future tense.
B	0.10		
C	0.08		
D	0.04		



Question 39

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.32	D	Candidates were required to demonstrate their understanding of which sentence corresponded with the statement of the stimulus written in bold. However, they performed poorly with fewer than half the candidates being able to select the correct answer. Candidates failed to understand they were to report in the third person singular as an action which had already taken place, therefore requiring the past tense.
B	0.23		
C	0.05		
D	0.40		

Question 40

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.32	A	The candidates' performance for this item was poor. Roughly 32% of the candidates selected the correct answer as A. However, the bulk of candidates selected option B which was a distractor. They simply selected because it bore the exact wording that was used in the stimulus, yet forgetting the word 'can' required use of the conditional tense to report using the word 'could'.
B	0.54		
C	0.05		
D	0.09		



## PAPER 2: CONTINUOUS WRITING

### General Comments

The 2025 questions were both accessible to candidates across all levels. This was proved by the candidate's responses which demonstrated good creativity. The candidates made efforts to produce quality work. The very good candidates used excellent descriptive language to paint vivid pictures in the reader's mind. The above average category also showed understanding of the topic and used appropriate register. The average and below average understood both questions and wrote their compositions with appropriate register though they were limited by their vocabulary and spelling.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Question 1 – Composition

The topic of 2025 was, **write about the best gift I have ever received**. This was a narrative/descriptive topic. Most candidates understood the topic and were able to address all the bullets and added their own details. For the very good candidates the vocabulary was varied and, in some instances, we had apt vocabulary. Here the vocabulary was commendable. Candidates added very interesting details, making their compositions very vivid. The above average candidates used appropriate registers and punctuated accurately. The average and below average category understood the topic but had limited vocabulary.

#### Question 2 – Report

2025 the candidates were asked to **write a report to the police commissioner about a break in at a neighbour's house**. Generally, most candidates understood the question and what was expected of them and added their own details. Most candidates used the correct layout though a few could not give the right layout of a police report. This proves that the question was accessible to all candidates used excellent vocabulary while the above average category also used appropriate vocabulary and register. The average and below average were again here limited by vocabulary. This question was understood by all candidates, and the layout was well written by most candidates. However, it should be noted that the teaching of English should not only be about the classroom grasping of points for examination purposes. English is a skill-based subjects and students or learners should be able to write for example a good, appropriate report, with the correct format just like the everyday or day-to-day report to the police. Application of the skill beyond the classroom should be considered.

### Recommendations

1. Candidates must be exposed to extensive reading of different materials such as newspapers, magazines, and novels. (Effective use of the school library)
2. Teach correct layout of different situational compositions, e.g., speech, reports, memos, letters, etc
3. More practice on continuous writing.
4. More emphasis to be given to grammar aspects such as punctuation, prepositions, adjectives, subject-verb agreement, spelling, and sentence construction (various sentence types).
5. Candidates must be taught to plan for their work and proofread their work after writing.
6. Incorporate the use of role play and fun games to improve the use of tenses



## PAPER 3: LITERATURE

### General Comments

The paper is divided into 2 sections Section A is structured question in Poetry while Section B is divided into two: Question 2 and Question 3 essay based in Prose.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A – Poetry

The Title of the Poem is **The World of Ticktock and Facebook**. It explores the addiction to Tiktok and Facebook by school going children thus neglecting their academic work and failing in their studies .

- 1 (a) The item required the candidates to lift a simile and explain its meaning. The candidates responded poorly as they assumed that the simile should come from the first line, thus stopping halfway through the correct response. The correct response is in the glow of the screen like a moth drawn to light my daughters' eyes dance. The candidates only picked the first line. The explanation was that the daughter is fascinated / attracted to their phone.
- (b) The item required the candidates to give two parts, first the attitude of the poet / hate / dislike / despite / negative, and then the second part by explaining why the poet has that kind of attitude / worries consume me an endless, nagging fear / the poet does not like social media because it distracts her daughter from her schoolwork.
- (c) The word **significance** implies the importance / the meaning of something. The item required candidates to interpret the phrase while textbooks gather dust in context and then explain briefly. The response is neglect / lack of focus. The explanation is that the textbooks are not being used or that the child is not interacting with their books.
- (d) The item required the candidate to interpret the mother's silence / to explain why the mother does not want to talk. The response is that the mother feels powerless / hopeless because her child does not want to listen to her advice. The mother has given up since social media has completely swallowed her child.
- (e) This is an item that required the candidate to summarise the emotions that are evoked by the whole poem in the readers as they go through it. The mood is interpreted by analysing the diction (words) used in the poem and also how the subject is being presented by the poet. There are two kinds of mood: happy and sad words with double meanings cannot describe the mood. Excitement is both positive and negative. The response to (e) is sad / the support worries consume me, an endless, nagging fear / or sad because the persona is worried by their child's negligence of their studies.
- (f) The candidates have already been told the classification of the poem, what is required of the item is to use their knowledge of what a lament is. Most candidates just wrote sad / sorrow / pain which are wrong responses. The response is that the poem talks about the pain that the mother is going through because her child is neglecting her studies by concentrating on social media.



