

# PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA  
EXAMINATIONS  
COUNCIL

**JCE SETSWANA**

**2025**



## PAPER 1: MULTIPLE CHOICE

### General Comments

The 2025 examination series experienced a significant increase in the candidate population by 6.32%. The performance of the candidates was somewhat similar to that of the previous year with a slight decrease in the mean from 24.09 in 2024 to 21.37 in 2025. As usual, the performance varied across the items with some having very high proportions of candidates getting the item correct, while others had very low proportions.

The strongest distractors across the options generally indicate that some misconceptions were shown by the candidates and hence should be used as an indicator for identifying the next steps to rectify such misconceptions during teaching and learning.

Generally, Multiple-Choice items have a guessing factor that is considered to be the lowest proportion of being able to get the item correct without necessarily knowing the answer. For a multiple-choice item with four options, the guessing factor is 25%, and any item that has the proportion of candidates who got it correct lower than the guessing factor is a cause for concern. Candidates should be encouraged to always read the question for understanding before they select an answer.

The report is mainly in table format, showing the proportion of candidates at each of the options. The key for reading the table:

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 Items

#### Question 1: Maikaelelo a mokwadi - Specific information

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.22	C	Poorly done. Candidates were required to recall facts from the passage highlighting what the author wanted Batswana to do concerning traditional medicine. The highest number of candidates was drawn to Option B, which was not the correct answer.
B	0.41		
C	0.21		
D	0.17		

#### Question 2: Tlhaloso ya se se dirilweng ke Batswana fa Basweu ba goroga - Specific information

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.06	B	Well done. This item targeted the knowledge cognitive domain of candidates. They were required to recall facts from the passage concerning how Batswana began to look down on traditional medicine when White people arrived in the country. A good proportion got the correct answer.
B	0.73		
C	0.10		
D	0.11		

#### Question 3: Tlhaloso ya mafoko a a dirisitsweng mo temana 2 - Inference



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.39	A	Poorly done. This was an Inferential question that challenged candidates with the task to unravel the contextual significance of the statement ' <i>re bo re kgokologa jaaka koloi e fologelela mo molapong e se na maremo</i> '. Most candidates failed to infer the correct meaning, with the higher proportion of the candidates choosing B instead of A.
B	0.48		
C	0.08		
D	0.05		

**Question 4:** Seelana - Locate and select a word or a phrase

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.43	A	Poorly done. Less than half of the candidates were able to identify the specific information as demanded by the task. They were to recall specific information from the text and choose A as the correct answer. However, many candidates just picked from the different options.
B	0.19		
C	0.18		
D	0.20		

**Question 5:** Tlhaloso ya mafoko a a dirisitsweng mo temana 3 - Inference

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.33	D	Very poorly done. Candidates struggled with this Inferential question that tasked candidates to conclude as to how the author uses language to create effect. A very small portion of the candidate population got the answer correct.
B	0.33		
C	0.22		
D	0.12		

**Question 6:** Sesupo sa gore puso ya Botswana e kgathala ka bongaka ywa setso - Implicit information

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.13	C	Fairly done. Candidates' performance on this item was satisfactory with roughly half of the population getting the correct answer. Given the simplicity of the item, as it targeted the cognitive domain of knowledge, some candidates still failed to identify the specific information from the text as required.
B	0.18		
C	0.54		
D	0.15		

**Question 7:** Tlhaloso - Reasoning

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.21	A	Poorly done. Candidates were to explain why Botswana do not want to associate with traditional medicine. Few candidates managed to understand the passage enough to help them select A as the correct answer. Most picked C, which was a strong distractor given that reference to it was made in the same paragraph. However, this was not the reason as cited in Paragraph 3.
B	0.07		
C	0.57		
D	0.14		

**Question 8:** Bokao jwa seelana sa 'Le fa go ntse jalo'. - Significance



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.32	D	Poorly done. This was an inferential question calling for the candidates to deduce the significance of the above-mentioned phrase. Candidates appeared to guess their responses as evidenced by the random picking of all the different options.
B	0.11		
C	0.28		
D	0.29		

**Question 9:** Se mokwadi a lelang go se tlhalosa - inference / Deduction

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.26	C	Poorly done. Candidates' selection of options of responses was equally spread across the different options. Only 23% of the candidates got the answer correct. They were required to tap into their inferential skills in order to unravel implicit information as used by the author in the text.
B	0.20		
C	0.23		
D	0.31		

