



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

## Preparation for the National Examinations: Tips for teachers and learners

Preparing for an examination can be very hard, especially if a learner start too late. Being able to prepare in a proper manner will achieve the best results.

We are all aware that there are no shortcuts to good performance in an examination, other than ensuring that the teaching and learning process is well mastered throughout the year. However, previous marking and moderation processes have revealed some slip-ups, done by learners during the examination, which could be avoided through proper revision. We, therefore, trust that the following advices will be valuable to you.

This article serves to inform, advice and guide;

- teachers on how to assist their learners when preparing for National examinations and
- learners on how to best prepare for the National examinations.

### To both teachers & learners

Teachers should use assessment results obtained throughout the year to identify topics that need to be revisited with individual learners to ensure clearer understanding. This should be done without disturbing the learner's studying and revision time.

It is noticed over the years that often learners fail to give the desired answers to the question because they misunderstood what the question is asking them to do. Teachers should assist learners to understand different questions and should advice their learners to read the instructions well.

All questions have command words that are aimed to tell learners what to do; often these words are misinterpreted by learners. A good example is, when a question is asking for a **description** many learners give an **explanation** instead and **vice versa**. Therefore, teachers should make sure that their learners understand how to respond to the questions using the **common command words**, which are also given in the syllabus.

The legibility of learners' handwriting has increasingly become a concern for examiners and all involved in the marking. It is therefore important for teachers to stress the importance of learners to write their answers clearly using legible handwriting. Additionally, it is advisable to leave open lines between answers to different clearly numbered questions.

The other equally important point is the learner's understanding of what the question demands from him or her. It has been commonly observed that learners spend too much time responding to questions that are worth 1 or 2 marks and vice versa, because they do not link the number of marks to the value of the answer. Think of it in terms of buying an item in a shop, if one item costs one dollar, two items will cost two dollars. In the same way the demand of the question is determined by its value which is the marks given. Consequently one idea is worth one mark. This idea should be build into the teaching through practiced assessment.

Another very concerning issue is on choice questions, often learners answer more questions that required by the paper. This practice results in the loss of marks and it is generally time consuming for both learners and markers. Learners should therefore be advised to only answer the number of questions asked to answer. It is more appropriate for learners to first read through all choice questions before choosing the one to answer.

There are a lot other issues of concern, which shall be addressed in their specific fields as follows;

### **1. Sciences and Mathematics**

When doing revision with the learners, teachers are reminded to put emphasis on the following points;

- Scientific terminologies and chemical names should be spelled correctly at all times.
- All general answers to scientific process should be scientifically sound and practical.
- All working should be clearly shown even if the question does not demand working.
- Numerical answers should be written with units where applicable.
- All diagrams and graphs should be done with a sharp pencil.
- Graphs should be fully labelled with appropriate scale.
- When labelling diagrams, labelling lines should touch the labelled object or parts of an object.
- All numerical answers should be rounded off to the correct significant figures/decimal places.

### **2. Languages**

When doing revision with the learners, teachers are reminded to put emphasis on the following points;

- Write only the number of words as required by specific questions.
- Avoid using sms language.
- Written pieces should always start with an introduction and end with a conclusion.

- Written pieces should be divided in paragraphs. Where one paragraph carries one idea.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation marks.
- Use correct orthography.

### **3. Social Science**

When doing revision with the learners, teachers are reminded to put emphasis on the following points;

How to answer paper 3 for both Geography and Development Studies

#### ***Geography:***

- Learners should be able to answer questions on all topics of both Physical and Human Geography but not just selecting some topics.
- Learners should know geographical terminologies

#### ***Development Studies:***

- Learners should be able to differentiate between a hypothesis and a research question.
- Learners should understand how to do investigations, including sampling methods, data collecting methods, measuring techniques and the use of equipment.

#### ***History:***

- Learners should adhere to the instruction given on the papers and should make sure that they answer the correct amount of questions.
- Learners are made familiar of the contents previous examination reports and model answers given in the mark scheme to make sure they know what is expected of them.

### **4. Commercial subjects**

When doing revision with the learners, teachers are reminded to put emphasis on the following points;

- Learners should delete mistakes clearly, but should not just put them in brackets
- Correct subject terminologies should be used at all times.
- Always use full sentences except if indicated otherwise.

- Calculations should be shown where necessary and numerical answers should be correctly rounded off (normally to two decimal places).

**Accounting:** Learners should know the basic theory, and how to apply it in the different formats of accounts and statements. Learners are also advised to practise different exercises.

**Business Studies:** Learners should always answer in relation with the given case.

**Economics:** Learners should be advised to draw relevant diagrams to questions asked.

## 5. Pre-vocational subjects

When doing revision with the learners, teachers are reminded to put emphasis on the following points;

- When answering the questions there should be a link between theory and practice.
- All terminologies/terms/measurements, concepts and principles should be correctly used.
- All calculations should be shown.

**Fashion and Fabrics,** correct measurement for the patterns should be used.

### **Design and Technology**

- Diagram/sketches with short notes should be used when studying.
- Learners should be aware of similarity between topics.
- Revisit work done for portfolio.

## **To learners**

- **Give yourself enough time to revise.** Do not wait until it is just a few days before your examination in order for you start revising your school work. Doing this will force you to start memorising. Memorising a few days before is proven to be ineffective way of studying. When you memorise, you tend to take in so much information at once which is just kept in your short term memory. In reality, you will hardly retain anything. Studying before and going over it multiple times really is the best way to learn the material.
- **Develop a timetable so that you can track and monitor your progress.** Having a revision plan ensures that you give the right attention to different subjects. It also helps you feel in control of the process. Plan your work carefully around the topics

you need to focus on. Being aware of gaps in your knowledge can create nerves, but having a plan of how you will fill these gaps will make you feel better.

- **Select proper atmosphere to study in.** Regardless of what your preferences are, you won't be able to study while there are distractions like:
  - Your darling little brother or sister is running screaming around the house.
  - Your older brother or sister is bothering you on purpose.
  - You are studying with music or television. Some people think they can study with music but there will always be a song you want to sing along to instead of studying.
  - It's too dark. Your eyes will strain in dim light.
  - You're in a mess. Clean your room, as the mess around you really can distract you from what you're doing.

As soon as you notice your mind is losing concentration, take a short break. You will then come back to your revision refreshed.

- **Do not just read.** Highlight important points and make short notes (summaries) as you study. When you are making short notes, you will definitely think about what you are writing, what it's about, and why you wrote it down. Most importantly, it refreshes your memory.
- **Practice answering questions.** Use past question papers to familiarise yourself with the format of questions. Also, familiarise yourself with what is involved in the exam. You need to know things like:
  - where and when the exam will take place
  - how many components/papers are involved
  - how much time is allowed per component/paper
  - how many questions do you need to answer
- **Think positive and keep the exam in context.** Even if you usually do not do so well, there will always be questions that you can do. Therefore you are advised to start with the question you understand.
- **Sleep well and eat sensibly.** There's nothing worse than going into an exam after staying up until 4 am. Your brain cells need energy and good rest to function well. Make sure you drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated. Dehydration makes you tired and reduces concentration.

- **Write the answer to the question only once.** If for some or other reason you write it twice, clearly delete the one you think is wrong.
  - In answering a question, **do not copy the question again.** You will be wasting your time if you start answering the question by copying it down yet, no marks are awarded for just copying down the question. Answer the question and go straight to the answer.
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