EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

2025 PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS REPORT

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Foreword

The Examinations Council of Zambia under its mandate has over the years conducted assessments at Primary (G7), Junior Secondary (G9), School Certificate (G12) and Teacher Education levels. These assessments have provided useful information on learning achievement, valuable to teaching and learning, system improvement and policy formulation. It is for this reason that the Examinations Council of Zambia yearly evaluates the performance of candidates in examinations at various levels of learning, to provide feedback to the general public and key stakeholders in the education sector. The 2025 Primary School Leaving Examination Annual Examination Performance Analysis Report is presented in two chapters. The first chapter highlights examination statistics on candidature absenteeism and general performance while Chapter Two provides analyses of items, in terms of content and cognitive domains, and highlights challenges and suggestions for improvement. It is hoped that stakeholders will find information in this report useful.

Dr. Michael M. Chilala
Executive Director
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1.0 Introduction

This report presents the performance of candidates in the 2025 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) (Grade 7). The report provides statistical information on national and regional performance by division classifications and grade distributions. Performance is also analysed by mean standard scores and sex, as well as by content area and cognitive domains.

Overview of the 2025 Grade 7 Composite Examination

1.1 The 2025 Grade Seven (7) cohort was the ninth to sit for the examination since the revision of the 2013 Zambia National Curriculum Framework

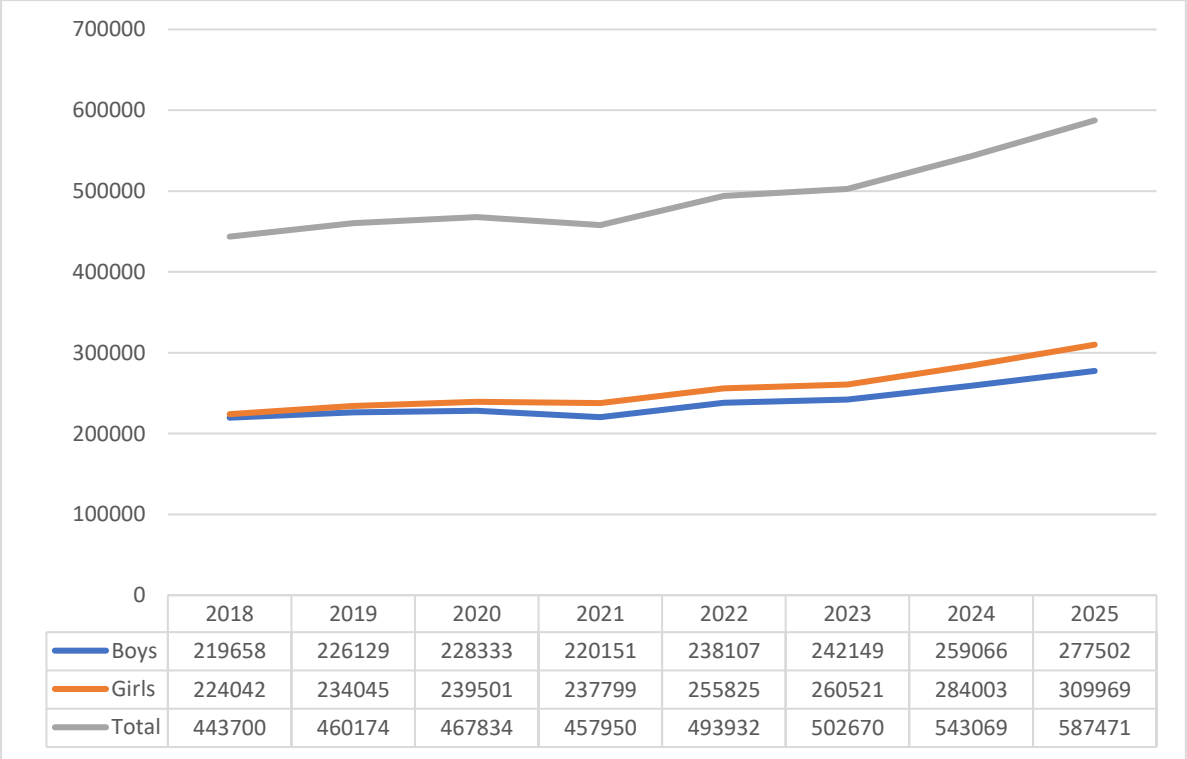
1.2 The Examination was written from Monday, 27th to Friday, 31st October 2025, with the results announced on Tuesday, 23rd December 2025.

1.3 The Grade 7 Composite Examination is based on six learning areas and two aptitude tests. The six learning areas are English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Integrated Science, Creative and Technology Studies and Zambian Languages, while the two aptitude tests are Special Paper 1 (Verbal Reasoning) and Special Paper 2 (Non-verbal Reasoning).

2.0 Candidature

2.1 Five hundred eighty-seven thousand four hundred seventy-one (587,471) candidates entered the 2025 Grade 7 Composite Examination. Of these, 587,320 were from the Zambian schools and 151 from St. Jeff College in Johannesburg, South Africa.

2.2 Generally, total candidature increased by 8.17 percent from 543,069 in 2024. The number of boys who entered the examination was 277,502 (47.24%), while that of girls was 309,969 (52.76%). Compared to 2024, the proportion of girls increased by 0.47 percentage points, while the proportion of boys decreased by the same margin.



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Boys	219658	226129	228333	220151	238107	242149	259066	277502
Girls	224042	234045	239501	237799	255825	260521	284003	309969
Total	443700	460174	467834	457950	493932	502670	543069	587471

Figure 1: PSLE candidature for the years 2018-2025

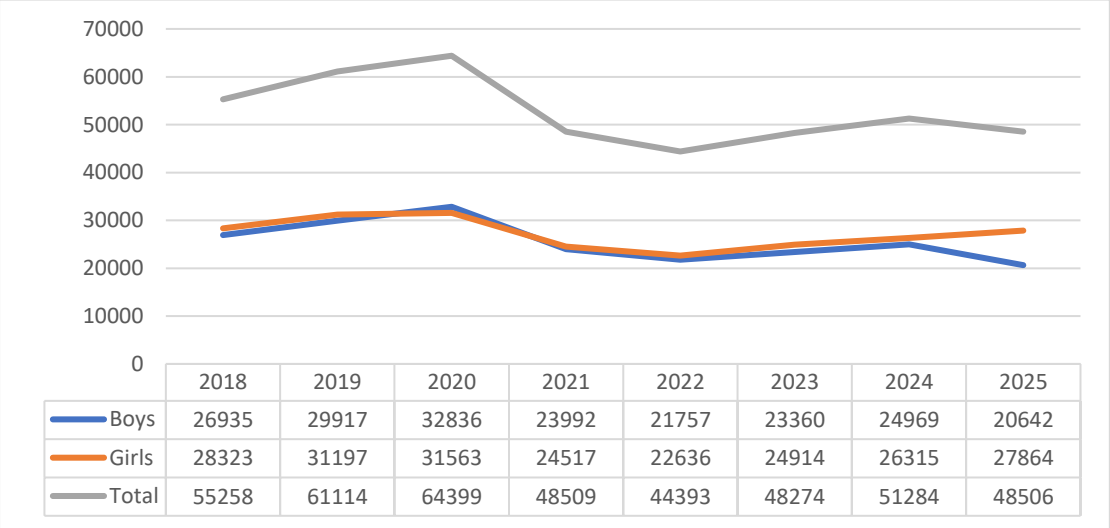
3.0 Absenteeism

3.1 The absenteeism rate for the 2025 Examination decreased slightly by 1.18 percentage points, from 9.44 percent in 2024 to 8.26 percent in 2025.

3.2 Among the 309,969 girls and 277,502 boys who registered for the examination, 27,864 girls (8.99%) and 20,642 boys (7.44%) were absent.

3.3 North-Western recorded the highest absenteeism rates in 2025 at 14.51 percent, continuing their trend as the highest since 2022.

3.4 Southern Province recorded the lowest absenteeism rate in 2025 at 5.77 percent. Lusaka Province was the second lowest at 6.48 percent



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Boys	26935	29917	32836	23992	21757	23360	24969	20642
Girls	28323	31197	31563	24517	22636	24914	26315	27864
Total	55258	61114	64399	48509	44393	48274	51284	48506

Figure 2: Number of PSLE candidates absent from the Examination from 2018 to 2025

4.0 General Performance

4.1 Certificate Awards

The PSLE scores are standardised with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Each subject score ranges between 50 and 150, where zero (0), the lowest possible score, is adjusted to 50. For candidates who sit six subjects, the composite score ranges from 300 to 900.

4.1.1 The certification awards are classified into four distinct divisions, namely, Division 1, Division 2, Division 3, and Division 4. The candidates in Division 4 did not meet the required competencies to proceed to secondary school. Candidates in Divisions 1 to 3 have demonstrated the necessary competencies to be eligible for selection into secondary school.

4.1.2 Certificate classification is based on any of the best four out of six curriculum-based subjects. To obtain Division 1, a candidate must obtain 460 standard points and above in the best four subjects, excluding the aptitude tests (Special Paper I and Special Paper II). To obtain divisions 2 and 3, candidates must score between 420 and 459 standard points and 372 and 419 standard points, respectively. For Division 4, the standard points are 371 and below (Refer to Table 1 below).

4.1.3 A candidate who achieves Division 3 or higher is awarded a certificate, demonstrating that they have acquired the necessary competencies to progress to secondary school. Those in Division 4 did not meet the required competencies to proceed to secondary school.

Table 1: Certification Classification

Award	Cut Scores (Per Subject)	Grade Boundaries (Best 4 Subjects)
Division One	115 - 150	460 - 600
Division Two	105 - 114	420 - 459
Division Three	93 - 104	372 - 419
Division Four	Below 93	Below 372

4.1.4 A total of 384, 451 candidates from the Zambian schools obtained Divisions 1 to 3 and therefore passed the examination and are eligible for selection to Form one.

4.1.5 For selection purposes, scores from two intelligence tests (SP1 and SP2) are added to the composite score for those who met the certificate award criteria.

4.1.6 In 2025, a total of 67,976 candidates (12.61%) obtained Division 1, while 156,124 candidates (28.97%) obtained Division 2. A total of 160,492 candidates (29.78%) were awarded Division 3, and 154,373 candidates (28.64%) fell in Division 4.

4.1.7 Compared to 2024, the proportion of candidates achieving Division 1 decreased from 13.61 percent to 12.61 percent in 2025. The proportion of Division 2 awards saw a slight increase from 28.36 percent in 2024 to 28.97 percent in 2025.

4.1.8 There was also a slight increase in the proportion of candidates obtaining Division 3 awards, rising from 29.22 percent in 2024 to 29.78 percent in 2025. The percentage of Division 4 awards also decreased from 28.81 percent in 2024 to 28.64 percent in 2025.

4.1.9 By sex, a slightly higher proportion of boys (13.63%) obtained Division 1 compared to girls (11.69%). However, a greater percentage of boys (29.37%) obtained Division 2 compared to girls (28.53%).

4.1.10 Overall, most of both boys and girls were concentrated in Division 3 at 30.32 and 29.18 percent, respectively. (See Table 2).

Table 2: PSLE Performance according to Gender and Division (2025 and 2024)

Certificate	2025			2024		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Division One	32976	35000	67976	34576	32343	66919
(Percent)	11.69	13.63	12.61	13.42	13.82	13.61
Division Two	82844	73280	156124	74180	65310	139490
(Percent)	29.37	28.53	28.97	28.79	27.9	28.36
Division Three	85542	74950	160492	75484	68223	143707
(Percent)	30.32	29.18	29.78	29.29	29.14	29.22
Division Four	80734	73639	154373	73448	68221	141669
(Percent)	28.62	28.67	28.64	28.5	29.14	28.81

4.2 Performance according to division classifications by Learning Area (Subjects)

4.2.1 The performance of candidates across the core subjects, by grade distributions, revealed distinct patterns.

4.2.2 Similar to 2024, Special Paper I (15.56%) had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining Division 1. This was followed by English Language, where 12.33 percent of candidates obtained Division 1.

4.2.3 The other subjects recorded a slightly lower proportion of candidates obtaining Division 1; Special Paper II (11.64%), Integrated Science (11.55%), Mathematics (11.41%), Social Studies (11.40%) and Creative and Technology Studies (11.08%).

4.2.4 In terms of Division 4, which represents the lowest performance, Special Paper II stood out with the highest proportion of candidates (32.01%) in this category. Special Paper I also had a significant portion of candidates in Division 4, at 31.44 percent (Table 3).

4.2.5 The absenteeism rate across all subjects remained relatively consistent, ranging from 8.71 percent to 8.81 percent. Integrated Science had the highest absenteeism rate (8.81%) while Social Studies had the lowest with 8.71 percent.

Table 3: Grade Distributions by Learning Area (2025)

Subject	Sat	Div1	Div2	Div3	Div4	Absent
Creative and Technology Studies	536,217	11.08%	23.78%	38.58%	26.36%	8.72%
English Language	535,926	12.33%	22.90%	37.31%	27.27%	8.77%
Integrated Science	535,686	11.55%	24.32%	37.50%	26.46%	8.81%
Mathematics	536,181	11.41%	23.54%	38.09%	26.81%	8.73%
Social Studies	536,314	11.40%	23.42%	38.00%	27.04%	8.71%
Special Paper I	536,043	15.56%	21.54%	31.28%	31.44%	8.75%
Special Paper II	535,908	11.64%	23.44%	32.79%	32.01%	8.78%

4.3 Performance in Core Subjects by Mean Standard Scores

4.3.1 The subjects in this analysis include English Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Zambian Languages and Creative and Technology Studies.

4.3.2 In the standardised grading system, each subject has a maximum possible score of 150 marks.

4.3.3 Candidates' mean scores ranged from 98.97 in Special Paper Two to 100.08 in English.

4.3.4 In 2025, performance declined in Zambian Languages, dropping by 0.24 marks.

4.3.5 English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics and Creative and Technology Studies recorded marginal increases of about 0.07, 0.04, 0.98, 0.04 and 0.11 marks, respectively (See Figure 3).