- (g) The theme denotes the main topic that the poem is talking about. A candidate writes an incomplete thought with the intention to further explain it. The thoughts must be complete such that even without an explanation it makes sense. Candidates wrote social media. What about it? This is an incomplete thought. The correct response is the effects of social media / conflict between social media and academic pursuits / and the evidence is / yet notes lie untouched, and books remain still / her studies neglected, as she surrenders to chains. Therefore, social media alone does not communicate the sense that one is talking about / the effects, the conflict etc.

## Section B

Questions 2 and 3 are based on a story about a boy called Leruo, who, despite coming from a comfortable family, goes astray when he starts his senior year. He is an academically gifted child, but he chooses a group of wayward boys to be his friends, and this choice becomes deadly. Wanting to belong to the group, Leruo starts staying out late, taking drugs, and drinking alcohol. With all these wrong choices, Leruo distances himself from his parents, misses school, and his academic results decline. The parents are very worried and run around looking for a solution to their daughter's addiction.

- 2 (a) The item required the candidate to talk only about the initial / first signs that showed that Leruo had started using drugs. Most candidates wrote signs at a later stage. The initial signs are in paragraph three (3), staying out late with friends, ignoring his time limit, skipping family dinners, showing little interest in his studies, and his grades began to decline. The candidates are supposed to pick only one of them.
- (b) The item required the candidates to determine the personalities exhibited by Tapela and Masa anywhere in the story and then support their findings with evidence from the story. The expected responses are loving / caring / supportive / determined / focused / patient. These traits are found in both parents. Then the evidence is that they seek professional help. They attend support groups. They never give up on their child.
- (c) The item required the candidates to state tangible things that Leruo did to prove that he was no longer on drugs. Then the candidate had to give supporting evidence for their response. The expected responses are that / He returned to school / The evidence is / He passes with flying colours / He receives a badge of honour / He reconciles with his parents / He devours books / He solves equations / He soaks up knowledge like a sponge / some students responded to the item using information meant for item (d).
- (d) The item required the candidate to state a tangible thing that Leruo did to help other people not to fall into the same traps that he found himself in and then write an example from the story. The expected responses are that he told his story about the dangers of drug abuse / he sang about the importance of listening to parents / he showed how important it is for parents to accept and support their children. The support is through music / through motivational talks / through group talks / through visiting schools.



- 3** Year in and year out, examination Centres respond to this item by drawing a table or by bulleting. This is an essay-type item. Candidates are required to respond in continuous writing: separating their ideas / points by paragraphing. The candidates should demonstrate the skill of continuous writing in its entirety just as they do in other subjects where they write essays. A candidate who responds by producing a table or bulleting scores a zero because they have not understood the rubric / instruction.

This year, 2025, the candidates were required to follow the pointers below:

- Come up with three (3) characteristics displayed by Leruo **in the story**
- Explain each of the characteristics in relation to the story (**NOT IN GENERAL TERMS/NOT THEIR USUAL MEANINGS**)
- Give an example for each of the characteristics (get the example from the story, either quote it or paraphrase it).
- Say how each characteristic weighs on the parents (What is the **result** of Leruo behaving the way he did).

Each of the character traits discussed scores five (5) marks. That is

- 1mark for character trait
- 2 marks for contextual trait
- 1 mark for the example
- 1 mark for the result/effect

Therefore, three (3) fully discussed character traits will score a total of fifteen (15) marks. The table below is meant to illustrate how to analyse and synthesize the question, but the candidate is required to translate the table or ideas into a continuous piece of work (**ESSAY**).