**Question 10:** Tlhaloso ya seelana se se reng 'Selo se' - Linking / Coherence marker

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.23	B	Fairly done. Candidates were required to use inferential skills in tackling this item and almost half got that answer correct, while the rest of the candidates appeared to guess different options as their selection. They generally struggled to infer meaning of the coherence marker/linking word as used in the passage.
B	0.47		
C	0.15		
D	0.15		

**Question 11:** Tiriso ya lefoko 'tota' - Infer the meaning of a word

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.28	C	Fairly done. About half of the candidates were able to apply their inferential skills towards determining the meaning of the word 'tota' within the presence context. Other candidates were deceived by options A and B which were incorrect and therefore did not earn the mark.
B	0.16		
C	0.50		
D	0.07		

**Question 12:** Ntlhagolo ya temana 9 - Main idea

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.14	C	Well done. A significant number of the candidates did well for this question item as they managed to determine the main idea to be deducted from paragraph 9. They demonstrated sufficient understanding of the details and were able to therefore interpret what was being communicated as the main idea.
B	0.16		
C	0.60		
D	0.10		

**Question 13:** Maikaelelo a mokwadi - Author's intention

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.22	B	Poorly done. This item called for candidates to use higher cognitive skills of being able to analyse the intentions of the author as pertaining to the text. They were to draw conclusions on the gist of what the author intended to communicate but failed to achieve this. Most erroneously picked option C.
B	0.27		
C	0.48		
D	0.03		

**Question 14:** Specific information



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.24	C	Poorly done. Only 40% of the candidates succeeded in identify the answer to this knowledge-based question for which they were required to give specific information about what tradition medicine was predominantly used for according to Botswana culture. Some candidates chose A while others opted for B, although the answer was C, 'go ipabalela ka jone'.
B	0.06		
C	0.40		
D	0.30		

**Question 15:** Mafoko a wetsang temana 8 sentle - Concluding sentence

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.13	D	Poorly done. Although this was an item targeting candidates' lower cognitive skills of identifying the concluding sentence of paragraph 8, only less than half of the candidates were able to pick D as the correct answer. The rest of the candidates were confused and torn between the different distractors.
B	0.29		
C	0.18		
D	0.40		

**Question 16:** Setlhogo - Title

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.09	B	Fairly done. Candidates were required to state the Title after reading the whole passage. Their performance for this task was satisfactory with just over half of the candidature being able to attain the correct answer. Other candidates were drawn to options C and D which were wrong.
B	0.56		
C	0.22		
D	0.13		

**Question 17:** Di ka na ka thapo tsa loselo - Contextual meaning of a phrase

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.10	B	Fairly done. Performance by candidates on this item was satisfactory. They managed to demonstrate their understanding of the phrase in question, even though others fell for other distractors that were not aligned with the correct meaning of the phrase.
B	0.57		
C	0.17		
D	0.16		

**Question 18:** Dilo makwati di kwatabolotswa mo go ba bangwe - Contextual meaning of a proverb

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.06	B	Well done. A significant number of candidates were able to identify the correct answer as B. A few other candidates, however, were lured towards option D which served to be a good distractor and not the correct answer to unraveling the proverb.
B	0.59		
C	0.10		
D	0.25		

**Question 19:** A ka ja modisa nko e sa butswa - Contextual meaning of an idiom.

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.17	B	Well done. Candidates were able to demonstrate their ability to understand the contextual meaning of the idiom by selecting the correct answer as B. However, other candidates were uncertain of the answer and equally tried their luck with different options.
B	0.58		
C	0.10		
D	0.16		

**Question 20:** O mo setse morago - Contextual meaning of an idiom.



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.14	D	Well done. A significant number of candidates understood the meaning of the idiom used in this question item. They identified the correct answer without struggle, although there were a few candidates who selected option A as their answer and thus could not attain a mark.
B	0.05		
C	0.08		
D	0.72		

**Question 21:** Tiriso sentle ya matshwao a mokwalo le dithakagolo - Punctuation and Capitalisation

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.77	A	Well done. Candidates performed well in tackling this item that required them to demonstrate their ability to understand the application of punctuation and capitalisation. A few other candidates opted for D and lost the mark.
B	0.02		
C	0.03		
D	0.17		

**Question 22:** Tiriso sentle ya matshwao a mokwalo le dithakagolo - Punctuation and Capitalisation

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.10	C	Fairly done. Candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge of Punctuation and Capitalisation as a task of the lower cognitive domain. However, some candidates misinterpreted the word ' <i>batswakwa</i> ' and thought it ought to be followed by an exclamation mark to emphasize the length of distance, therefore opting for D. This was incorrect interpretation of the word.
B	0.06		
C	0.67		
D	0.17		