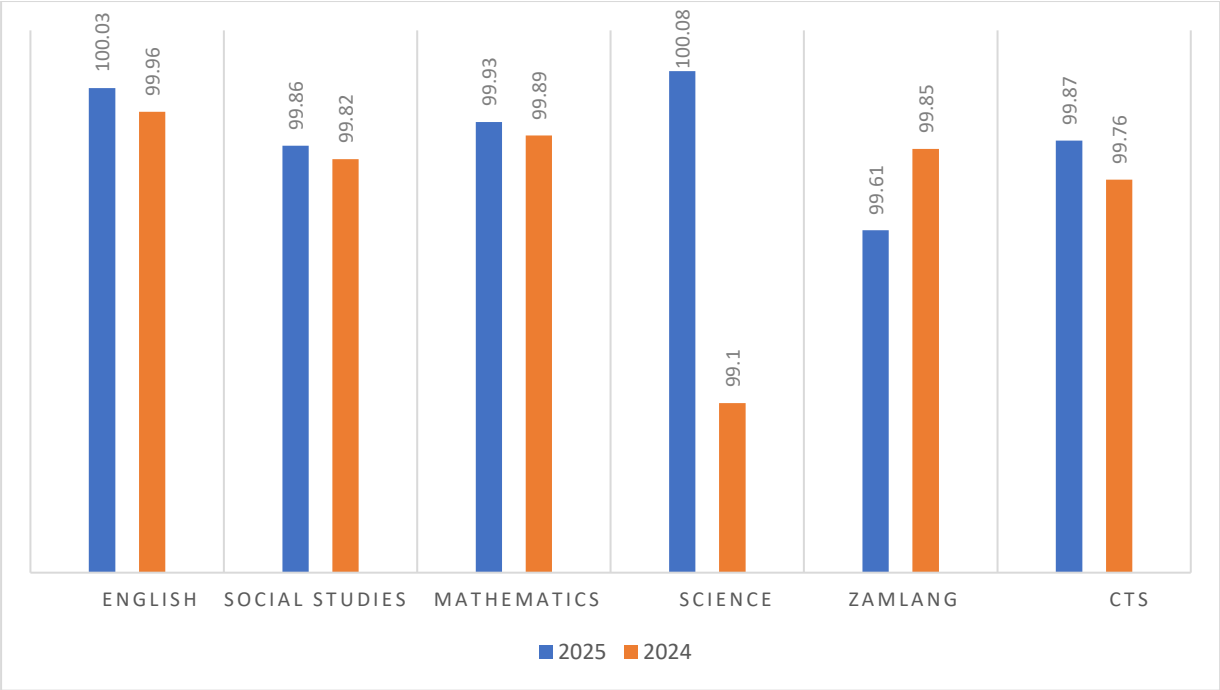


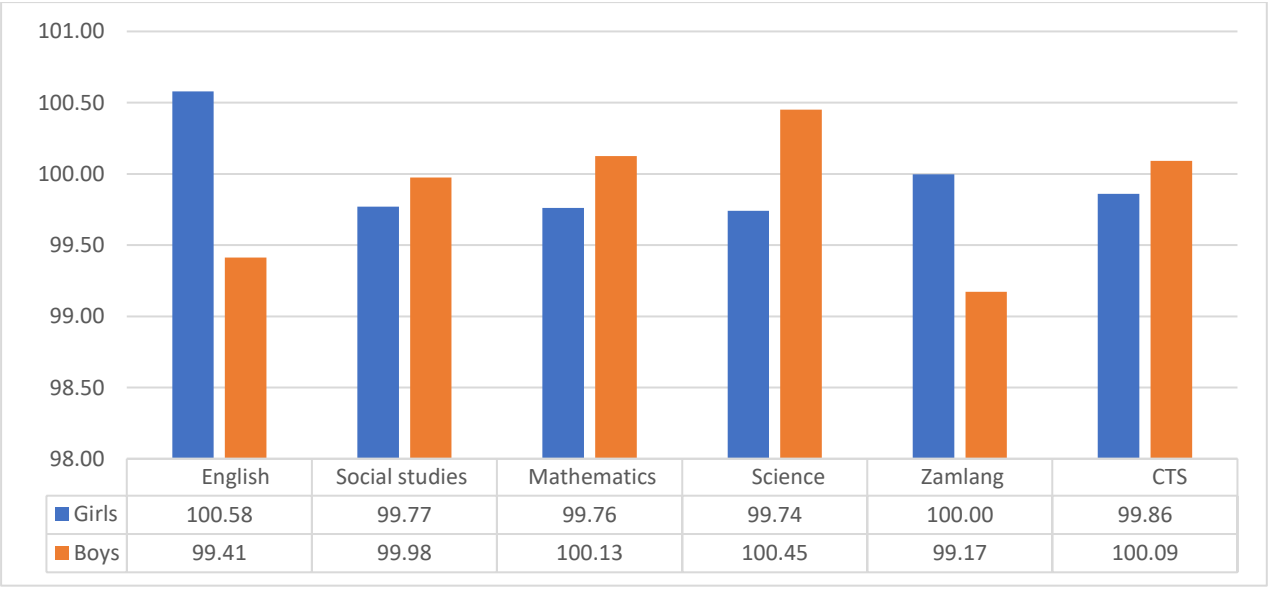
Figure 3: 2025 and 2024 Mean Standard Scores in Core Subjects

4.4 Performance by Mean Standard Score and Sex

4.4.1 The analysis revealed that boys slightly outperformed girls in Integrated Science (by 0.71 points), Creative Technology Studies (by 0.23 points), Social Studies (by 0.21 points), and Mathematics (by 0.36 points). Conversely, girls performed better than boys in language-based subjects, specifically English Language and Zambian Language, with mean differences of 1.17 and 0.18 marks, respectively.

4.4.2 In 2025, a more significant gap was observed in the English Language, where the mean standard score for girls exceeded that of boys by 1.17 standard marks. However, this difference was less than the previous year's gap (1.36).

4.4.3 Overall, the data indicate minimal variation in performance between girls and boys across all subjects (see Figure 4).



	English	Social studies	Mathematics	Science	Zamlang	CTS
Girls	100.58	99.77	99.76	99.74	100.00	99.86
Boys	99.41	99.98	100.13	100.45	99.17	100.09

Figure 4: 2025 Mean Standard Scores by Sex

4.5 Performance by Sex in the Special Papers

4.5.1 Unlike last year, the analysis revealed that girls outperformed boys in Special Paper 1, by 0.18 marks, while boys outperformed their female counterparts in Special Paper 2, by 3.70 marks.

4.5.2 4.5.2The mean standard scores for both papers were nearly identical, with Special Paper 1 at 99.17 and Special Paper 2 at 98.97 (see Figure 6). Additionally, the mean score for Special Paper 2 improved from 2024 by 0.11 marks.

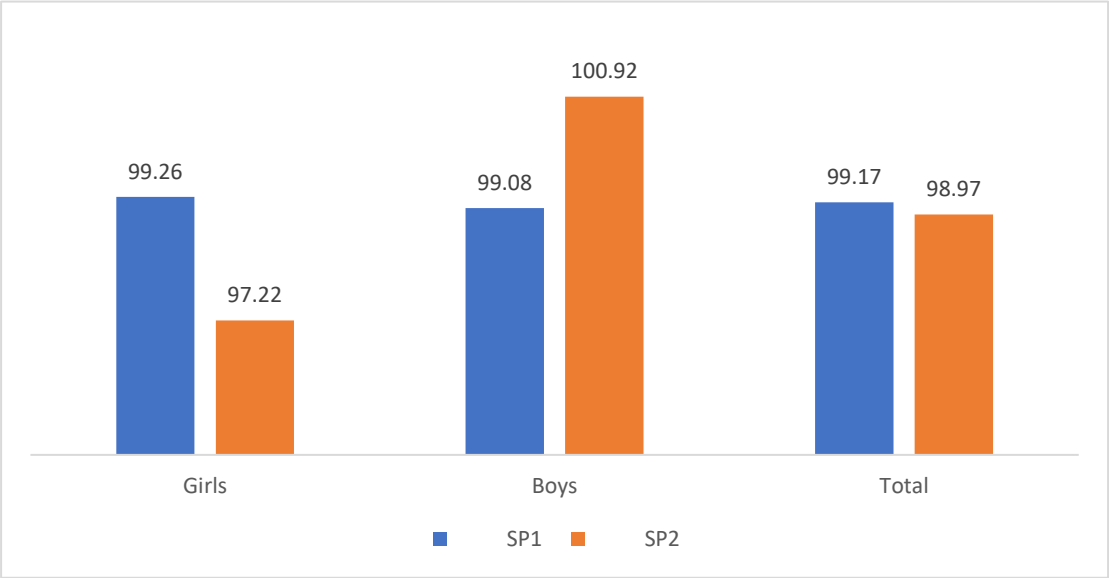


Figure 5: 2025 Mean Performances by Sex in Special Papers

4.6 Overall Performance According to Divisions by Region

4.6.1 Overall, Lusaka (18.39%) had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining Division 1.

4.6.2 Western Province recorded the lowest proportion of candidates obtaining division 1 (7.67%).

4.6.3 Luapula Province (36.10%) had the highest proportion of candidates that obtained Division 2, whilst Western Province (32.29%) had the highest proportion for Division 3.

4.6.4 The highest proportion of candidates obtaining division 4 was recorded in Central Province at 37.68 percent while Luapula Province (22.07%) had the lowest.

