

LIFE ORIENTATION NSC EXAMINATION

Grade 12 Past-Paper Trend & Study Guide

2019–2025 Analysis | 2026 Preparation

Purpose

This document analyses Grade 12 Life Orientation NSC past papers from **2019–2025** to identify recurring **topics, subtopics and specific focuses** and to determine which areas have been tested frequently, recently, or not yet tested.

The purpose is **not to predict the 2026 paper with certainty**, but to use past-paper trends to make study time more strategic.

Key Principle

Use past papers to prioritise your studying, not to eliminate syllabus content.

The goal is to achieve broad coverage of the Grade 12 syllabus while giving greater attention to areas that the past-paper analysis suggests may deserve additional preparation.

This contains useful information that all can use

Life Orientation NSC Common Assessment

Topics Matrix (2019–2025)

Year / Paper	Question 1.4	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
2025	Tax Obligations: A Challenge in South Africa	Human Rights Violations: Safe and Healthy Living	Human Factors Causing Ill Health: Smoking in Adolescents	Labour Laws: Workers' Rights and Obligations in the Workplace	The Media: Being Cyber-Savvy	Recruitment Processes: General Trends and Practices
2024	Personal Fitness and Health Goals	The Value of Work: Generation Z (Gen Z) and the Changing World of Work	Study Skills: Dishonesty in Examinations on the Increase	The Role of the Media: Media Coverage of Sport and Sports Personalities	Social and Environmental Responsibility: Participation in Community Service	Lifestyle Diseases: TB – A Silent Killer
2023	Adapting to Growth and Change in a Globalised World	Long-Term Engagement in Physical Activity: Preventing Lifestyle Diseases	South African Youth: Lack of Required Skills / Recruitment Trends	Human Factors Causing Ill Health: Stereotyping as a Social Factor	Entrepreneurship : An Innovative Strategy to Counteract Unemployment	Responsibility of Communities in Ensuring Safe and Healthy Living: South Africa's Water Systems in Crisis
2022	The Power of Our Belief System	Basic Conditions of Employment Act: A Worker's Umbrella	The Importance of Investigating Other Views and Insights	Staying Competitive on E-Business Platforms	Collaboration: A Vital Interpersonal Skill in This Era	My Phone, My Photos, My Information, My Privacy, My Social Media Footprint
2021	Entrepreneurship : Plan A, B or C?	The Importance of Communication	Surviving Examinations	The Devastation of Crises and Disasters	Critical Analysis of the Media	Finding Meaning in Work
2020	—	—	—	—	—	—
2019	—	The Outcry of Victims of Gender Imbalance	Opportunities to Counteract Unemployment: Youth Entrepreneurship and Relevant Job Skills	Are Municipalities Spending Money Properly?	Campaign to Root Out Substance Abuse	Worker Submits Fraudulent Medical Certificates

Category	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2019
Health	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			✓
Work	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Media	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Entrepreneurship			✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal Development		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	
Social Responsibility	✓	✓	✓✓		✓	✓✓

What can be seen here is that the broad topics can appear in consecutive years, and sometimes even return to the same question number. What appears to change more often is the **specific subtopic or angle**.

If a broad section contains many possible focuses, the paper-setters have plenty of unused angles available, so an immediate return to the *exact same focus* may be less likely. The key would be to make a list of:

1. **Broad category**
2. **Specific focuses already used**
3. **Specific focuses not yet seen in your papers**

That third list is probably where your trend analysis becomes most useful for preparing for the upcoming assessment.

Grade 12 Life Orientation — 90%+ Study Checklist

This is what you need to know. This is sort of what you need to focus on.

The underlying Grade 12 structure comes from the DBE CAPS/examination guidance; the DBE specifically says the Annual Teaching Plan should be used for the full topics, subtopics and content.

Priority key

-  **MASTER** = learn properly; know definitions, explanations, examples and how to answer questions.
-  **STUDY** = understand thoroughly, but don't spend as long as the red items.
-  **REVIEW** = know the basics and key terms.
-  **COVER** = make sure you have at least encountered it.

Important: The priority is based on **your 2019–2025 data + syllabus coverage**, not a claim about what 2026 will definitely contain.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF IN SOCIETY

Stress, change and relationships

- ☐  Stressors — physical, emotional, social and environmental
- ☐  Signs and symptoms of stress
- ☐  Positive vs negative stress
- ☐  Stress-management techniques / coping mechanisms
- ☐  Developing a personal stress-management strategy
- ☐  Conflict resolution
 - interpersonal conflict
 - intrapersonal conflict
- ☐  Initiating, building and sustaining positive relationships
- ☐  Communication
 - understanding others
 - communicating feelings
 - communicating beliefs and attitudes

- effective communication
- ☐ ● Empathy / seeing another person's perspective
- ☐ ● Adapting to change
- ☐ ● Change and quality of life
- ☐ ● Personal lifestyle plan
- ☐ ● Personal values, beliefs and attitudes

Human factors causing ill health

This deserves **very strong preparation** because it has appeared repeatedly.

