

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

General comments

The overall performance in this session was good, if not quite of the same high standard as last year. Most candidates attempted both sections regardless of their ability. Encouragingly, candidates are now increasingly avoiding the use of English or other foreign words in their compositions.

A few candidates wrote essays without referring to the rubrics and scored low marks as a result. Despite instructions about the word limit some candidates wrote unnecessarily long introductions to their essays. This often resulted in abrupt or hasty conclusions as the candidates clearly ran out of time. A fairly sizeable number of candidates deviated entirely from the task set or lost focus along the way. A very few candidates forgot to cross out part or all of their rough draft, which created some confusion.

The most positive aspect of this session's performance is the increased use of idioms and proverbs, which has given some extra weight to the work. Only a small number of candidates did not manage to use these effectively in the context of their chosen topic.

Unfortunately, spelling mistakes still abound in the work of weaker and middling candidates and even occur with the ablest candidates. Centres should advise future candidates of these issues.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates attempted this question and scored high marks as there was ample scope to write from real life experience. Candidates who answered with reference to all the bullet points gained significantly higher marks than those who only did so partially or not at all. In many cases, an essay plan would have helped prevent oversight of the rubric. Indeed, the importance of devising such a plan cannot be overstated as it also helps candidates stay within the word limit, as illustrated by the fact that most of the candidates who did not structure their essay properly wrote excessively long introductions and/or irrelevant conclusions.

Candidates should be reminded that they are not required to provide the addressee's or their own address, as they do not receive credit for this. The most common error in terms of content was the fairly frequent neglect to mention all the information required under the second bullet point.

Question 2

While a number of candidates did very well here, there were some who failed to address fully all the information asked for in the bullet points, especially numbers three and four. While one of the bullet points asks what the likely consequences of unplanned and uncontrolled building would be for the immediate environment, many candidates described the current state of affairs instead of focussing on any future impact. There was a little reference to bullet point 4 in most candidates' work. Centres are strongly advised to remind candidates to read the question very carefully.

Question 3

Quite a few candidates attempted this question and performed reasonably well. Some candidates, however, were not able to construe the plot of their narrative successfully or struggled to maintain consistency. Many candidates ignored the word limit to the detriment of their work.

Question 4

A fair number of candidates attempted this question. Many candidates relied rather too heavily on personal anecdotes and were unable to think outside a narrow perspective; those candidates who broadened their view to a global perspective did much better.

Question 5

While some candidates showed imagination and a confident mastery of the language in response to this topic, quite a few were unable to maintain consistency in quality across their essay while some even deviated completely from the task. In many cases, the word limit was ignored; an essay plan with estimated word limits per section would have helped a great deal in such cases.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02

Language Usage and Comprehension

General comments

Most candidates performed very well. All candidates attempted all exercises, even if in some cases partially. A vast majority of candidates answered questions to the point and presented their work neatly.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise A1

Questions: 1-5

Some candidates scored low marks in this exercise as a result of spelling mistakes. It is important to be vigilant about spelling errors as a potentially correct answer can be invalidated by a mistake of this kind.

Exercise A2

Questions: 6-10

Some candidates struggled with the idiomatic demand of this exercise, especially in **Questions 6, 9 and 10**. Candidates are to be encouraged to read widely to increase their idiomatic knowledge of Bengali.

Exercise A3

Questions: 11-15

Most candidates performed well in this section. Some candidates, however, could not transform the sentences quite as successfully. A few candidates lost marks on at least one or two sentences mainly due to the lack of appropriate synonyms. **Question 15** was found the most challenging of this exercise.

Exercise A4

Question: 16-25

Some candidates experienced difficulty picking the right words to fit in the gap among the distracters. Candidates should study the sentence in which the gap occurs carefully as the surrounding words offer important clues to finding the correct answer.

Exercise B5

Questions: 26-32

Most candidates scored high marks in this exercise, but a small number of less able candidates had difficulty ruling out some of the distracters. Close reading of the text and questions is the key to success in this exercise and candidates must take the time to verify carefully the possible answers against the text.

Exercise C6

Questions: 33-38

A large majority of candidates coped reasonably well with this exercise, whilst a few candidates relied on lifting large chunks of text for their answers, including much unnecessary and irrelevant material. Examiners

look for the originality of candidates' work, so it is crucial that candidates practise answering open-ended comprehension questions in their own words. Although answers should be to the point, concise and in the candidates' own words, all answers should be written in full sentences.

Exercise C7

Questions: 39-43

Quite a few candidates performed well in this section. In working out the meaning of individual words many used the context in which the words occurred in the text to good effect. Nevertheless, a sizeable minority resorted to guessing while others were unsure and gave a number of meanings which they hoped would contain the correct answer. Candidates should be reminded that they should focus on the meaning of the word as it appears in the context of the reading text. No marks could be awarded for English translations or ambiguous answers.