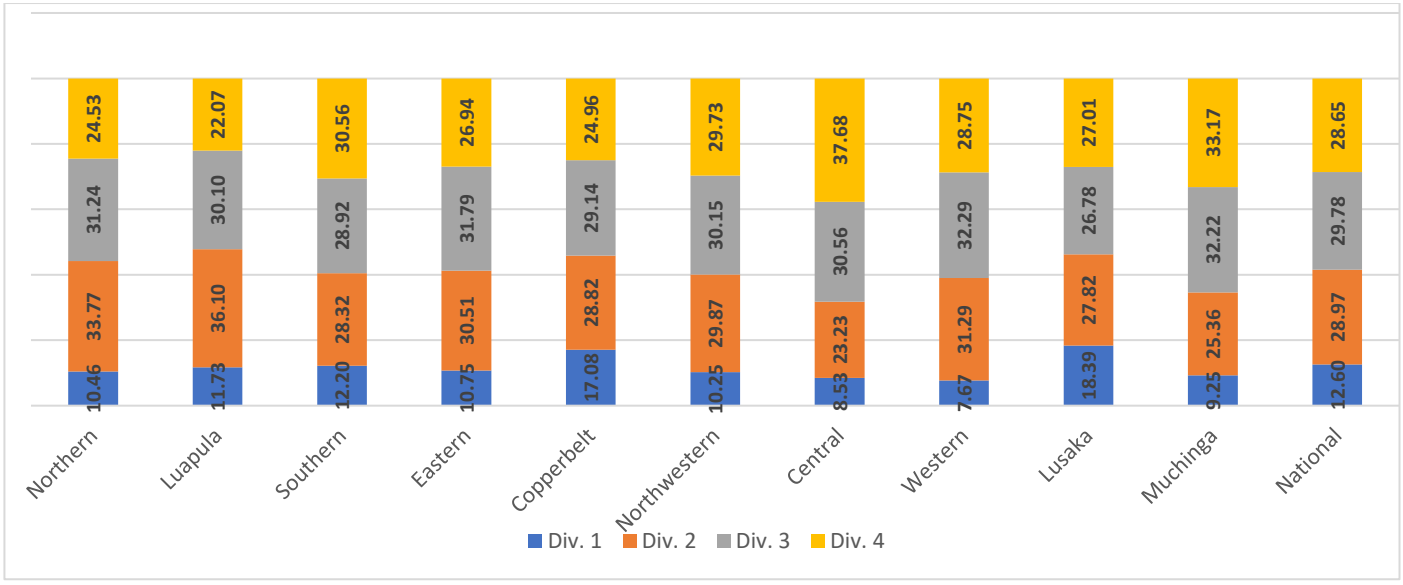


Figure 6: 2025 Proportion of Grade Distributions by Region

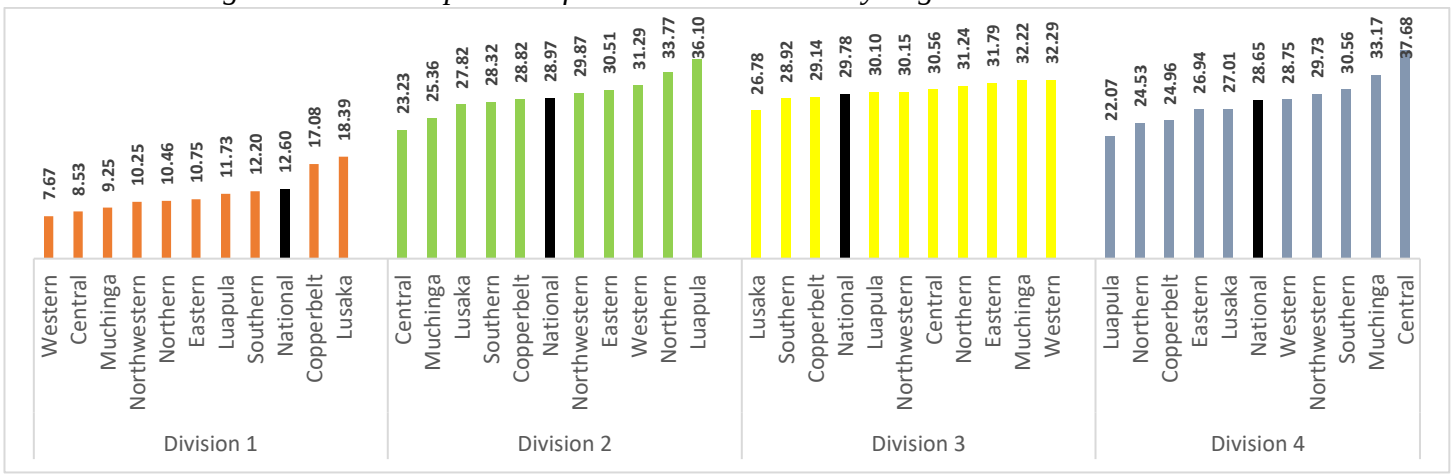


Figure 7: 2025 Proportion of Grade Distributions by Region

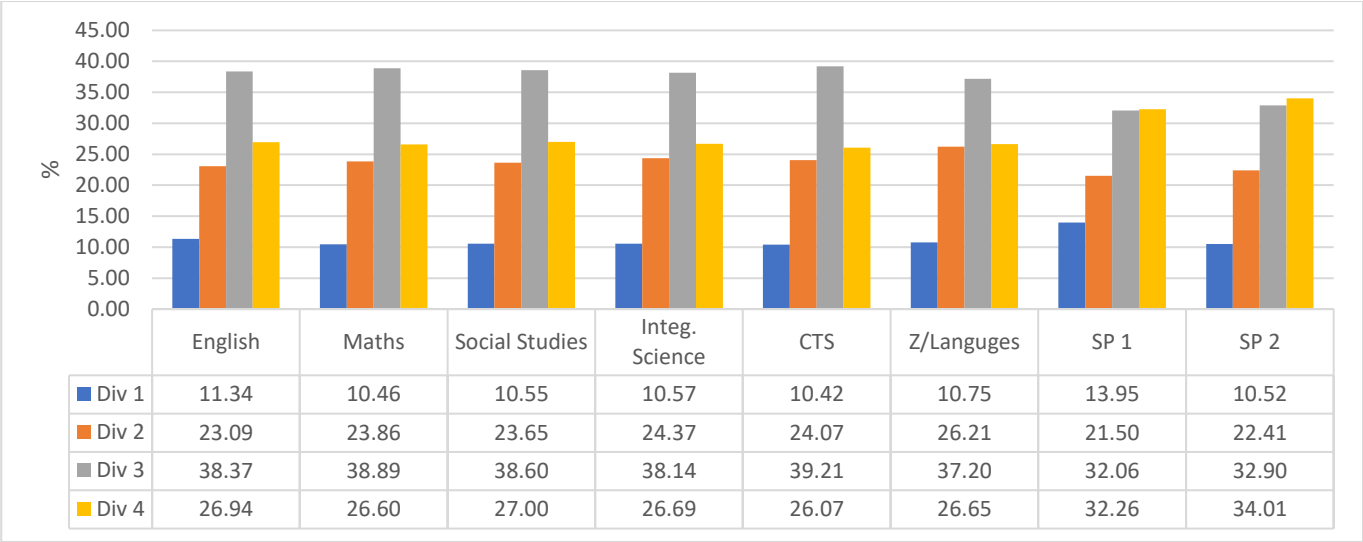
4.7 Grade Distribution by Subject at National Level

4.7.1 In the division one category, Special Paper One (averaged), recorded the highest score at **13.95** percent. Second was English at **11.34** percent. The lowest was CTS at **10.42** percent.

4.7.2 In division two category Zambian Languages was highest at **26.21** percent followed by Integrated Science at **24.37** percent.

4.7.3 Special paper two had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at **34.01** percent.

4.7.4 All taught (curriculum-based) subjects had higher proportions of candidates obtaining division three than divisions four, two and one. Special Paper one and Special Paper two had higher proportions of candidates in the division four categories than divisions three, two and one.



	English	Maths	Social Studies	Integ. Science	CTS	Z/Languges	SP 1	SP 2
Div 1	11.34	10.46	10.55	10.57	10.42	10.75	13.95	10.52
Div 2	23.09	23.86	23.65	24.37	24.07	26.21	21.50	22.41
Div 3	38.37	38.89	38.60	38.14	39.21	37.20	32.06	32.90
Div 4	26.94	26.60	27.00	26.69	26.07	26.65	32.26	34.01

Figure 8: Proportion of Grade Distribution by Subject at National Level

4.8 Grade Distribution by Subject by Region

4.8.1 English Language

4.8.1.1 Lusaka Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 21.78 percent.

4.8.1.2 Muchinga Province had the least proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 6.75 percent and also recorded the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at 34.13 percent followed by Central province at 33.60 percent.

4.8.1.3 The highest proportion of candidates obtaining division two was recorded in Lusaka Province at 28.58 percent followed by Copperbelt at 26.26 percent.

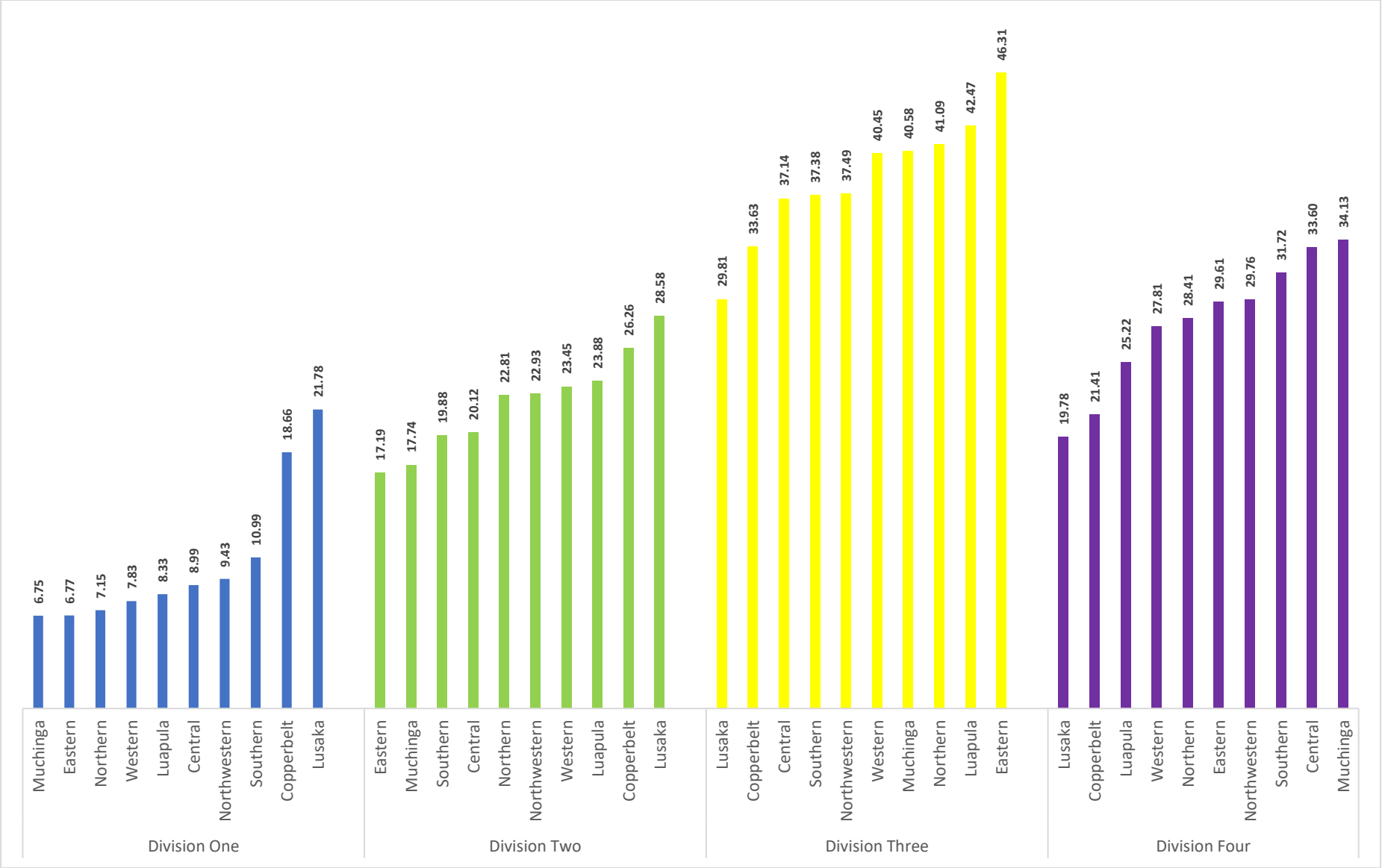


Figure 9: 2025 English Language Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.2 Mathematics

4.8.2.1 Lusaka Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 16.42 percent followed by Copperbelt at 15.27 percent.

4.8.2.2 The province with the least proportion of candidates obtaining division one in Mathematics was Western Province at **6.30** percent.

4.8.2.3 Luapula Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division two in Mathematics at 29.77 percent followed by Northern at 26.50 percent.

4.8.2.4 Central Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at 33.94 followed by Northwestern Province at 30.87 percent.

4.8.2.5 There were more candidates who obtained division three across all regions in Mathematics.

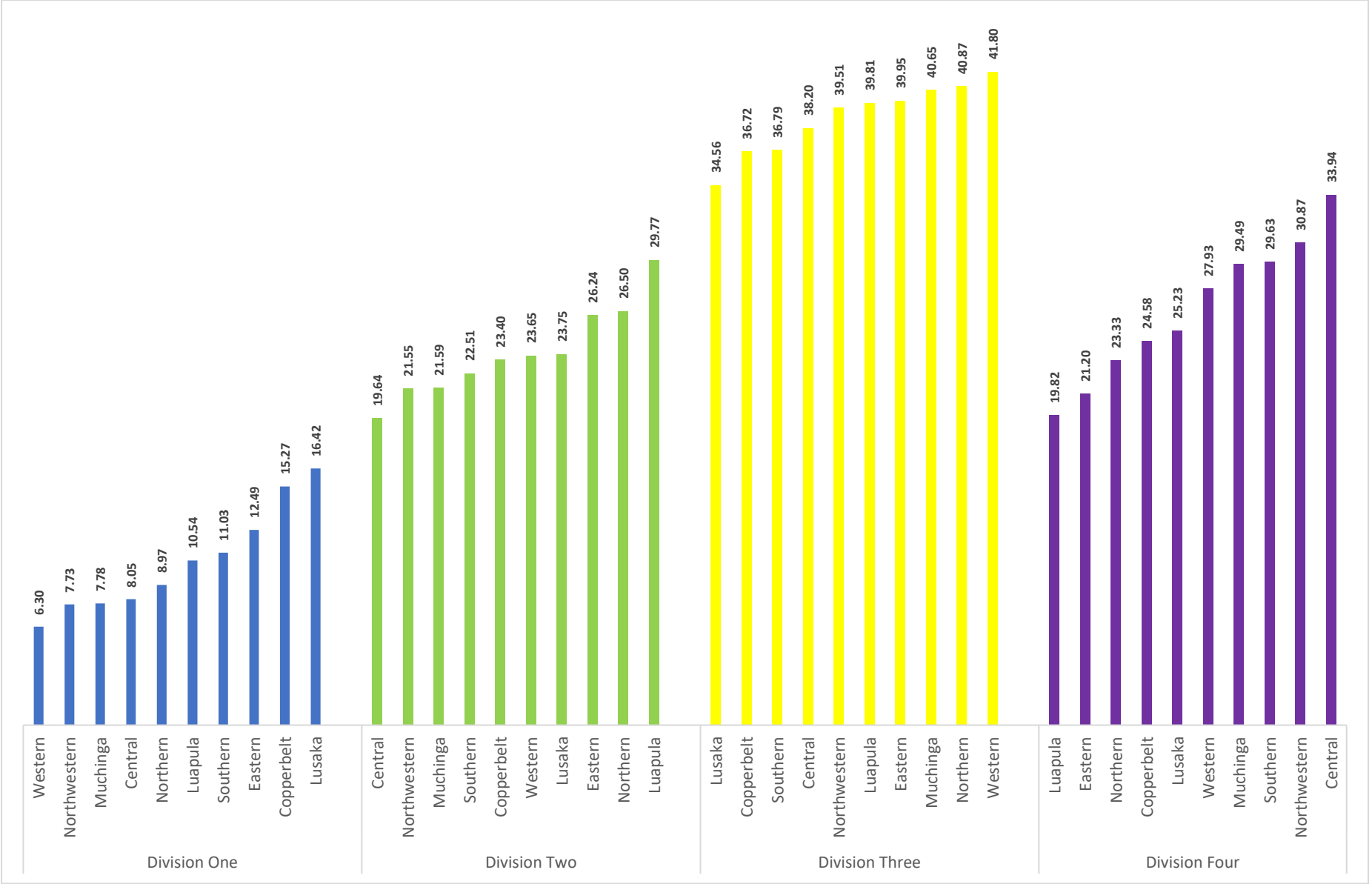


Figure 10: 2025 Mathematics Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.3 Social Studies

4.8.3.1 Lusaka Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 16.72 percent followed by Copperbelt province at 15.65 percent.

4.8.3.2 Eastern Province had the least proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 6.44 followed by Western at 7.90 percent.

4.8.3.3 Central province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at 34.74 percent followed by Eastern province at 32.05 per cent.

4.8.3.4 There were also more candidates who obtained division three than division four, two and one across all regions in Social Studies.