- ☐ ● Human factors causing ill health
- ☐ ● Psychological factors
- ☐ ● Social factors
- ☐ ● Cultural factors
- ☐ ● Religious factors
- ☐ ● Stereotyping as a social factor
- ☐ ● Lifestyle diseases
- ☐ ● Causes/contributing factors of lifestyle diseases
- ☐ ● Prevention of lifestyle diseases
- ☐ ● Smoking
- ☐ ● Substance abuse
- ☐ ● TB
- ☐ ● HIV/AIDS/STIs
- ☐ ● Cancer
- ☐ ● Hypertension
- ☐ ● Heart/circulatory diseases
- ☐ ● Intervention strategies
- ☐ ● Prevention, control, early detection, treatment and support

Physical activity / health

- ☐ ● Long-term participation in physical activity
- ☐ ● Benefits of physical activity
- ☐ ● Personal fitness and health goals
- ☐ ● Setting achievable health/fitness goals

- ☐ ● Developing an action plan for lifelong participation
- ☐ ● Physical, mental, emotional and social benefits
- ☐ ● Recreational/community activities

2. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

This is an area where I would **increase your attention**, because your past papers have touched some parts but not everything.

Safe and healthy living

- ☐ ● Environments that promote safe and healthy living
- ☐ ● Services that promote safe and healthy living
- ☐ ● Community responsibility
- ☐ ● Community participation
- ☐ ● Community service
- ☐ ● Educational programmes
- ☐ ● Intervention programmes
- ☐ ● Environmental problems affecting communities
- ☐ ● Water systems / water crisis
- ☐ ● Government/community responses to environmental problems

Government

- ☐ ● National government responsibilities
- ☐ ● Provincial government responsibilities
- ☐ ● Local/municipal government responsibilities
- ☐ ● Municipal by-laws
- ☐ ● Laws, regulations and rules
- ☐ ● Government accountability
- ☐ ● Government services
- ☐ ● Impact studies

Personal mission

This is one of the areas I would make sure you don't leave out.

- ☐ ● Personal mission statement
- ☐ ● Personal vision
- ☐ ● Personal values
- ☐ ● Belief system and personal goals
- ☐ ● Study/career goals
- ☐ ● Physical and emotional well-being
- ☐ ● Environmental responsibility
- ☐ ● Impact of your vision/actions on your community and society

3. DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights / citizenship

- ☐ ● Human rights
- ☐ ● Bill of Rights
- ☐ ● Human rights violations
- ☐ ● Discrimination
- ☐ ● Responsible citizenship
- ☐ ● Democratic values
- ☐ ● Human dignity, equality and freedom
- ☐ ● Participation in community/civic activities
- ☐ ● Campaigns and their outcomes
- ☐ ● Nation building
- ☐ ● Protest action and democratic rights

Media

This has appeared **many times**, so you should know it very well—but don't spend your whole day on it.

- ☐ ● Role of media in a democratic society
- ☐ ● Critical analysis of media

- ☐ ● Media coverage
- ☐ ● Freedom of expression
- ☐ ● Limitations of freedom of expression
- ☐ ● Propaganda
- ☐ ● Investigative journalism
- ☐ ● Social media
- ☐ ● Social media privacy
- ☐ ● Digital footprint
- ☐ ● Cyber-safety / being cyber-savvy
- ☐ ● Cyberbullying
- ☐ ● Media coverage of sport and sports personalities
- ☐ ● Media accessibility
- ☐ ● Media bias / positions taken by editors
- ☐ ● Space allocated to topics
- ☐ ● Geographical distribution of information

Beliefs / worldviews

- ☐ ● Belief systems
- ☐ ● Ideologies
- ☐ ● Worldviews
- ☐ ● Cultural beliefs
- ☐ ● Recreation/physical activity across cultures
- ☐ ● Gender and physical activity

4. CAREERS AND CAREER CHOICES

This is probably the section I would give the most attention to overall, because it has appeared extremely frequently in your papers, but with many different subtopics still available.

Career decisions

- ☐ ● Career choice
- ☐ ● Career suitability

- ☐ ● Career interests
- ☐ ● Gap year and career decisions
- ☐ ● Commitment to a career/course decision
- ☐ ● Job/course applications
- ☐ ● Requirements for acceptance
- ☐ ● Sources of employment/study opportunities
- ☐ ● Possible challenges when applying
- ☐ ● Strategies for achieving career goals

Unemployment

- ☐ ● Causes of unemployment
- ☐ ● Effects/impact of unemployment
- ☐ ● Youth unemployment
- ☐ ● Youth entrepreneurship
- ☐ ● Entrepreneurship as a solution to unemployment
- ☐ ● Volunteering
- ☐ ● Part-time work
- ☐ ● Community work
- ☐ ● Informal employment

Entrepreneurship

- ☐ ● Entrepreneurship
- ☐ ● Innovative entrepreneurship
- ☐ ● Financial viability
- ☐ ● Social viability
- ☐ ● Financial challenges
- ☐ ● Social entrepreneurship
- ☐ ● Other employment options

Tax / corruption / fraud

- ☐ ● SARS tax obligations
- ☐ ● Importance of paying tax
- ☐ ● Corruption

- ☐ ● Fraud
- ☐ ● Effects of corruption/fraud on individuals
- ☐ ● Effects on companies
- ☐ ● Effects on communities
- ☐ ● Effects on the country
- ☐ ● Nepotism

Labour law / workplace

Very important, but don't assume it cannot repeat.