**ESSAY**

<b>Character traits</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Rebellious	He starts to distance himself from his parents // engages in acts of defiance.	Staying out late // skipping family dinners	Communication breakdown // There is tension and conflict in the family.
Determined	He rebuilds his life // He rebuilds his relationship with his parents.	He devoured books // He solved equations // soaked knowledge like a sponge // work on every test and assignment // Engages in open communication with his parents.	Relief from the strain of dealing with a wayward child.
Independent	Leruo longs for freedom from the rules // freedom from expectations set by his parents.	Joins wayward groups // succumbs to peer pressure // he skips dinner // he stays out late.	Causes tension and strain on his parents.



<b>Character traits</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Perseverance	Committing to his recovery journey despite the demanding process.	Undergoes the process of rehabilitation.	Renewed hope
Loving/caring	Express affection more openly // Appreciation for their presence in his life // The affection he shows towards his schoolwork.	Leruo would often seek out his parents // offering them hugs.	Strengthened family bonds.



## PAPER 4: LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY

### General Comments

This is a Listening and summary question paper that comprises of two sections. Section A is a listening comprehension which is read to the candidates in seven minutes. Section A contains structured questions which carry 20 marks. Section B is a written passage from which the candidates attempt the task from the passage. This section carries 10 marks divided as follows: 5 marks for the points identified and another 5 for style (cohesion, punctuation, grammar and spelling).

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### SECTION A: Listening Comprehension (Cover Crops)

The passage was about the use of cover crops, types of cover crops and the benefits of cover crops. The passage was very interesting, therefore motivating the candidates to listen attentively since it was accessible to the general candidature of varied backgrounds, for example, agriculture, home economics, and integrated science. Most of the questions were simple recall questions, hence the paper was accessible to the majority of the candidates.

- 1 (a) Candidates were required to explain the meaning of cover crops as per the passage, for which they ought to have mentioned them to be plants that are planted to cover the soil rather than for the purpose of being harvested. Most candidates did well on the item.
- (b) For this item, candidates were called to demonstrate their understanding of why it is important to manage cover crop grazing. Candidates' responses were well-articulated and managed to get the correct answer.
- (c) Candidates were requested to state two benefits of using cover crops as green fertiliser and grazing. Most responses given by candidates were satisfactory. They had to either state cover crops used as fertiliser can provide high-quality roughage or contribute significantly to soil health.
- (d) Candidates had to earn a mark for stating the role played by soil organisms in the soil, in which they are responsible in forming organic manure.
- (e) This item called for candidates to name two categories of plant species that could be used for crop rotation. Examples of suitable responses were Grass species and Legume Species. Candidates performed well in this item.
- (f) For this item, candidates were called to give three reasons why Rhodes grass has been used as a rotation crop for many years. Some candidates' responses to this item quite good whereas others struggled to attain the correct answer. They had to demonstrate their understanding of the passage by citing reasons such as, 'It establishes easily and quickly', 'controls worms and that 'it provides a lot of organic material'.
- (g) Candidates were required to give two examples of annual rotation crops. Their performance on this item was average, with only some of the candidates managing to get the correct answer, such as 'Hybrid' or 'Forage sorghum'.



- (h) This item proved to be challenging for most candidates. They were required to explain what successful farmers consider when including cover crops in their grain production system. The response is that they had to explain that such farmers need to establish whether the crop could be used as forage later on.
- (i) This item asked on “two conditions necessary to make cover crops a low risk alternative.” It was well attempted by most candidates. Some managed to mention Climate and rainfall patterns, while other candidates only managed to articulate one of the two.
- (j) This item called for candidates to state three advantages of having a good cover. Most of the candidates struggled to get all three advantages, which were;
- Good cover improves the penetration of rainwater by ten times more than when without cover.
  - Good cover protects the soil against soil erosion.
  - Good cover improves soil fertility.
- (k) This item was only satisfactorily done. Candidates were to give any two benefits apart from feed conversion that farmers could gain from cover crops. Responses such as, gaining ground cover, trampling of organic matter into the soil, or cattle manure / urine returning humic acid to the soil were expected.

### **SECTION B: Summary**

The summary task demanded the job of summarising the passage that was based on Oral Health. The candidates had to articulate summary points that spoke to the need to brush teeth regularly or twice a day and mention the use of toothpaste and mouthwash with fluoride. In addition, they were to make mention of the need to see the dentist before health issues escalate, while touching on the not smoking and also using mouthwash containing anti-bacterial ingredients. The question was generally tackled well though some candidates missed on the main points which had to be captured as key information to include in the summary. The summary was mostly on recall, and points could be easily lifted from the passage, which was ultimately of great help to the candidates.