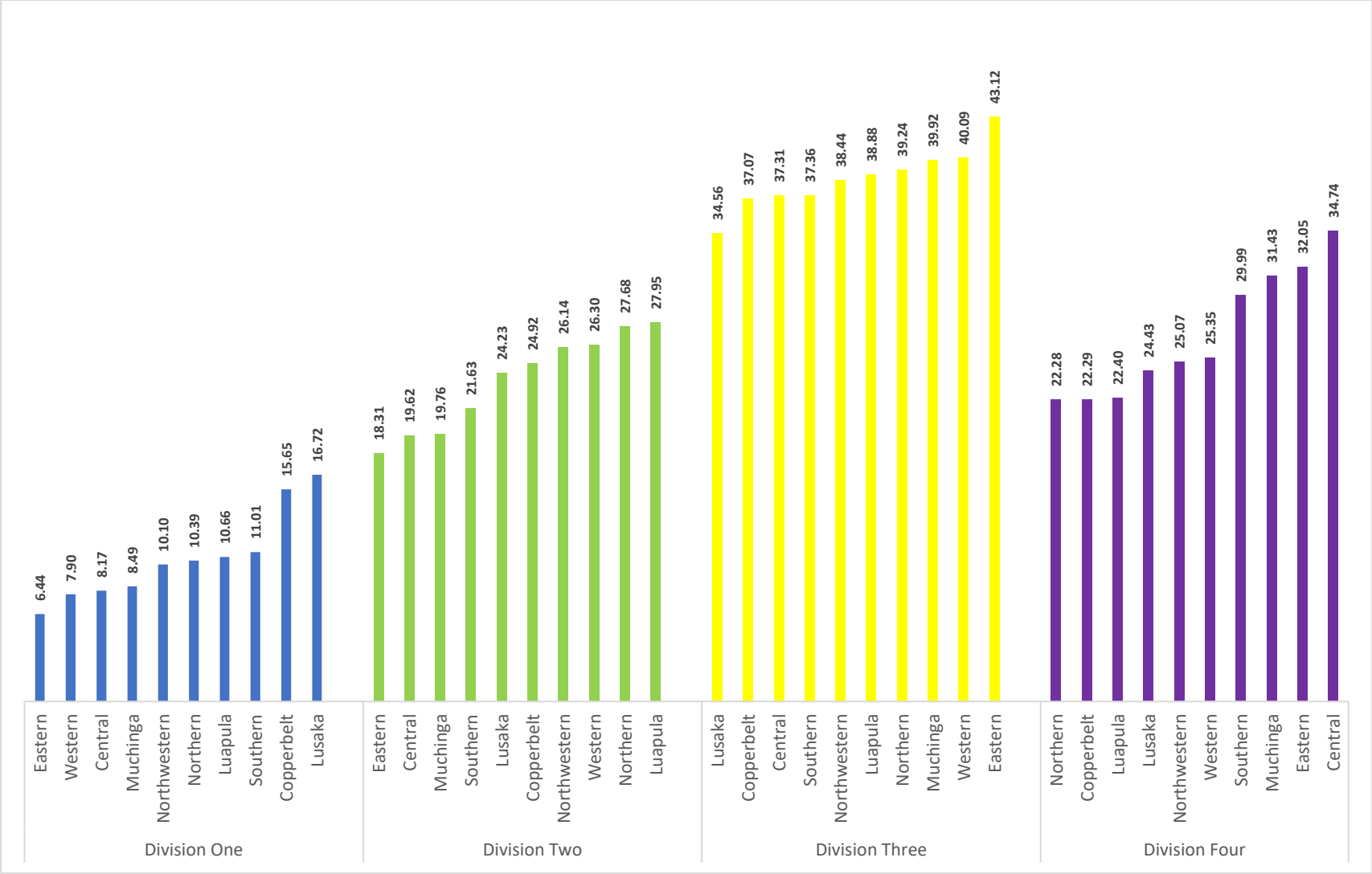


Figure 11: 2025 Social Studies Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.4 Integrated Science

4.8.4.1 Lusaka had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 17.11 percent. The second highest Province was Copperbelt at 15.87 percent.

4.8.4.2 Western Province had the least proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 7.35percent followed by Muchinga province at 7.41percent.

4.8.4.3 Central Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at 33.64 percent followed by Muchinga at 30.51percent.

4.8.4.4 There were also more candidates who obtained division three than division four, two and one in most regions in Integrated Science.

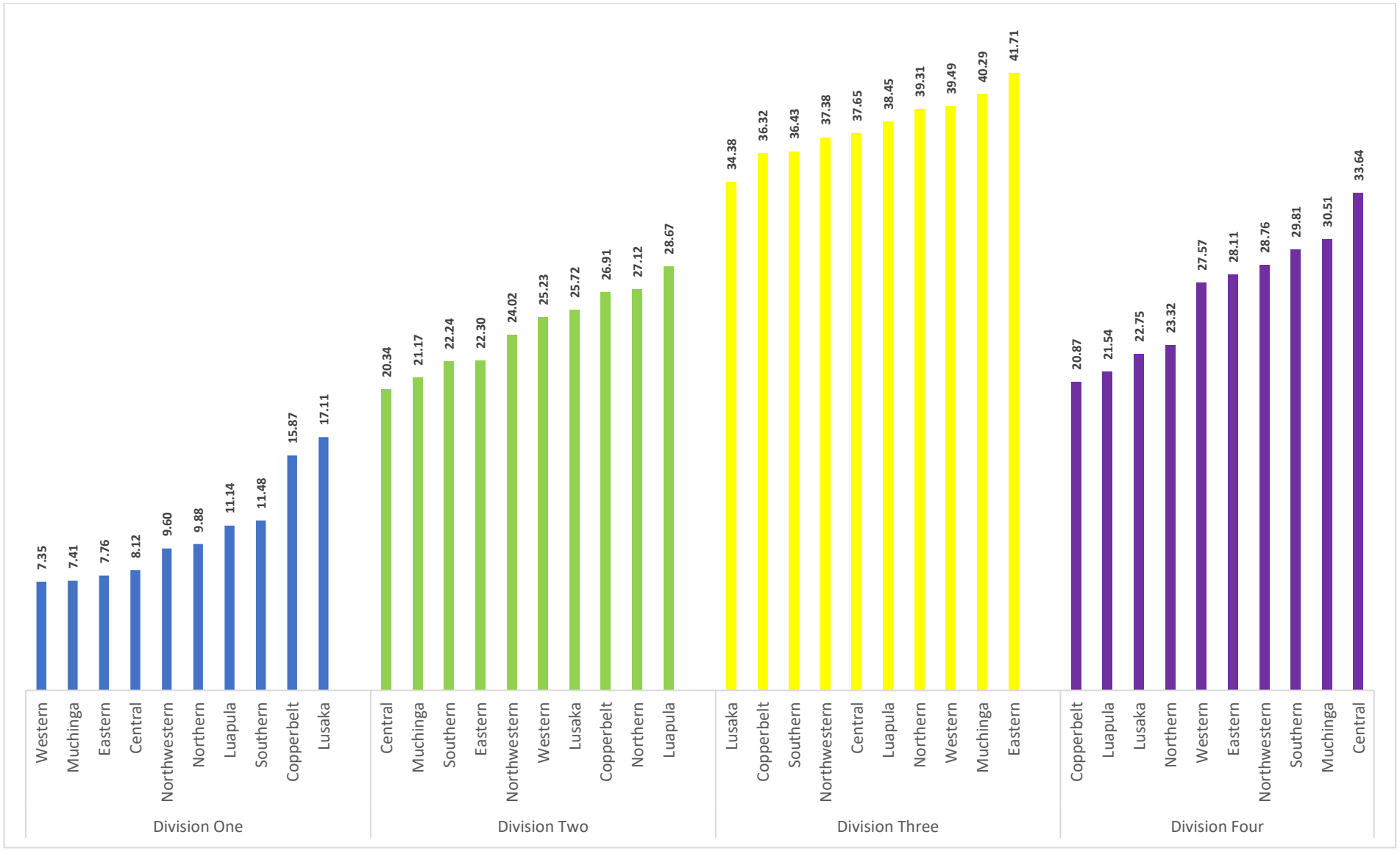


Figure 12: 2025 Integrated Science Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.5 Special Paper One

4.8.5.1 Lusaka province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 24.79 percent followed by Copperbelt province at 21.68 percent.

4.8.5.2 Western Province (25.29%) had the highest proportion in division two, followed by Northern at 23.73 percent.

4.8.5.3 At division three, Eastern province had the highest proportion at 39.55 percent followed by Northern at 34.42percent.

4.8.5.4 More candidates obtained division four than three, two and one in five of the ten regions in Special Paper one.

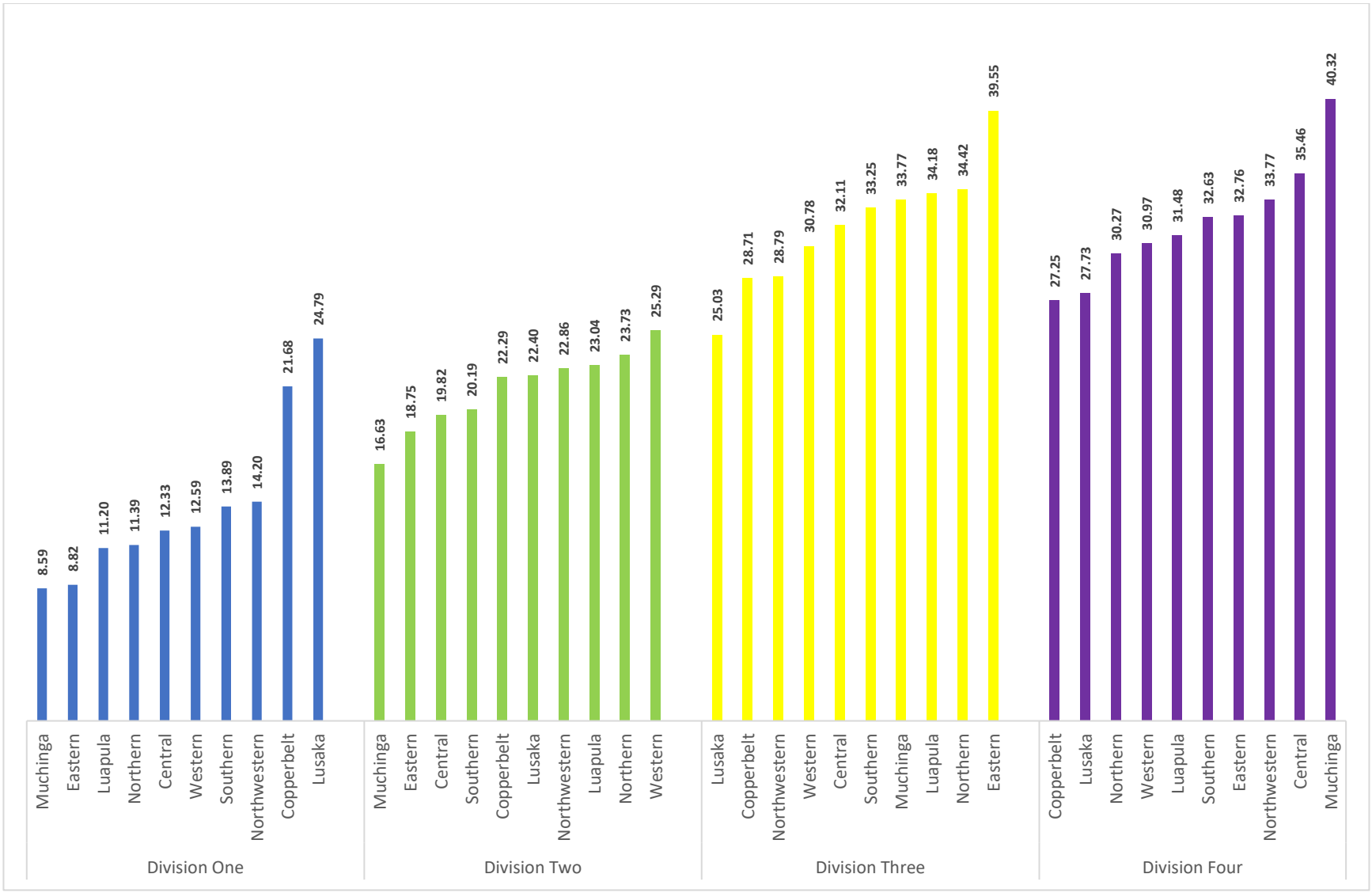


Figure 13: 2025 Special Paper One Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.6 Special Paper Two

4.8.6.1 Lusaka province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 16.16 percent followed by Copperbelt province at 15.01 percent.

4.8.6.2 Eastern Province (27.91%) had the highest proportion in division two, followed by Lusaka at 26.68 percent.

4.8.6.3 At division three, Eastern province had the highest proportion at 35.52 percent followed by Luapula at 34.92 percent.

4.8.6.4 More candidates obtained division four than three, two and one in six of the ten regions in Special Paper two.

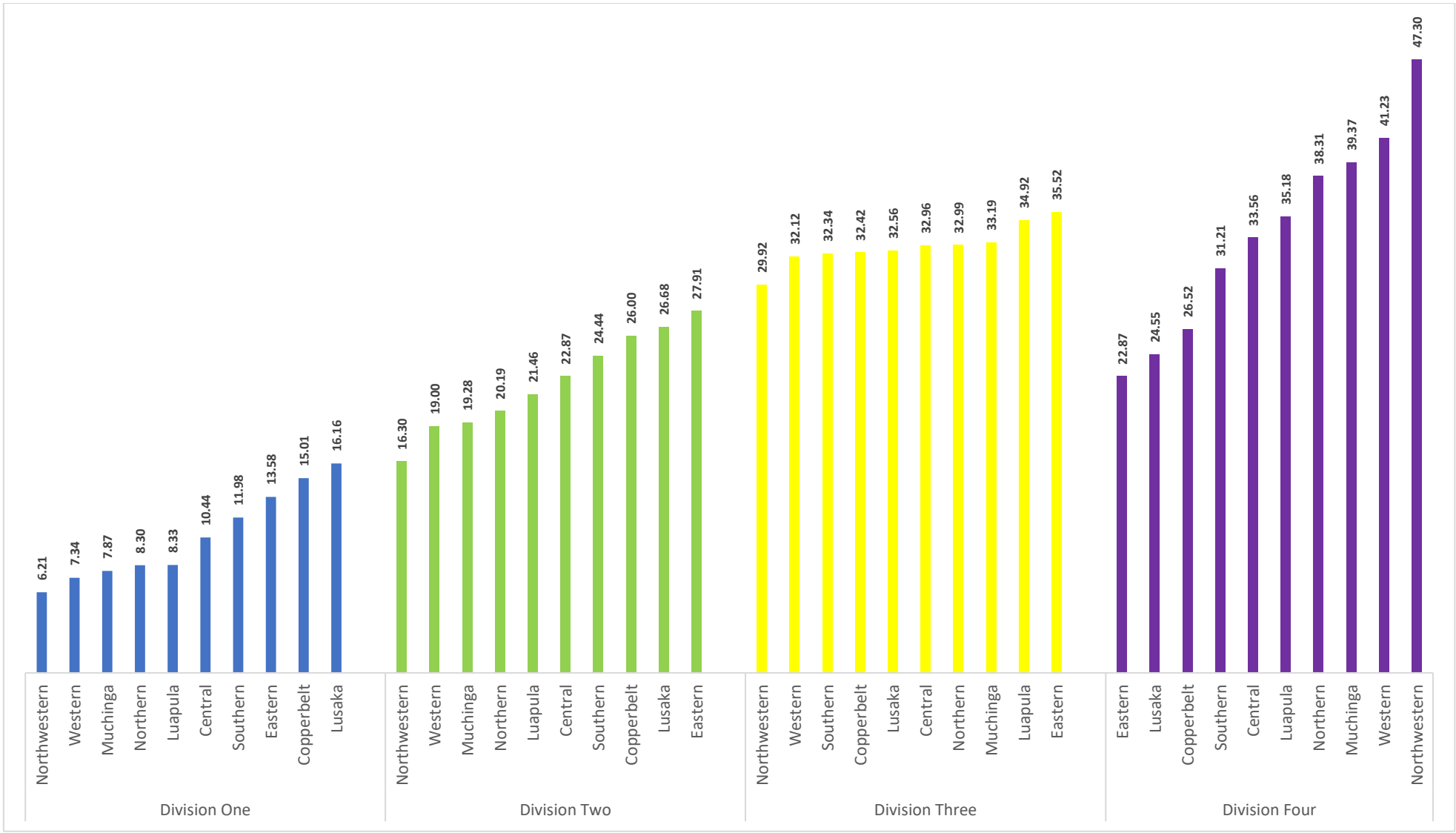


Figure 14: 2025 Special Paper Two Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.7 Creative Technology Studies

4.8.7.1 Lusaka province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one at 15.49 percent followed by Copperbelt province at 15.0 percent.