- ☐ ● Basic Conditions of Employment Act
- ☐ ● Labour laws
- ☐ ● Workers' rights
- ☐ ● Workers' obligations
- ☐ ● Conditions of employment/service
- ☐ ● Labour Relations Act
- ☐ ● Employment Equity Act
- ☐ ● Redress
- ☐ ● Equity and discrimination
- ☐ ● Gender inequality in the workplace
- ☐ ● Trade unions
- ☐ ● Organised labour
- ☐ ● Work ethics
- ☐ ● Societal expectations at work

Recruitment

Because you've now compared the **actual 2023 and 2025 questions**, I would study this but **not give it your entire focus**.

- ☐ ● Recruitment trends
- ☐ ● Recruitment processes
- ☐ ● General recruitment practices
- ☐ ● Technology in recruitment
- ☐ ● Personal branding
- ☐ ● CVs

- ☐ ● References
- ☐ ● Employer selection
- ☐ ● Work experience
- ☐ ● Company mission statement when applying
- ☐ ● Keeping up with recruitment trends

Value of work

- ☐ ● Value of work
- ☐ ● Meaning of work
- ☐ ● Changing world of work
- ☐ ● Generation Z and work
- ☐ ● Work satisfaction/fulfilment

Post-school planning

Give this extra attention because it has not appeared as a major focus in your dataset.

- ☐ ● Portfolio of plans for life after school
- ☐ ● Post-school study plans
- ☐ ● Employment plans
- ☐ ● Bursary applications
- ☐ ● CV preparation
- ☐ ● Letters of application
- ☐ ● Admission requirements
- ☐ ● Higher-education options
- ☐ ● Funding/fees
- ☐ ● Accommodation
- ☐ ● Travel arrangements
- ☐ ● Alternative study/work opportunities

5. STUDY SKILLS

This has appeared in Q1.2/Q1.3 **and** as a major question, so don't neglect it.

- ☐ ● Study skills
- ☐ ● Study strategies
- ☐ ● Study styles
- ☐ ● Effective vs poor study habits
- ☐ ● Examination-writing skills
- ☐ ● Reading questions carefully
- ☐ ● Understanding command words
- ☐ ● "Define"
- ☐ ● "State"
- ☐ ● "Explain"
- ☐ ● "Discuss"
- ☐ ● "Critically discuss"
- ☐ ● "Analyse"
- ☐ ● "Evaluate"
- ☐ ● Planning an answer
- ☐ ● Answering according to mark allocation
- ☐ ● Visualising information
- ☐ ● Scanning
- ☐ ● Mnemonics
- ☐ ● Learning styles
- ☐ ● School-Based Assessment
- ☐ ● Importance of NSC
- ☐ ● Grade 12 study plan
- ☐ ● Examination preparation

6. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Don't completely skip this because your Q1.2/Q1.3 data shows that **individual PE concepts are actively used**.

- ☐ ● Personal fitness
- ☐ ● Health goals
- ☐ ● Cardiovascular endurance
- ☐ ● Physical fitness components

- ☐  Benefits of physical activity
- ☐  Long-term participation
- ☐  Physical activity action plans
- ☐  Safety during physical activity
- ☐  Hydration/dehydration
- ☐  Balance/body control
- ☐  Community games
- ☐  Indigenous/traditional games
- ☐  Adapting activities for people with disabilities
- ☐  Recreation
- ☐  Lifelong participation
- ☐  Movement performance

What I would do TODAY

Start with this order:

1. Careers & Career Choices

Work through the checklist above.

2. Development of Self

Especially:

- Stress
- Ill health
- Lifestyle diseases
- Smoking/substance abuse
- Physical activity
- Relationships/communication

3. Democracy & Human Rights

Especially:

- Human rights
- Media
- Freedom of expression
- Social media
- Citizenship

4. Social & Environmental Responsibility

Give particular attention to the **less-tested areas**:

- Personal mission statement
- Government responsibilities
- Safe/healthy environments and services

5. Study Skills

This is relatively compact, so you can get good coverage quickly.

6. Physical Education

Do a focused review of the terminology and concepts.

The goal is:

- Master the important material → ● understand the rest strongly → ● don't leave major gaps →
○ only the smallest details if time remains.