**Question 23:** Seele se se kwadilweng ka mokwalo o o amogelesegang - Orthography

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.06	B	Well done. Candidates generally had the right understanding of the proper usage of the speech sound "ha" and "ga" as well as when to use "fa". They successfully chose the correct answer as B. ..
B	0.88		
C	0.03		
D	0.04		

**Question 24:** Seele se se kwadilweng ka mokwalo o o amogelesegang - Orthography

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.88	A	Well done. Candidates generally differentiated between the words which should be written conjunctively and disjunctively. noted the correct written statement as A.
B	0.04		
C	0.04		
D	0.05		

**Question 25:** Dipaka tsa diele - Tense

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.03	D	Well done. Almost all the candidates were aware that the statement used was in the past continuous tense, although a few opted for B and this was not the correct tense since it represented the past tense without the element of continuity.
B	0.17		
C	0.09		
D	0.71		

**Question 26:** Dipaka tsa diele - Tense



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.47	A	Poorly done. Not many candidates were able to identify A as the correct answer that represented an action in the past which had already been completed. They were torn between the different distractors and struggled to get the mark.
B	0.19		
C	0.16		
D	0.19		

**Question 27:** Seele sa lekopanyi - Conjunctive

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.08	D	Well done. Candidates were required to identify the correct conjunctive as demanded by the task. Almost all candidates were able to pick the correct letter as option D.
B	0.02		
C	0.06		
D	0.83		

**Question 28:** Seele sa lekopanyi - Conjunctive

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.35	C	Poorly done. Most candidates struggled to identify the correct conjunctive were drawn the option A distractor which was wrong. They picked 'ka jalo' instead of 'ka jaana'.
B	0.08		
C	0.48		
D	0.09		

**Question 29:** Seele sa letlhalosi - Adverb

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.31	B	Poorly done. Candidates' performance on this item was very poor. They were required to identify the <b>incorrect</b> usage of an Adverb and this negative approach to the task could have thrown them off. Candidates ought be encouraged to pay close attention to the stem of the question so as to understand what the task of the item entails.
B	0.17		
C	0.27		
D	0.25		

**Question 30:** Dikarolo tsa seele - Tiri-Selection of Parts of Speech - Predicate

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.09	D	Fairly done. A good number of candidates managed to identify the action word within the given sentence. Other candidates appeared to guess between options B and C thus failed to earn a mark.
B	0.17		
C	0.14		
D	0.60		

**Question 31:** Dikarolo tsa seele - Subject

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.79	A	Well done. Candidates generally succeeded in identifying the subject within the given sentence. A select few candidates were confused and opted for B as the answer, which was incorrect.
B	0.13		
C	0.04		
D	0.04		

**Question 32:** Maele - Idioms



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.07	C	Fairly well done. While the majority of the candidates were able to correct answer, the rest of the candidates were equally distributed amongst the other distractors which were incorrect
B	0.11		
C	0.72		
D	0.10		

**Question 33:** Dithamalakane - Riddle

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.07	B	Well done. Candidates were mostly able to identify the riddles in the listed sequence of numbers that were in roman numerals. However, a small proportion of candidates remained uncertain of the pattern to identify in how the number were sequenced.
B	0.76		
C	0.11		
D	0.06		

**Question 34:** Siane - Proverb

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.10	D	Fairly done. Candidates were able to identify the correct response by choosing option D. However, it was evident that few other candidates were guessing as evidenced by the responses which were evenly distributed among the rest of the distractors.
B	0.12		
C	0.14		
D	0.64		

**Question 35:** Tiriso sentle ya ngotlo mo seeleng - Diminutive

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.05	B	Well done. Candidates were required to demonstrate their ability to understand the significance of the diminutive. For this item, they were able to note that B was the correct word that best matched the meaning of the word Kgosana as used in the stimulus. Other candidates misinterpreted the word to be referring to youthfulness, thereby opting for C which was the wrong answer.
B	0.78		
C	0.15		
D	0.02		

**Question 36:** Tiriso sentle ya ngotlo mo seeleng - Diminutive

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.05	C	Well done. The candidates were able to note that C was a statement which was negative in nature and represented an aspect of 'lonyatso'. A select few other candidates appeared to have guessed among the other options which were incorrect given the context in which 'Mosadinyana yo' was used.
B	0.03		
C	0.87		
D	0.05		

**Question 37:** Sekai sa moila wa puo - Culture-Taboo

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.25	B	Poorly done. Few candidates were able to identify the correct answer as B, while others simply relied on guess work and went for different alternatives according to what they thought might be the answer.
B	0.34		
C	0.13		
D	0.28		