4.8.7.2 Luapula Province (28.68%) had the highest proportion in division two, followed by Northern at 27.90 percent.

4.8.7.3 At division three, Eastern province had the highest proportion at 44.14 percent followed by Western at 41.41 percent.

4.8.7.4 More candidates obtained division three than four, two and one across all the regions in Special Paper two.

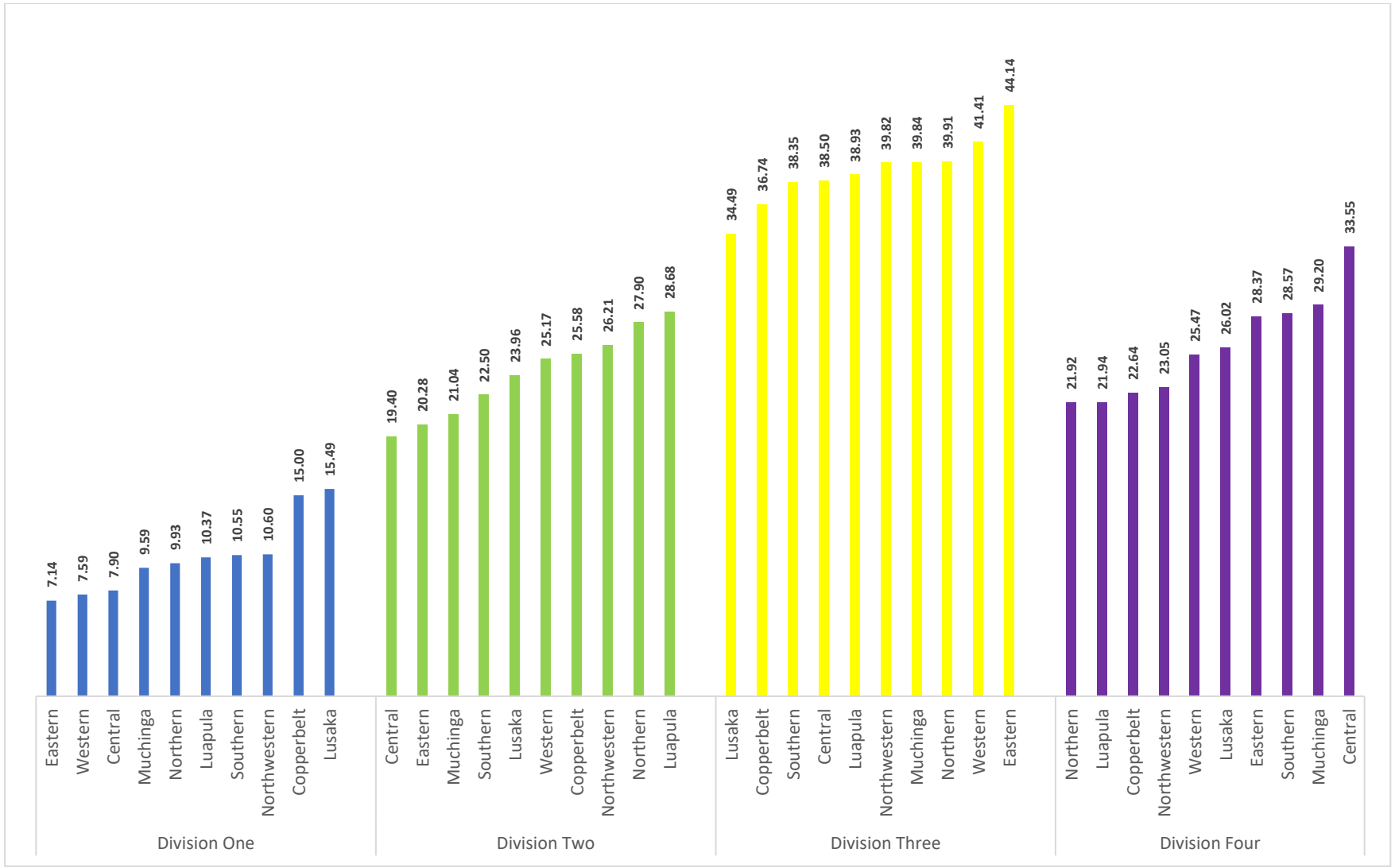


Figure: 15: 2025 Creative and Technology Studies Grade Distributions by Region

4.8.8 Zambian Languages

4.8.8.1 Eastern province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division one in their respective Zambian Languages at 24.33 percent followed by Luapula at 14.77 percent.

4.8.8.2 Lusaka Province recorded the least proportion of division one at 3.13 percent.

4.8.8.3 Eastern province also recorded the highest proportion in the division two category at 38.61 percent followed by Luapula at 32.47 percent.

4.8.8.4 Central Province had the highest proportion of candidates obtaining division four at 41.53 percent.

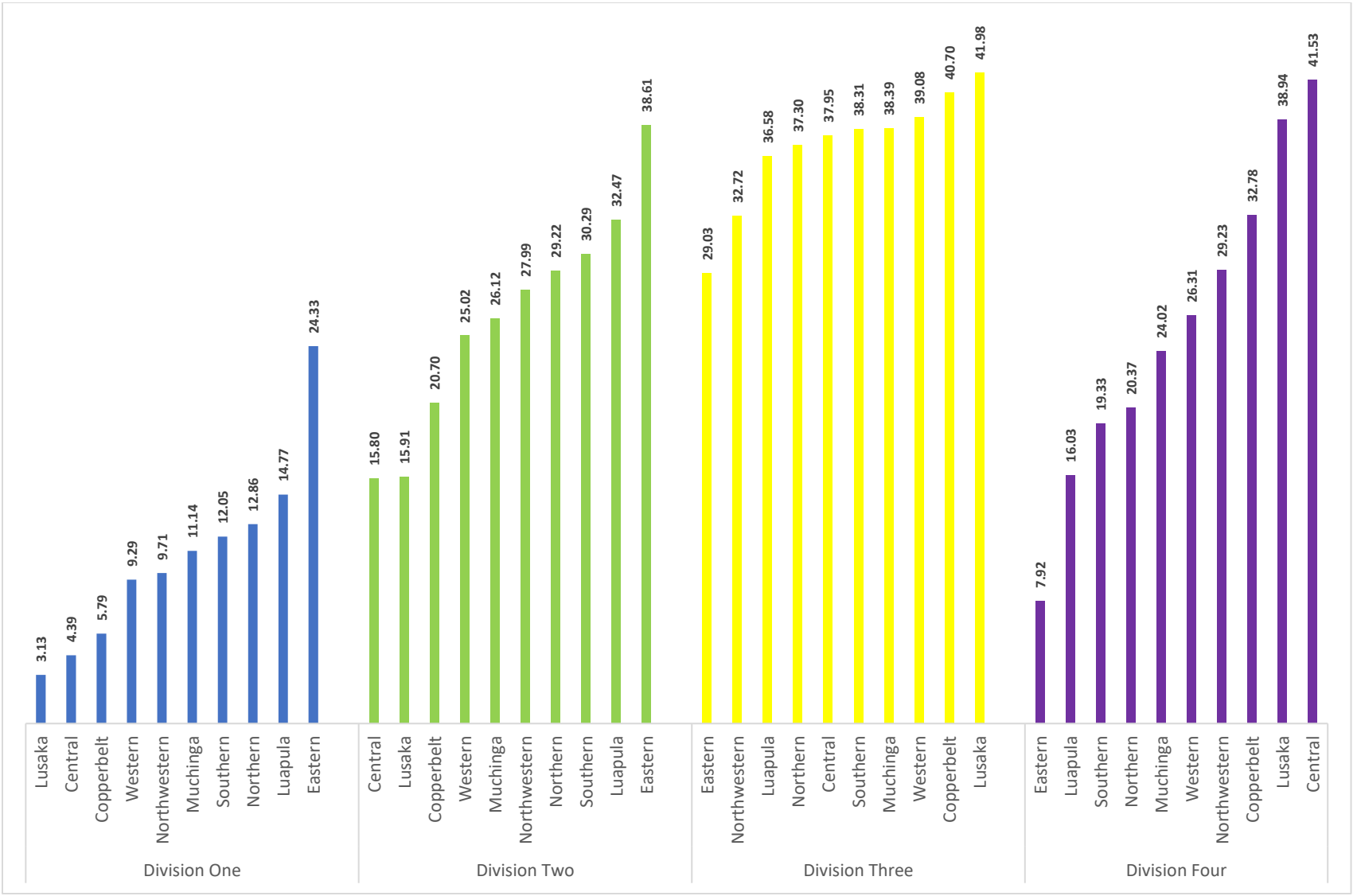


Figure: 16: 2025 Zambian Languages Grade Distributions by Region

4.9 Provincial Performance by Gender

4.9.1 The proportion of girls obtaining division one was higher than that of boys in eight provinces except Northern and Luapula Provinces.

4.9.2 Luapula province recorded the highest proportion of girls outperforming boys in division one by 1.06 percentage points.

4.9.3 In division two, category six out of ten provinces recorded higher proportions of girls outperforming boys in terms of percentage points, namely Southern (3.29), Western (2.53), Lusaka (2.01), Copperbelt (3.65), North-western (1.15) and Central (0.6).

Table 4: 2025 Grade 7 Overall Certificate Performances by Province and Gender

Region	Certificate Clarification							
	Girls				Boys			
	Div. 1	Div. 2	Div. 3	Div. 4	Div. 1	Div. 2	Div. 3	Div. 4
Northern	10.91	32.68	30.39	26.02	10.02	34.86	32.09	23.03
Luapula	12.23	33.54	30.33	23.89	11.17	38.91	29.85	20.07
Southern	10.74	29.93	29.88	29.45	13.77	26.59	27.88	31.76
Eastern	10.66	28.79	32.30	28.25	10.86	32.52	31.20	25.42
Copperbelt	15.37	30.56	29.93	24.14	18.96	26.91	28.27	25.86
North-western	9.42	30.42	30.49	29.67	11.15	29.27	29.78	29.79
Central	7.93	23.52	31.13	37.42	9.19	22.92	29.94	37.96
Western	6.78	32.50	32.79	27.92	8.64	29.97	31.74	29.65
Lusaka	16.57	28.76	27.72	26.96	20.49	26.75	25.70	27.07
Muchinga	8.69	24.94	32.19	34.18	9.84	25.79	32.24	32.13

5.0 Analysis of Performance by Subject, Content and Cognitive area

This section evaluates the performance of the 2025 Primary School Leaving Examination candidates using item analysis. Using the difficulty index, which is the percentage of learners who answered a question correctly, learners' performance was analysed. The index ranges from 0 to 100. A higher difficulty index indicates how easy an item was to the learners and vice versa. Mean item difficulty indexes were used to identify specific content areas and cognitive levels that learners found easy and/or difficult in the 2025 Primary School Leaving Examination. Distractor analysis was also used to identify misconceptions exhibited by the uninformed candidates (learners who could not distinguish between the correct and wrong responses).

5.1 English Language

5.1.1 The English questions were drawn from 13 content areas (topics) and five cognitive levels. The topic with the highest proportion of candidates answering

items correctly was Punctuation **(61.51%),** followed closely by Adjectives **(61.17%)** and Pronouns **(58.89%).** The topic with the lowest proportions of correct responses were Spelling **(43.20%),** followed by Prepositions **(43.73%),** and Paragraph Organisation **(45.07%).**

5.1.2 With regard to cognitive skills, Application recorded the highest proportion of correct responses **(55.76%),** followed by Comprehension **(51.58%).** The lowest was Evaluation **(32.86%).** n 2024, Application recorded the highest proportion of correct responses, while Evaluation maintained its position as the cognitive skill with the lowest level of correct responses

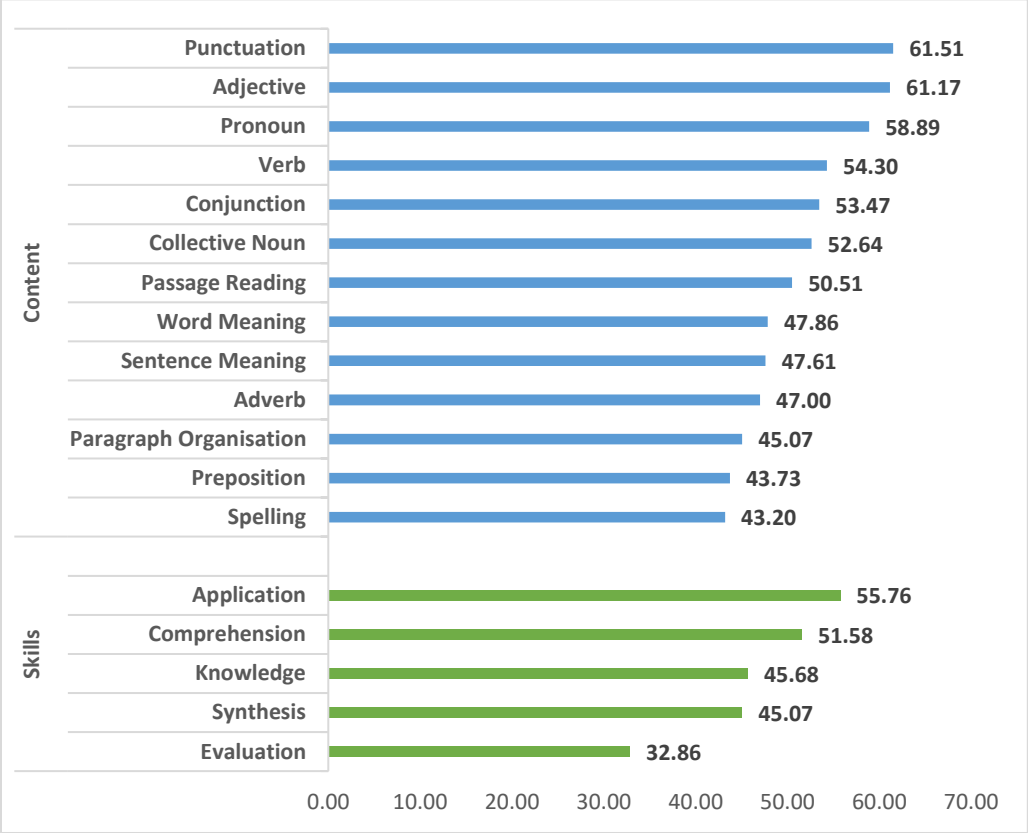


Figure 17: 2025 English Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

The following are questions that were answered well and those not well answered in the 2025 English examination:

