

BENGALI

<p>Paper 3204/01 Composition</p>
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General comments

Overall, the performance in this session was good. Most candidates attempted both sections, regardless of ability. A few candidates scored low marks in **Section A** as they did not address all the bullet points. Commendably, an increasing number of candidates is now avoiding the use of English or other foreign words where good Bengali alternatives are available. In spite of the instructions about the word limit, some candidates wrote essays that far exceeded it, often as a result of lengthy introductions. Quite a few candidates struggled to maintain focus and ended up deviating from the task set. However, it was pleasing to see that candidates are, on the whole, showing increased awareness of the word limit and the need to write concisely. Unfortunately, there were some persistent spelling mistakes, even amongst the most able candidates. It is therefore strongly recommended that candidates edit their essays carefully before handing them in.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Some candidates wrote lengthy and unnecessary introductions that inevitably used up too many words. There were also a number of candidates who scored relatively low marks as they did not provide all the information required. With regard to the first bullet point, some candidates referred only to the first part and skipped the second part, or the other way around. It was also noticeable that the fourth bullet point was not always addressed fully.

Question 2

Most candidates did reasonably well in this question. However, quite a few omitted referring to all bullet points, especially point four. Again, as was the case for **Question 1**, a surprisingly large number of candidates wrote lengthy introductions that often led to their exceeding the word limit. Candidates are therefore strongly recommended to read the question thoroughly and plan accordingly before writing.

Section B

Question 3

Only a few candidates attempted this question and most performed reasonably well. It was quite encouraging to see nearly all candidates presenting relevant information in a well-organised way, although some candidates had difficulty in structuring their work. Such candidates would be well advised to plan their essay ahead of writing.

Question 4

The majority of candidates chose this topic. Some candidates struggled to keep their essay relevant to the task set, especially those who wrote a narrative rather than a description of a stormy night.

Question 5

This topic was also a popular choice. Quite a few candidates deviated from the question and wrote essays that were too long. In addition, Examiners look for a solid structure of candidates' work, but this was not evident in a large number of essays. In such cases, an essay plan would have helped candidates to devise a better structure and avoid irrelevance.

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Paper 3204/02

Language Usage and Comprehension

General comments

All candidates attempted to answer all the questions in this paper. The majority of candidates achieved high scores, wrote concisely and presented their work neatly. Some candidates, however, wrote short answers in response to questions in the open-ended comprehension exercise. Candidates should bear in mind that they are assessed on the linguistic quality of their response, as well as on its content. Therefore, they need to write their answers in full sentences in this exercise.

In the cloze test, however, a few candidates copied the whole passage and filled in the gaps, sometimes without mentioning answer numbers. This is unnecessary and wastes valuable time. In this part of the test, candidates need only write down the question number and the number corresponding to the correct word from the list given below the text.

Candidates are strongly advised to read the rubrics more carefully to ensure they answer all questions in the correct manner.

Comments on specific questions

A1

Questions: 1-5

Most candidates answered all questions correctly, but some experienced difficulty, particularly with **Question 2**. A few candidates lost some marks for spelling mistakes.

A2

Questions: 6-10

Most candidates did very well in this exercise. A small minority of candidates seemed to struggle with **Questions 9 and 10**.

A3

Questions: 11-15

Most candidates made good attempts at answering this exercise. Only a few candidates could not transform the sentences quite successfully. A large number of candidates seemed to have difficulties in transforming direct speech into indirect speech in **Question 13**, suggesting that teachers should focus on practising this skill with future candidates.

A4

Question: 16-25

Most candidates did reasonably well here, but some failed to find the appropriate words to fit the gaps. A small number of candidates resorted to guesswork. Candidates are advised to read the sentences more carefully and repeatedly to help them identify the correct answers among the distracters.

B5

Questions: 26-32

Many candidates scored high marks in this exercise. A small number of less able candidates often opted for the distracters, however, suggesting that they had not read the text and/or the questions thoroughly.

C6

Questions: 33-38

Most candidates did well in this exercise, whilst a few candidates wrote only the main points in their answer, without embedding them in sentences. As mentioned before, candidates are assessed on their use of language: writing brief lists of points has a negative impact on their linguistic assessment. Although the answers should be to the point and in candidates' own words, all answers must be written in full sentences.

C7

Questions: 39-43

Most candidates performed reasonably well in this challenging section of the paper. The weakest candidates, however, usually lacked the vocabulary to answer more than two questions correctly. Some candidates gave multiple meanings when they should have focussed on the meaning the words have within the text from which they are taken. No marks could be awarded for English translations or ambiguous answers.