

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES

SPECIALISATION ELECTIVE – FEATURE WRITING (IJM 2105)

JANUARY 2004 EXAMINATION

TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Section **A is compulsory**.
2. Answer **any three** questions in Section **B**.
3. Poor spelling and grammar will be penalised.

SECTION A (COMPULSORY)

Read Annexure A. You may mark it and make comments on it clearly. **RETURN** it with your script. Do **NOT** forget to put your registration number on the annexure.

- 1 (a) Annexure A is a first draft of a story. What comments do you have about it? Justify your comments. [5 marks]
- (b) Brainstorm on paper some of the ideas presented in the draft. [3 marks]
- (c) Define the term “concept tree” and .... [2 marks]
- (d) ..... do one for this draft. [3 marks]
- (e) Using one of your concepts, write an intro and first paragraph suitable for publication. [10 marks]
- (f) Briefly justify why you have used this intro and first paragraph. [7 marks]
- (g) What type of publication would you send this to? [5 marks]
- (h) What advice would you give to the sub editor in terms of story design? [5 marks]

**Total: [40 marks]**

**SECTION B: ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS**

- 2 (a) What is a feature article? **[5 marks]**
- (b) What qualities make you into a good feature writer and how would you go about looking for stories? **[15 marks]**
3. Good reporters include in their notes not only what they heard and read, but also what they saw. How far do you believe this statement is true when dealing with personality profiles? **[20 marks]**
4. How would the “watch-and-wait” form of literary journalism differ from the “participant-observation” form of reporting, and when might you use one or the other? **[20 marks]**
5. Your editor sends you to do a feature about a highly technical, scientific subject. What would you do to prepare for it, and how would you angle it at a lay-audience? **[20 marks]**

STUDENT REGISTRATION NUMBER: .....

**Annexure A - This needs to be returned with your script**

Entering the peaceful premises of J C Merkins School for the Handicapped makes one wonder and think back to the early 90s when there was vandalism, pupils were toyi-toying and 36 teachers at this school in White City, Soweto were arrested after a sit-in demanding the reinstatement of a dismissed colleague. A few limping pupils carrying books pass by quietly to go and talk to teachers or to submit books to a teacher. Teachers also pass by to go to the staff room for a little chat with other teachers or collect materials they might have left behind for the next class.

It is between classes and three pupils are playing football near the classroom door. Speaking in soft voices, they dribble the ball to each other while making sure that they do not kick the ball into other classes. They play quietly – or least no none is complaining about noise. As others finish their class work, they join the football game. The number of players has increased. The ball is rolling from front to back and from side to side. Even those with a limping walk do not mind running after the ball. Even though the ball runs away from them, they still laugh and smile. Despite the fact that the teacher is not around, their noise is tolerable. Unlike other schools where you will hear the sound of a siren or a bell, teachers and students here rely on their watches to know if it time for another class or lunch.

At lunchtime those who can walk help push around pupils on wheelchairs to go and buy lunch. Thulane Xaba and his friend are chasing and kicking each other when everybody around them is having lunch. His playmate will punch or clap him but Xaba, with no arms, has only his feet to rely on. A merciful pupil shares his two slices of white bread with curried mince and potatoes with them. Xaba has been walking and running barefooted. When eating, his feet help him to take food to his mouth. He puts his food between the big toe and the second toe. Eating his white bread from his dirty foot seems not to bother him. He is not going to depend on anybody to feed him.

There are still problems but teachers and students have learned that vandalism is an addition to those problems. The school is currently using one bus to pick up 100 children around Soweto to and from school. Mrs Margaret Malebane, the house mother, says that lack of transport is one of the major problems experienced at school. “Some of the children cannot come to school because the bus is unable to fetch them. No pupil has an electric wheelchair. Some of these pupils’ wheelchairs are not in good condition. On some days pupils get home at eight o’clock in the evening because the bus got stuck on their way home. Despite all the problems at school, people never pass by without a greeting”.

Beverly Khoza is busy doing her laundry while other children are in class. Sitting in her wheelchair, she pushes herself from the tap to the washing line. The washing line is very low because some pupils are unable to use their feet.

Khoza travels a distance of 15 to 20 kilometres to see her family in Meadowlands. “Every Friday, I go home to visit my aunt. I cannot afford a taxi fare, so I push myself from here to Meadowlands,” Khoza said. Her only affordable transport is her manual wheelchair which she has been using since the ‘80s. Khoza and Gertrude Mphahlele are in matric and have no idea who to talk to about the careers they want to pursue or about public relations and Khoza is determined to pursue a career in civil engineering. Despite the fact that they are disabled, they have dreams, aspirations and are determined to contribute to the world economy.

The new principal, Baba Memani, says they have two buses but one bus is still with the panel-beater for repairs. The school also owns a van specially built for the paraplegic, which is used for transporting pupils to and from school and for taking the children to clinics and hospitals. Memani has been with the school for only three weeks but is determined that things will be better. He is still working on a development programme with the Association for the Disabled and hopes that after three months the 180 children will have better resources and facilities.

[Extracted from Ansell, G – *Basic Journalism*, M & G Good Journalism Guides, M & G Books, Durban, 2002. (Adapted for the examination purposes)]