Questions that were Well Answered	
Question 1 on adjectives	Question 6 on adverbs (Comparatives)
Question 2 on conjunctions	Question 26-30 on punctuation
Question 3 on collective nouns	Question 10 on prepositions
Question 4 and 5 on pronouns	Question 46 and 57 on Passage Reading
Question 7 and 8 on verbs	
Questions that were Not Well Answered	
Question 20 on adverbs	Question14 and 18 on collective nouns
Question 17 on conjunctions	Question 54 and 60 passage reading

Question 16 on adjectives	Question 35 on sentence meaning
Question 25 on spellings	Question 42 and 45 on paragraph organisation
Question 38 on word meaning	Question 54 and 69 on passage reading
Question 19 on preposition	

Misconceptions and Recommendations

i. Adjectives

Misconceptions:

Learners confused adjectives of size, quantity, and length. Many failed to recognise when comparatives or superlatives were required and overlooked key words in questions that guided correct selection.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should teach adjectives in structured "families" (size, quantity, length, appearance) and provide more practice, other than just the introductory part. Emphasis should be placed on teaching comparatives and superlatives through practical examples and classroom application.

ii. Conjunctions

Misconceptions:

Many learners assumed "and" could join any two sentences and failed to recognise conflicting or conditional relationships. Learners struggled to identify conditions that needed to provide clues to the answers within sentences.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should teach the logical function of conjunctions and demonstrate how they alter meaning while maintaining sentence coherence. Practice should focus on identifying conflict and condition before selecting the appropriate conjunction.

iii. Collective Nouns

Misconceptions:

Learners lacked knowledge of collective nouns for objects and failed to use contextual clues such as mood, occupation, or setting. Rarely used collective nouns were particularly challenging.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should categorise collective nouns into thematic groups (people, animals, objects) and prioritise high-frequency examples. Instruction should emphasise contextual interpretation rather than memorisation.

iv. Pronouns

Misconceptions:

Learners failed to link pronouns correctly to antecedents, leading to ambiguity. There was confusion regarding pronouns used for self, inclusive groups, exclusive groups, third person, and objects.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should emphasise pronoun–antecedent agreement and avoid ambiguous sentence constructions. Pronouns should be taught in clearly defined categories with structured examples.

v. Adverbs

Misconceptions:

Learners lacked vocabulary for adverbs of manner and showed confusion between comparatives and superlatives.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should dedicate focused lessons to comparatives and superlatives separately and expand learners' vocabulary of adverbs of manner through structured exercises and regular reinforcement.

vi. Verbs (Tenses)

Misconceptions:

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of tense consistency and correct verb forms.

Recommendation to Teachers*:*

Teachers should provide explicit instruction on tense usage and demonstrate how changes in verb form alter meaning. Practical contextual exercises should reinforce present, past, future, and continuous tenses.

vii. Prepositions

Misconceptions:

Learners lacked a foundational understanding of prepositions and commonly confused "between" and "among."

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should use real-life demonstrations and visual positioning activities to clarify prepositional relationships and reinforce usage in context.

viii. Spelling

Misconceptions:

Learners ignored phonemic structure and selected seemingly correct spellings without evaluating alter*nat*ives.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should strengthen phonemic awareness and encourage learners to test spellings systematically before final selection.

ix. Punctuation

Misconceptions:

Learners confused commas and full stops, failed to capitalise correctly, and lacked knowledge of question formation and list construction.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should reinforce punctuation rules within reading and writing exercises and emphasise expressive reading to support structural understanding.

x. Sentence Meaning

Misconceptions:

Learners struggled with paraphrasing and ignored key modifiers such as "if" and "only," which significantly alter meaning.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should explicitly teach paraphrasing strategies and encourage careful reading of qualifying words before answer selection.

xi. Word Meaning (Vocabulary)

Misconceptions:

Limited vocabulary and confusion between similar words affected performance. Learners struggled with varying intensities of meaning within word families.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should intensify vocabulary development through synonym work, contextual reading, and word-family analysis, highlighting differences in meaning intensity.

xii. Paragraph Organisation

Misconceptions:

Learners struggled to identify topic sentences, logical sequencing, and concluding statements. Weak oral narrative skills contributed to poor coherence.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should model paragraph structure explicitly and provide guided sequencing exercises to develop logical organisation skills.

xiii. Passage Reading (Comprehension, Application, Evaluation)

Misconceptions:

Learners relied on copying words from passages rather than interpreting meaning. Weak inference skills and superficial reading affected learners' ability to get the correct responses.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should strengthen inference, evaluation, and critical reading strategies. Learners should be encouraged to paraphrase before selecting answers and practice eliminating incorrect options systematically

5.2 Mathematics

5.2.1 The purpose of the mathematics assessments at Primary Level is to measure learner achievement against the set competencies as well as acquisition of reasoning and problem-solving skills as outlined in the syllabus. The Mathematics Examination focuses on Knowledge, Comprehension, Application and Problem-solving skills. Candidates are expected to apply mathematical concepts and skills to find the correct answers to a given problem. The paper comprises computational, graphical and word problem question types.

5.2.2 Mathematics questions were drawn from 23 content areas (topics) across three cognitive levels (Figure 7). The analysis by content area indicated that the topic 'Number sequence' had the highest proportion of candidates answering the items correctly (91.99%), followed by 'Statistics' (75.67% The topic with the lowest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was 'Angles' (38.23%), maintaining the same position as in 2024. The topic 'Addition and Subtraction' had the most correct answers in 2024.

5.2.3 By cognitive levels, the domain with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was Comprehension (56.94%) followed by Application (53.58 %). The lowest proportions were recorded in the Knowledge

domain (53.10%). The knowledge domain was highest in 2024 (Refer to Figure 20).

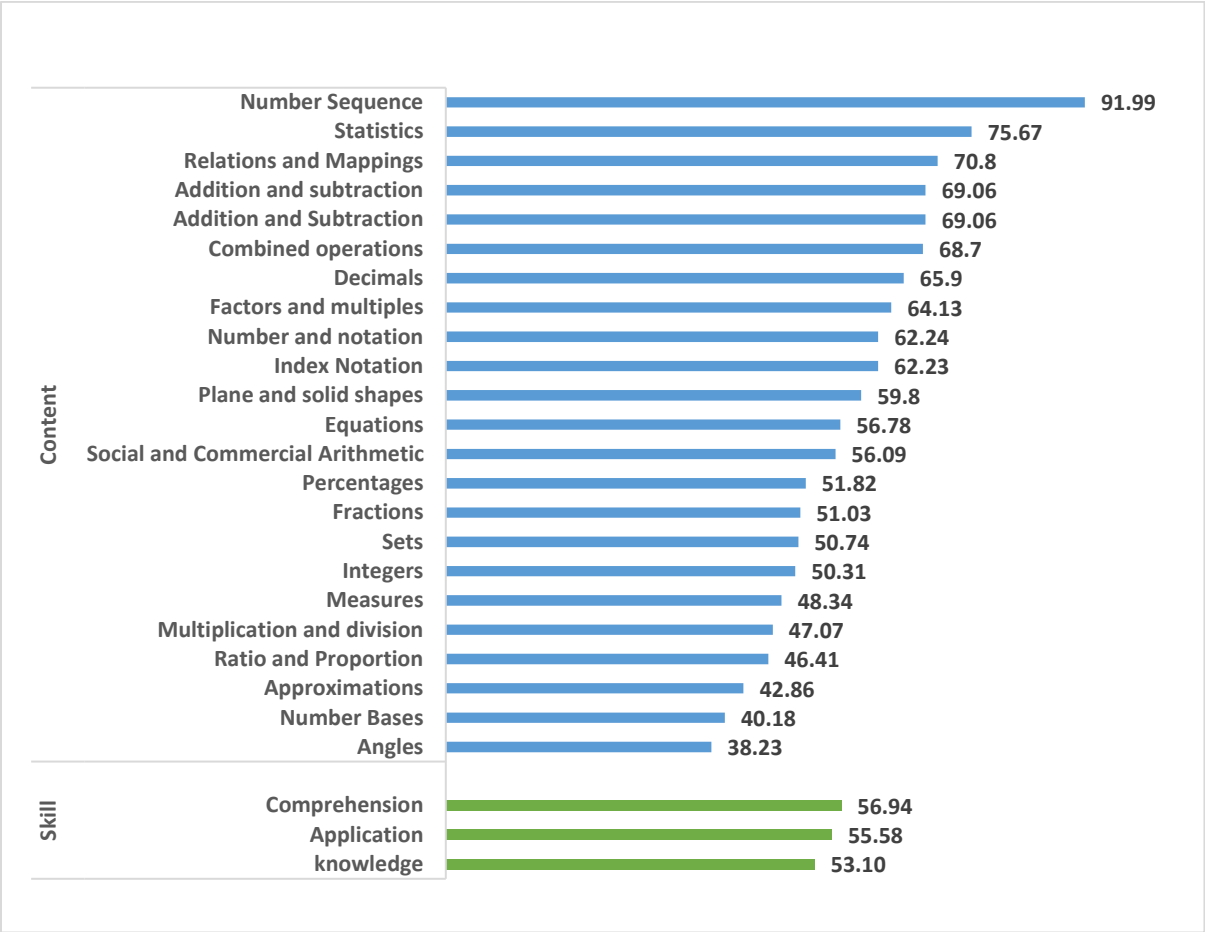


Figure 18: 2025 Mathematics Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

The following are questions that were well answered and those that were not well answered in the 2025 Mathematics examination:

Questions that were Well Answered	
Question 1 on Number Sequence	Question 13 on Mappings and Relations
Question 3 on Index Notation	Question 8,10,15 and 22 on Decimals
Question 4 on Factors and Multiples	Question 11on combined Operations
Question5,6 and 7 on Addition and Subtraction	Question 17 on Social and Com. Arithmetics
Question 9 on Fractions	Question 16 on Plane and Solid shapes
Questions that were Not Well Answered	
Question 52 on Number Bases	Question 60 on Sets
Question 46 on Angles	Question 40 and 59 on Index Notation
Question 48 and 53 on Fractions	Question 58 on Decimals
Question 42 on Ratio and Proportion	Question 51 on Approximations
Question 54 on Percentages	

Misconceptions and Recommendations

i. Number Bases -

Misconceptions:

Learners demonstrate limited understanding that number bases operate using powers of the base. Many incorrectly apply base ten rules to other bases, misinterpret digit positions, or fail to multiply digits by the correct powers of the base during conversion.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should emphasise that each base system relies on powers of its base number, and also emphasise the correct use and interpretation of place value. The use of worked examples and guided practice when converting between bases must be emphasised to ensure learners clearly understand positional value before performing calculations.

ii. Index Notation

Misconceptions

Learners confused repeated multiplication with ordinary multiplication, interpreting $9\times9\times9\times9\times9$ as $9\times5=45$ instead of expressing it in index form. This indicates a weak understanding of the meaning of exponents and repeated multiplication.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should emphasise that index notation represents repeated multiplication of the same base. Use concrete examples and expansion methods to reinforce the concept. Provide guided practice in distinguishing between the base and exponent.

iii. Angles

Misconceptions:

Learners showed a weak understanding of angle relationships and properties. Many confused adjacent angles with vertically opposite angles and struggled to identify complementary and supplementary angles. There was also difficulty in interpreting diagrams and correctly adding or subtracting angle measures based on given information.

Recommendation to Teachers:

Teachers should reinforce concepts of angle properties using hands-on activities with protractors and clearly labelled diagrams. Use colour-coding to demonstrate relationships such as vertically opposite angles and supplementary pairs. Encourage learners to justify their answers using angle rules and properties rather than relying on guesswork.

iv. Fractions

Misconceptions:

Learners demonstrated weak conceptual understanding of fraction operations. Many incorrectly multiplied or added fractions by operating on numerators and denominators indiscriminately. Some failed to recognise when a common denominator is required, particularly in addition and subtraction.