**Question 38:** Sekai sa moila wa puo - mekgwa ya setho - Culture-Taboo



Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.26	C	Poorly done. Similar to question 37, few candidates were able to identify the correct answer, which was option C. They appeared to guess on their answers as displayed in the manner in which they all picked different options at random.
B	0.21		
C	0.32		
D	0.20		

**Question 39:** Lesika - Culture: importance of a cultural practice related to kinship

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.12	D	Poorly done. Candidates were supposed to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of cultural practice as pertaining to kinship. Less than half of the candidates were able to identify the correct answer as D.
B	0.27		
C	0.21		
D	0.40		

**Question 40:** Mekgwa ya setho - Culture: importance of a cultural practice related to courtesy

Option	Prop.	Key	Comments
A	0.16	D	Fairly done. Candidates' performance on this item was satisfactory with only 50% of the candidates getting the correct answer. They were required to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of cultural practice as related to courtesy, for which the answer was D.
B	0.09		
C	0.25		
D	0.50		



## PAPER 2: LITERATURE SUMMARY AND TRANSLATION

### General Comments

Candidates in 2026 generally demonstrated stronger analytical skills although they exhibited weaker poetry skills. Overall, their quality of work remained somewhat comparable to that of the previous year. The decline in the quality of work exhibited by candidates for the poetry section was compensated for by the improvement that was noted in the literature section. For other skills with similar underlying constructs such as Summary and Translation, candidates' quality of work was deemed to be somewhat comparable.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A: Literature

##### Question 1: Setting

Advice given to centre is to train candidates to always analyse Setting using reasons and justifications instead of giving examples.

##### Question 2: Character Evaluation

Candidates were required to analyse the character of the main character; they were to select ideas which clearly determinate his character; come up with words that describe him and give relevant examples or evidence from text;

Observations: Candidates would come up with words that are not relevant to analysing a character. Also, in other instances relevant words would be used but supporting evidence would be weak / irrelevant.

Recommendations: Train candidates in words that describe character traits, their meanings and examples ( from real life) for justification.

However, it is worth noting to state that generally, candidates who opted for this objective did fairly well.

##### Question 3

##### Molaetsa

Generally, the performance was fair. There was an improvement in analysis in terms of stating why candidates said the actions of the character are bad, in relation to consequences in real-life situations, a great improvement from 2024. However, candidates who opted to state theme in figurative language (using idioms) had a challenge of use of keywords, resulting in retelling of the story.

##### Conflict

Candidates who opted for this item did not do very well because it is a high order question which requires identification of Motivation, Conflict and resolution. The difficulty was they could not identify those and had a tendency of using keywords with no effect because what would follow would just be retelling of the story.

##### Conclusion.

Candidates are required to have general knowledge of the story and to select relevant points to use to analyse the objectives they have opted for. The analysis should be effective and show very good understanding of the text and the relevant keywords.



## Section B: Poem

### Question 4. Interpretation of the poem

Requirement: Candidates were supposed to state what the poet said, using their own words. They were to use quotations effectively and also to identify poetic devices.

Observation: They did not do very well as most candidates were not able to Express what the poet said, using their own words, resulting in reproduction of the poem.

Recommendations: Train learners to understand the poem fully by getting the gist of the message.

### Question 5: Theme of The Poem

They were supposed to identify the theme and use the keywords to explain why SEETEBOSIGO had bad effects on living organisms. They were to stick to the terms of the question (*malaetsa wa leboko*) I.e *Le fa madi a tswa axsiame, a nale ditlamorago tse di maswe / madi a a siama*). Support with quotations and poetic devices is needed. Candidates who opted for Theme performed poorly because they could not identify it.

Observations: Candidates who opted for this objective could not state the theme but ended up interpreting the poem. Most of the themes stated were wrong. Quotations and poetic device were not recognised.

Recommendations:

- Train candidates to clearly state the theme
- Train them on the use of keywords (*madi ga siama ka gore... se sengwe gape se se maswe ka madi ke gore...*)
- Train learners to always support points made with evidence from the poem.
- To identify and mention/ use poetic devices skillfully

### Question 6: Summary

Requirement: Candidates were to read a text and to summarise it using their own words and using word connectors to join the main idea.

Observation: They performed more or less the same with 2024 candidates. However, there was a notable increase in rewriting topic sentences with no effort to use own words. Use of own word was a challenge. A lot of candidates picked the topic sentences only and made no effort to use own words or use word connections; Wholesale copying of text was notable, while cultural difference was not observed.