Recommendation to Teachers*:*

Teachers should strengthen conceptual understanding of fractions using visual and concrete representations such as number lines, fraction strips, and real-life contexts (e.g., money, time). Emphasise clear procedural rules: multiply numerator by numerator and denominator by denominator when multiplying, and use common denominators when adding or subtracting.

v. Sets

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of the formal properties of sets, often viewing them simply as collections of objects without recognising defining characteristics. Some confused the symbols for union (∪) and intersection (∩), interchanging their meanings when interpreting Venn diagrams. There was also difficulty in correctly identifying elements belonging to intersections and unions.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers are advised to emphasise clear and formal definitions of sets and their properties. Greater use of visual aids such as Venn diagrams is recommended to strengthen conceptual understanding. It is also suggested that set concepts be revisited regularly throughout instruction to reinforce understanding and correct misconceptions before progressing to more complex topics.

vi. Approximations

Misconceptions

Learners exhibited a weak understanding of rounding and estimation principles. Many struggled to correctly identify place value when rounding and often confused rounding with truncation. Some rounded incorrectly when the next digit was five or greater, while others simply dropped digits without adjusting the value appropriately. There was also a limited understanding of significant figures

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers were advised to teach rounding using number lines to clearly demonstrate midpoint decisions (e.g., why 47 rounds to 50 when rounding to tens). Real-life estimation contexts, such as prices or population figures, are recommended to strengthen understanding. Frequent short exercises focusing on reasoning and place value, rather than memorisation of rules, are encouraged.

vii. Percentages

Misconceptions

Learners exhibited partial conceptual understanding of percentages. While many were able to follow procedures, some confused percentage increase with finding a percentage of a quantity. Others incorrectly divided instead of multiplying, or struggled to convert between fractions, decimals, and percentages. There was also a misunderstanding of percentage as "per hundred," resulting in mechanical but inaccurate calculations

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers are advised to reinforce the concept of percentage as "out of 100" using visual models such as 100-square grids and real-life examples (e.g., calculating 10% of K50). Emphasis must be placed on strengthening the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages through step-by-step demonstrations.

viii. Decimals

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated partial understanding of decimal concepts. While many correctly converted percentages to decimals, some showed confusion in the process, particularly in understanding that converting a percentage requires shifting the decimal point two places

to the left. In division of decimals, learners struggled with place value, with some incorrectly treating digits after the decimal point as separate whole numbers. This led to misconceptions such as thinking 1.7 is greater than 5.1 due to misinterpretation of decimal place value.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers must reinforce the concept of place value in decimals using place value charts and step-by-step demonstrations. Greater emphasis should be placed on explaining why shifting the decimal point represents division by 100 when converting percentages. In decimal division, teachers should model the process clearly and provide guided practice to ensure learners understand that decimal numbers represent parts of a whole and must be compared based on place value, not digit count.

5.3 Integrated Science

5.3.1 In Integrated Science, questions were drawn from 5 content areas (topics) and across five cognitive levels. The analysis by content area indicated that the topic with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was 'The Human Body' **(62.65%),** followed by 'The Environment' **(55.06%).** The lowest proportions of correct responses were recorded in **Plants and Animals (45.65%)**. In 2024, the topic 'The Human Body' had the most correct answers, while the topic 'Environment 'had the least correct answers.

5.3.2 The cognitive level domain with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was Analysis **(57.64%)**, followed by Knowledge **(51.15%)**. The lowest proportion was recorded in Evaluation **(32.48%).** In 2024, the Evaluation domain was the highest, while Analysis recorded the lowest (see Figure 8).

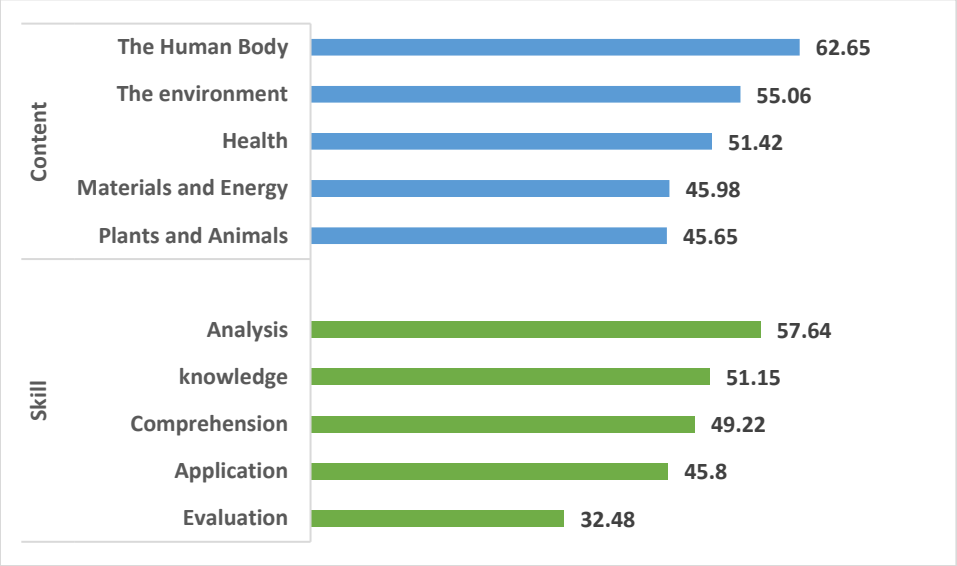


Figure 19:2025 Integrated Science Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

The following are questions that were answered well and those not well answered in the 2025 Integrated Science examination.

Questions that were Well Answered	
Questions 1 and 5 on Materials and Energy	Questions 15 and 17 on The Environment
Questions 3 and 4 on the Human Body	Question 2, 10 and 21 on Health
Questions that were Not Well Answered	
Question 14,41, 43, 46, 49 and 50 on Materials and Energy	Question 22 and 47 on Health
Question 28,36 and 48 on Plants and Animals	Question 44 on The Human Body
Questions 37, 42, 45 and 53 on Environment	

Misconceptions and Recommendations

i. Materials and Energy

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited knowledge of how sound travels through different media such as solids, liquids, and gases. Many appeared to guess responses, indicating insufficient understanding of the scientific principles governing sound transmission.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should incorporate practical experiments to demonstrate how sound travels through solids, liquids, and air. Activities such as using string telephones, tapping objects under water, or observing vibrations can provide concrete experiences that reinforce theoretical concepts. Emphasis should be placed on hands-on learning to strengthen comprehension and reduce guessing

ii. Plants and Animals

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of the structural characteristics of non-flowering plants. Many were unable to identify key features such as spores, cones, or the absence of visible flowers, which led to confusion during classification tasks.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should incorporate the use of real plant specimens when teaching flowering and non-flowering plants. Lessons can be conducted outdoors or using locally collected samples to allow learners to observe structures directly. Practical observation, comparison, and guided identification activities should be emphasised to strengthen conceptual understanding and accurate classification skills

iii. Environment

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of the physical properties of air. Many did not grasp that air occupies space and supports burning. This indicates a lack of practical exposure to experiments that demonstrate the invisible but essential characteristics of air.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should incorporate simple, practical experiments to demonstrate that air occupies space and supports combustion. For example, activities such as inverting a glass in water to show trapped air or covering a burning candle to demonstrate the role of oxygen can enhance conceptual clarity. Emphasis should be placed on experiential learning to strengthen the understanding of abstract environmental concepts.

iv. Health

Misconceptions

Learners showed limited understanding of how different drugs affect body systems. Some appeared unaware of the long-term physical and psychological consequences of substance abuse. There was also evidence that learners could identify drugs but could not explain their specific effects on organs such as the brain and liver or the concept of addiction.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should provide more detailed instruction on the effects of drugs on various body systems, clearly explaining concepts such as addiction, brain damage, and liver damage. Lessons should incorporate real-life examples, case discussions, and health awareness activities to deepen understanding. Integrating preventative education and decision-making skills into lessons will further strengthen learners' ability to apply health knowledge responsibly.

v. The Human Body

Misconceptions

While learners demonstrated good understanding of the circulatory and digestive systems, they showed limited knowledge of the accessory organs of the digestive system and their specific functions. This suggests insufficient emphasis on the role of organs such as the liver, pancreas, and gall bladder in the digestive process.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should give equal emphasis to accessory organs alongside the main regions of the alimentary canal. Instruction should clearly explain the functions and interactions of each organ within the digestive system, supported by labelled diagrams and practical illustrations to strengthen conceptual understanding.

5.4 Social Studies

5.4.1 In Social Studies, questions were drawn from seven content areas (topics) and four cognitive levels. The analysis by content area indicated that the topic 'Governance' had the highest proportion of candidates answering the items correctly **(62.83%),** followed by 'Learning about money' (**57.97%).** The topic with the least proportion of candidates answering items correctly was 'World Challenges' **(41.20%).** In 2024**,** the topic 'Learning about Money' had the most correct answers, while the topic 'The Environment 'had the least proportion of responses.

5.4.2 The cognitive level domain with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was Application (**54.03%),** followed by Knowledge **(51.56%)**. The skill with the lowest proportion of responses was Analysis **(47.96%)**. In 2024, the 'Application' domain was the highest, while 'Comprehension' recorded the lowest.

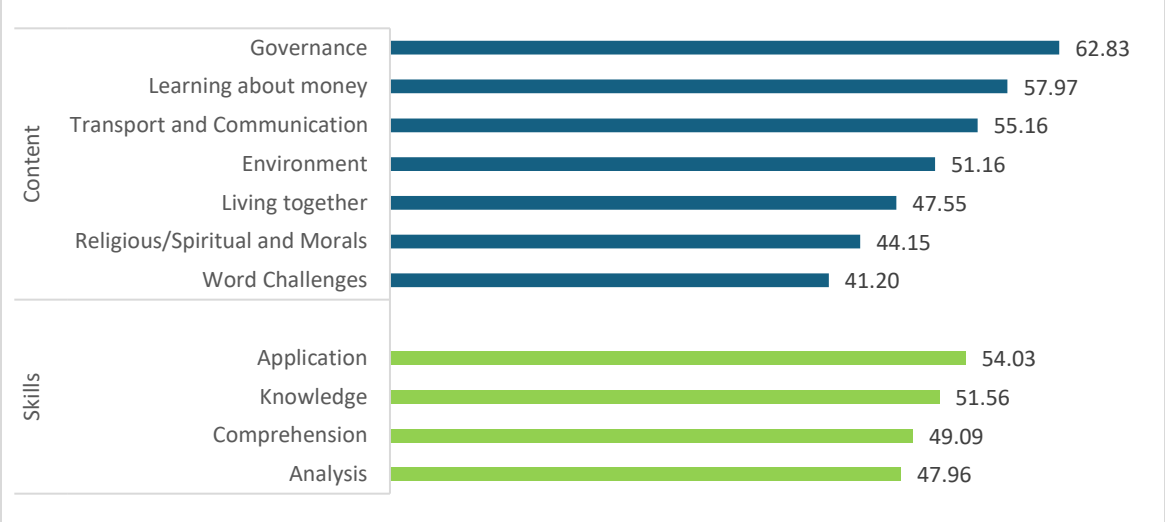


Figure 20: 2025 Social Studies Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

Below were the questions that were well and not well answered respectively by learners in the 2025 Social Studies examination.

Questions that were Well Answered	
Question 1 on Learning about Money	Question 10, 25 and 56 on Living together
Question 3 and 4 on Governance	Question 8 on World Challenges
Questions 5 on Environment	
Questions that were Not Well Answered	
Question 22 and 32 on Spirituality and Morals	Question 11, 17, 28 and 60 on Living together
Question 17,27 and 50 Living Together	Question 54 on World Challenges
Questions 37, 42, 45 and 53 on Environment	Question 42 on Transport and Communication

Misconceptions and Recommendations for Improvement

i. Governance

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited knowledge of the key characteristics of democracy, including rule of law, freedom, and fair elections. There was weak understanding of how democracy protects and promotes human rights. Learners also showed limited awareness of discrimination against women and girls in areas such as decision-making, employment, and access to education. Additionally, there was confusion in identifying forms of child abuse and distinguishing different types of child labour

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers are advised to intensify instruction on the principles and characteristics of democracy, with emphasis on practical examples of how democratic systems promote human rights. It is recommended that varied teaching methodologies and learning materials be used to enhance understanding. Broader and clearer teaching on forms of child abuse and types of child labour is also encouraged to strengthen learners' conceptual clarity in governance-related topics.

ii. Learning About Money

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of different saving methods and lacked knowledge of the benefits of keeping money safe. Some were unable to clearly identify the relationship between risk and reward in various financial contexts. There was also confusion regarding how safe financial practices, such as saving in a bank, differ from high-risk activities like gambling or betting

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers were advised to intensify instruction on the different methods of saving and the benefits of financial security, including earning interest from banks. Emphasis should be placed on explaining the relationship between risk and reward using practical examples. Real-life scenarios should be incorporated to help learners understand the consequences of unsafe financial practices and the importance of responsible money management.

iii. Environment

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of the elements of weather and climate. They also showed inadequate knowledge of proper waste disposal methods and struggled to identify communal places that require protection from waste. In addition, learners lacked clarity on the role of the community in environmental protection and waste management

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should contextualise the teaching of weather and climate by linking lessons to actual seasonal conditions so learners can observe and relate to real-life examples. Greater emphasis should be placed on proper waste disposal methods, such as recycling and safe disposal practices. Field-based learning experiences, such as educational visits to markets, clinics, bus stations, and drainage areas, should be incorporated to enhance understanding of communal environmental protection. Furthermore, teachers should reinforce the importance of community participation in environmental conservation and responsible waste management.

iv. Living Together

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of global and provincial physical features such as rivers, lakes, mountains, plains, valleys, and deserts. They also showed gaps in identifying key economic activities within their provinces, as well as limited knowledge of the cultural composition of districts, including ethnic groups and chiefdoms. In addition, learners struggled to identify historical and cultural sites and explain their significance, including their value as heritage and tourist attraction

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should strengthen instruction on physical features of the world and provinces using maps, charts, and other visual teaching aids to enhance spatial understanding. Emphasis should be placed on major economic activities within each province and their contribution to community development. Cultural education should be intensified by teaching about traditional ceremonies, ethnic groups, and chiefdom structures within districts. Furthermore, teachers should provide detailed instruction on historical and

cultural sites, highlighting their social, economic, and tourism significance to deepen learners' comprehension

v. World Challenges

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited understanding of the causes of rapid world population growth and its associated effects. They also showed inadequate knowledge of the social and economic consequences such as poverty, disease, illiteracy, and high mortality rates. In addition, many learners struggled to identify practical and sustainable solutions to rapid population growth.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should intensify instruction on the causes, effects, and solutions to rapid world population growth using varied teaching methodologies and real-life examples. Greater emphasis should be placed on linking comprehension to application so that learners can analyse real-world scenarios effectively. Lessons should clearly address the social and economic implications of population growth and promote awareness of responsible population management strategies, including family planning and informed decision-making.

5.5 Creative and Technology Studies

5.5.1 In Creative and Technology Studies, questions were drawn from 13 content areas (topics) across six cognitive levels, as shown in Figure 11. The topic with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was Human Development (**73.98%),** followed by Energy **(59.52%)** and Food (58.46%). The topics with the lowest proportions of correct responses were Applied Music (**32.43%)** and Crafts and Patterns **(38.19%).** In 2024**, t**he topic ''Energy'' had the most correct answers, while the topic 'Crafts and Patterns)' had the least proportion of responses

5.5.2 With regard to cognitive skills, Knowledge recorded the highest proportion of correct responses **(58.17%),** followed by Synthesis **(57.05%).** The lowest proportion was recorded in the Analysis domain **(33.98%)**.