Recommendations:

- Train Learners to learn to paraphrase or report information using own words.
- Train candidates to summarise each paragraph using own words
- Emphases use pf coherent markers( for flow of the paragraph).

### Question 7: Translation

Requirement: To translate text from English to Setswana.

The 2025 candidates did well, generally. However, they had challenges with some words and therefore could not interpret or find alternatives for. There is a notable improvement in recognising cultural differences in 2025, compared to 2024.



Candidates were required to translate text from English to Setswana, to use alternatives and demonstrate mastery of both source and the target language.

Observation: Lack of alternatives, resulting in word for word translation / deviation from intended meaning.

Recommendations:

- Advise learners to read extensively (on their own), both English and Setswana texts, to enhance their vocabulary.
- Train learners to identify CULTURAL DIFFERENCE (Mme/ Rre).
- Train learners to always capture main ideas.



## PAPER 3: CONTINUOUS AND EXTENDED WRITING

### General Comments

Overall, candidate performance has notably improved, particularly in the sophisticated use of figurative language across grades A, C, and E. Irrelevant responses have decreased, and the frequency of zero marks has significantly diminished.

However, specific technical deficiencies persist. While basic language mechanics are stable, candidates struggle with complex punctuation, such as nesting full stops within quotation marks. Orthography remains a concern, specifically regarding doubled consonants (e.g., mmaagwe).

Under the "Communication" domain, sentence structure is hindered by the omission of prefixes and poor paragraphing—often evidenced by single-sentence introductions. Furthermore, while there is a commendable attempt at complex sentence construction, it frequently leads to punctuation failures and communication breakdowns.

Recommendations: Future teacher training should prioritise complex mechanics, orthography, and prefix application to bridge the gap between creative expression and technical accuracy.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Subject: Assessment Feedback: Composition and Linguistic Proficiency

#### Executive Summary

While candidates demonstrated a commendable leap in the application of figurative language across all grade levels, significant structural deficits persist in syntax and organisation.

#### Key Observations

- **Sentence Structure & Concord:** Performance was generally fair; however, a recurring "gross error" involves the omission of prefixes (notably with the noun *letsatsi*). Furthermore, complex sentences featuring multiple predicates revealed a lack of mastery over subjective concords, leading to fragmented communication.
- **Paragraphing & Cohesion:** A critical weakness remains in introductory sections, where candidates frequently present a single long sentence as a complete paragraph. The absence of linking words results in poor transitions, with ideas failing to flow logically.
- **Technical Execution:** Overly ambitious sentence lengths often compromise both punctuation and paragraph standards, rendering the work structurally non-compliant despite improved creative content.

### Candidate Performance Review: Report Writing Component (Section B)

#### Overview of Content and Format

Candidates generally demonstrated a solid grasp of the subject matter, providing responses that were plausible and factually correct. However, a significant concern was the failure of many candidates to adhere to the specific type of report demanded by the assessment task. This often resulted in inappropriate register and format choices.

#### Structural Analysis

In terms of structure, performance was uneven:



- **Introductions:** This was a major weakness. A significant number of candidates struggled to set the context or outline the report's purpose effectively.
- **Conclusions and Endings:** Conversely, these sections were handled well. Candidates showed competence in summarising findings and providing the correct formal sign-off.

### **Recommendation**

Future instructional guidance should prioritise distinguishing between report genres and crafting effective introductions to ensure consistent structural quality.

### **Overview of Performance**

Current assessments reveal a positive trend in the creative use of figurative language. However, systemic issues in syntax and structural organization continue to hinder overall candidate performance. To move candidates from "Fair" to "Excellent," Centres should address the following technical deficits:

### **Key Recommendations**

- **Grammar & Concord Mastery:** Direct instruction is required on prefix preservation and subjectival concords. Educators should utilise sentence-combining exercises to help candidates manage complex sentences with multiple predicates without losing grammatical agreement.
- **Paragraph Architecture:** Schools must move beyond the "length" of a paragraph and focus on standard structure.
- **The Introduction:** Discourage the use of a single, over-extended sentence as an introductory block.
- **Cohesion:** Integrate lessons on discourse markers and linking words to ensure logical flow between ideas.
- **Punctuation and Spelling:** Conduct targeted drills on "complex mechanics," specifically the placement of full stops relative to quotation marks and the spelling of words with double consonants (e.g., mmaagwe).
- **Orthography:** Intensify focus on correct orthographic standards, as this remains a lagging area for a significant number of candidates.