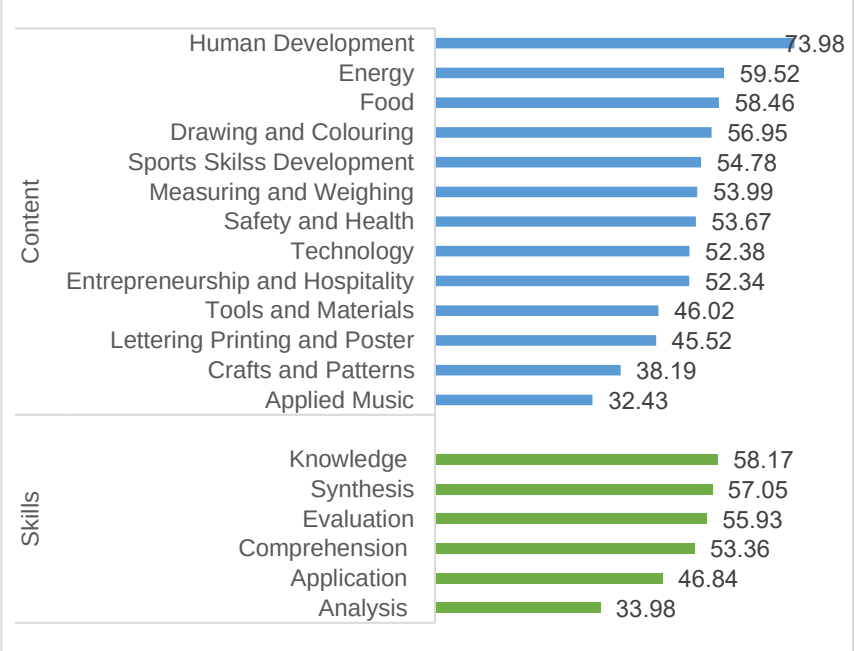


Figure 21: 2025 Creative and Technology Studies (CTS) Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

The following are questions that were well and not well answered in the 2025 Creative and Technology Studies examination.

Questions that were Well Answered	
Question 1 on Safety and Health	Question 22 on Food
Question 2 on Sports Skills Development	Question 24 on Human Development
Questions 21 and 41 on Drawing and Colouring	
Questions that were Not Well Answered	
Question 60 on Technology	Question13 and 19 on Applied Music
Question 39 and 40 on Crafts and Patterns	Question 41 on Tools and Materials
Questions 16 on Drawing and Colouring	

Misconceptions and Recommendations for Improvement

i. Drawing and Colouring

Misconceptions

Some learners demonstrated limited practical exposure to drawing and colouring skills. Learners struggled to identify shapes and objects accurately and showed difficulty applying drawing and colouring skills to real-life situations

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should increase hands-on practical activities to strengthen learners' drawing and colouring skills. Lessons should incorporate real-life objects and shape identification exercises to enhance observation and application. Learners should also be encouraged to develop sustained interest in drawing and colouring through regular practice and creative projects.

ii. Technology

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated difficulty in application and comprehension skills. Many learners exhibited limited understanding of how to use electronic devices practically and struggled with terminology related to internet use and associated risks. This indicates weak conceptual application in real-life technological contexts

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should incorporate practical demonstrations and guided activities involving both traditional and modern electronic devices to strengthen application skills. Instruction should emphasise correct technological terminology and real-life scenarios related to internet safety and digital risks. Learners should be encouraged to explore technological advancements responsibly to enhance both understanding and safe usage.

iii. Crafts and Patterns

Misconceptions

Although learners demonstrated basic conceptual understanding, limited access to learning materials and tools hindered full skill development. Some learners struggled to follow procedures due to unclear instructions and insufficient practical demonstration. The absence of appropriate tools reduced opportunities for effective hands-on learning

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should ensure the provision of adequate tools and locally sourced materials to support practical learning. Clear, step-by-step instructions and demonstrations should be provided before learners begin tasks. Learners should also be encouraged to improvise using available environmental materials to promote creativity and skill development.

iv. Applied Music

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated a weak understanding of musical concepts and components, indicating limited content mastery. There was minimal practical exposure to music activities, which hindered conceptual understanding. In addition, inadequate teacher preparedness and limited interest in teaching the subject negatively affected learner engagement and performance.

Recommendations to Teachers

When teaching music, it is important to use appropriate pedagogical methods. Lessons should focus on a practical, activity-based approach that includes singing, rhythm exercises, using instruments, and demonstrations. Additionally, students should be encouraged to participate in cultural, music, and drama clubs to increase their interest and gain practical experience in the subject.

v. Tools and Materials

Misconceptions

Learners demonstrated limited comprehension regarding the correct use, care, and storage of tools and materials in different workplace settings. There was insufficient practical exposure, which limited understanding of safe handling procedures. In addition, inadequate emphasis on safety precautions contributed to weak awareness of accident prevention.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should prioritise practical demonstrations on the correct use, care, and storage of tools and materials. Lessons should incorporate hands-on activities to strengthen understanding and skill development. Greater emphasis should be placed on safety measures and precautionary practices to prevent injuries and accidents in workshop environments.

5.6 Zambian Languages

5.6.1 In the seven Zambian Languages, questions comprise six content areas (topics) and five cognitive levels, as shown in Figure 12. The analysis by content area indicated that the topic ‘Language Structure’ had the highest proportion of candidates answering the items correctly **(75.96%),** followed by ‘Translation’ **(72.39%).** The topic with the least proportion of candidates answering items correctly was ‘Reading Comprehension’ **(62.46%).** Similarly, in 2024, the highest proportion of responses was recorded in the topic ‘Language Structure ‘while the lowest proportion was in the topic ‘Reading comprehension.’

5.6.2 With regards to cognitive levels, the domain with the highest proportion of candidates answering items correctly was ‘Application’ **(73.02%)**. The second highest was in the Synthesis domain **(67.80%).** The lowest proportions were recorded in Evaluation **(56.14%).** In 2024, Synthesis had the highest proportion of correct responses while Analysis had the least (See Figure 24).

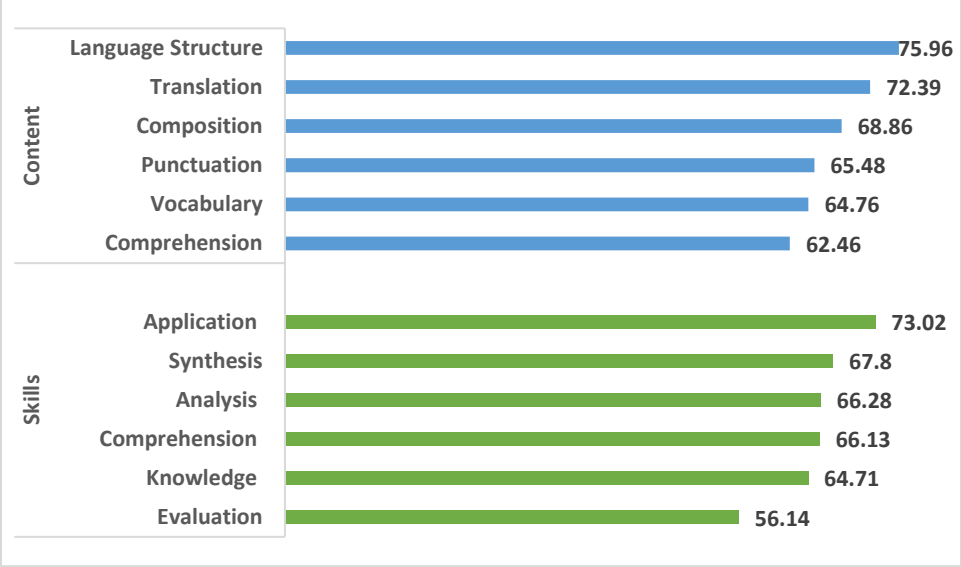


Figure 22: 2025 Zambian Languages Difficulty Index by Content Area/Cognitive Level

Misconceptions and Suggestions for Improvement

Misconceptions

i. Generally, learners exhibited poor language comprehension and vocabulary, punctuation and reading difficulties due to a lack of foundational skills and reading culture in the Zambian languages.
ii. Challenges in the use of approved orthography
iii. Limited vocabulary leading to poor interpretation of words.
iv. Teachers placed limited emphasis on developing learners' analysis and synthesis skills.
v. Some schools, mostly in urban and private schools, pay little attention to Zambian languages or totally do not teach the subject at all. Yet, the learners are exposed to the examinations at the end of the year.

Suggestions for improvement

i. *Enhance Training on Approved Orthography*
Teachers should receive continuous professional development (CPD) on the correct use of approved orthography to ensure consistency and accuracy in instruction. The Curriculum Development Centre and Directorate of Standards should monitor the correct application of orthographic rules in teaching and learning materials to minimise learner confusion.

ii. *Expand Learners' Vocabulary Development*
Teachers should intentionally incorporate vocabulary-building strategies in lessons, including contextual learning, word banks, language games, and exposure to diverse texts. Encouraging learners to engage in debates, storytelling, and written exercises in Zambian languages can further strengthen vocabulary acquisition.

iii. *Promote Analysis and Synthesis Skills*
Teachers should integrate activities that promote higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and synthesis. Learners should be given regular practice in summarising texts, interpreting passages, comparing ideas, and constructing coherent responses. Structured

exercises that require critical engagement with texts will improve comprehension and examination performance.

iv. *Ensure Equal Emphasis on Zambian Languages Across Schools*
The Ministry of Education, through the Directorate of Standards, should enforce compliance to ensure that all schools, including urban and private schools, offer Zambian languages as prescribed in the curriculum. Regular monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be strengthened to prevent schools from neglecting the subject while still exposing learners to examinations.

6.0 Grade 8 Progression Rates

6.1 With the policy of automatic progression abolished, the 2025 cohort had to meet the set progression criteria (scoring a minimum of 93 standard scores or 43 percent in at least four subjects) to advance to grade 8.

6.2 Out of the 538,824 candidates who sat the 2025 Grade 7 Composite Examination, 384,542 candidates were selected to Form 1, representing a national progression rate of 71.36 percent. Of the 384,542 candidates who obtained Division One to Division Three, 201,362 (47.64%) were boys and 183,230 (52.36%) were girls.

Table 5: 2022 to 2025; Grade 7 Progression Rates by Province

	NUMBER SAT			NUMBER SELECTED			PERCENTAGE SELECTED			PROGRESSION RATES			
REGION	**BOYS**	**GIRLS**	**TOTAL**	**BOYS**	**GIRLS**	**TOTAL**	**BOYS**	**GIRLS**	**TOTAL**	**2025**	**2024**	**2023**	**2022**
MUCHINGA	12,486	12,018	**24,504**	8,060	8,315	**16,375**	64.55	69.19	**66.83**	66.83	71.92	100	100
NORTHERN	17,869	17,845	**35,714**	13,896	13,058	**26,954**	77.77	73.17	**75.47**	75.47	70.44	100	100
LUAPULA	17,100	15,554	**32,654**	12,787	12,660	**25,447**	74.78	81.39	**77.93**	77.93	69.7	100	100
SOUTHERN	41,359	38,260	**79,619**	25,281	30,006	**55,287**	61.13	78.43	**69.44**	69.44	60.59	100	100
EASTERN	27,111	23,234	**50,345**	17,328	19,452	**36,780**	63.92	83.72	**73.06**	73.06	69.11	100	100
COPPERBELT	40,384	36,773	**77,157**	26,501	31,398	**57,899**	65.62	85.38	**75.04**	75.04	80.36	100	100
NORTHWESTERN	21,604	20,018	**41,622**	13,857	15,392	**29,249**	64.14	76.89	**70.27**	70.27	67.49	100	100
CENTRAL	33,008	30,225	**63,233**	18,753	20,656	**39,409**	56.81	68.34	**62.32**	62.32	60.14	100	100
WESTERN	22,275	20,321	**42,596**	14,052	16,299	**30,351**	63.08	80.21	**71.25**	71.25	65.95	100	100
LUSAKA	48,836	42,544	**91,380**	30,402	36,298	**66,700**	62.25	85.32	**72.99**	72.99	76.74	100	90.01
TOTAL ZAMBIA	**282,032**	**256,792**	**538,824**	**180,917**	**203,534**	**384,542**	**64.15**	**79.26**	**71.36**	**71.35**	**69.72**	**100**	**98.14**

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 587,471 candidates entered the 2025 Grade 7 Composite Examination. Of these, 587,320 were from the Zambian schools and 151 from St. Jeff College in Johannesburg, South Africa. Generally, total candidature increased by 8.17 percent from 543,069 in 2024. The number of boys who entered the examination was 277,502 (47.24%), while that of girls was 309,969 (52.76%)

7.2 Absenteeism decreased slightly by 1.18 percentage points, from 9.44 percent in 2024 to 8.26 percent in 2025. Among the 309,969 girls and 277,502 boys who registered for the examination, 27,868 boys (8.99%) and 20,638 girls (7.44%) were absent.

7.3 The patterns of performance in the 2025 examination was slightly similar to 2024, with Special Paper I recording the highest proportion of Division 1 (15.56%), followed by English Language (12.33%), while Special Paper II (11.64%), Integrated Science (11.55%), Mathematics (11.41%), Social Studies (11.40%), and Creative and Technology Studies (11.08%) recorded slightly lower but comparable proportions.

7.4 The percentage of Division 4 awards decreased from 28.81 percent in 2024 to 28.64 percent in 2025.

7.5 The item analysis for the six taught subjects, Mathematics, English, integrated Science, Social Studies, Creative and Technology Studies and Zambian languages, indicated that the trends in levels of difficulty for most topics and cognitive levels across the subjects were similar to those of 2024.

7.6 The analysis of candidates' performance in Selected Subjects by content area and cognitive level is meant to provide useful information about problematic topics, misconceptions and suggestions for improvement which teachers can use to improve their pedagogy.

7.7 This valuable information in this report must be used by teachers and relevant stakeholders in education to address the deficiencies in knowledge, skills and values noted in the specific subjects, topics and cognitive domains to improve performance.