

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

Key messages

In order to do well on this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can:

- express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- communicate effectively and appropriately
- demonstrate adequate control of paragraphing, vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
- show a sense of audience and an awareness of register and style in both formal and informal situations.

General comments

In general, candidates performed well on this paper. All candidates attempted both sections as required, and most candidates adhered to the word limits specified.

In good responses to the questions in **Section A**, candidates referred to all parts of the bullet points and presented their work in paragraphs, using appropriate punctuation. Successful responses in **Section B** were well planned, organised into paragraphs and sequenced in a logical order. They also demonstrated a wide range of vocabulary and varied sentence structures.

In weaker scripts, punctuation, paragraphing and appropriate use of tense were areas for improvement.

In a few scripts, candidates crossed out valid points made towards the end of their essays, in order to keep to the word limit. This crossed-out work could not receive credit.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

Candidates were asked to write a response of approximately 120 words in Bengali to one of two given topics.

Question 1

A few candidates missed the theme mentioned by the question – আনন্দমেলা – and instead described a book fair, international festival or trade fair in their response.

For the first bullet point, most candidates gave a rather vague answer in reference to কোথায় such as এলাকার মাঠে, পাশের মাঠে rather than a specific name of a place.

Most candidates addressed the second and third bullet points fairly well.

For the fourth bullet point, candidates were expected to provide two relevant questions of their own. In weaker scripts, a number of candidates responded to this bullet point by lifting two bullet points from the question paper, for example: তোমাদের মেলায় কী কী বিশেষ আকর্ষণ থাকে? সেখানে তোমার ভূমিকা কী?

Question 2

Performance on this question was varied. Most candidates referred to the bullet points as required. For the fourth bullet point, some candidates omitted to give a valid reason for an alternative site in support of their argument. In weaker scripts, some candidates described the proposed development site in Chittagong but suggested an alternative site somewhere in Dhaka. Candidates were expected to suggest an alternative site within the proximity and to give valid reasons.

Section B – Essay

Candidates were asked to write an essay of approximately 200 words in Bengali from a choice of three topics.

Question 3

To answer this question successfully, candidates needed to consider science in comparison with superstition. A small number of candidates performed well on this question, establishing their arguments in a concise and logical manner and demonstrating their understanding of superstition and science. In weaker answers, candidates tended to write an essay on the good and bad impacts of science on daily life. Such essays narrated the contributions of science to modern life but did not address superstition.

Question 4

Good answers to this question included an explanation of the reasons for which the chosen author is the candidate's favourite one. A significant number of candidates focused on biographical details of a famous author without demonstrating the reasons for which they particularly like that author. This lack of analysis inevitably limited the number of marks that could be awarded.

In some responses, candidates included incorrect information about details such as dates of birth and death, birth place, books written and awards received by the author.

Question 5

This was a popular question which seems to have been enjoyed by candidates. There were some very imaginative and creative responses, and some responses went beyond the expected level in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure and quality of narration. A small number of candidates provided less convincing essays which featured illogical or unrealistic descriptions of events during the train journey, for example the appearance of a ghost on board, or a fire in which the writer rescued all fellow passengers. In a few responses, no description of the journey was given – candidates wrote that they got on board, fell asleep straight away and woke up at the destination. To perform well in this type of question, candidates are advised to present their work with realistic description and present their ideas in a logical order.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02

Language Usage and Comprehension

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to make sure that they express themselves in clear, correct and concise language.

In addition, candidates need to:

- show that they can understand and adequately convey information
- understand, order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- evaluate information, select what is relevant to specific purposes and express it in their own words
- exercise control of appropriate structures
- understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary
- recognise implicit meaning and attitude
- demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing and sentence structure
- demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
- ensure that their handwriting is legible.

General comments

This paper comprises a variety of tasks to test candidates' knowledge of grammar, their ability to manipulate sentences and their comprehension skills. Most candidates were able to complete the paper within the time allocated. Only a small minority of scripts included unfinished or partially answered questions. At the highest end, there were several examples of outstanding work. There were also examples of candidates who could have achieved a better result if they had been more familiar with the required exam techniques for this examination. Overall, candidates coped well with the grammatical tasks in **Section A**. The level of performance on the comprehension questions in **Sections B** and **C** was more varied.

The quality of the Bengali used in the answers varied widely. Some candidates demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very skilfully. There were also instances where candidates were unable or lacked the confidence to write answers in their own words in **Exercise C6**. It should be noted that candidates who rely too heavily on lifting from the text cannot gain access to high marks for the quality of their language. In contrast, attempts to write answers which made an effort to manipulate language were awarded higher marks, provided that the wording did not interfere with comprehension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Exercise A1

In this exercise, candidates separate five words. This task was quite straightforward. Candidates had more difficulty with **Questions 2** and **4**, where a number of candidates struggled to separate the word correctly.

Exercise A2

For this exercise, candidates must choose the correct idiom, proverb or word-pair to fill the gaps in the five sentences given. It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates were able to complete this task correctly, though there were instances where a number of weaker candidates struggled to select the correct idiom, proverb or word-pair. **Question 10** proved to be the most challenging for candidates.

Exercise A3

This task comprises sentence transformation exercises. Candidates are required to transform each sentence based on the clues given either at the beginning or at the end. Most candidates performed very well on this exercise. Weaker candidates had more difficulty with **Questions 14** and **15**.

Exercise A4

Overall, performance on this question was good. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to find the correct answer for each gap, particularly in **Questions 19** and **20**.

Section B

Exercise B5

Candidates found **Exercise B5** more challenging than the exercises in **Section A** of this paper. **Questions 27** and **29** in particular were not always answered correctly by weaker candidates. As with **Exercise A4**, it is important to read through the whole text before tackling the questions.

Section C

Exercise C6

This exercise comprises open-ended comprehension questions. In the best scripts, candidates responded to all the questions appropriately and manipulated the language as needed, scoring full marks in this exercise. Mid-range candidates and candidates at the lower end of the ability range performed less well in this exercise than in the corresponding task last year. In many scripts, there was a lack of manipulation of the original text in candidates' answers. There were also a number of examples of stronger candidates who, even though they had a good grasp of the text, did not manipulate it successfully to provide correct answers. Answers which relied on copying information from the text without making an attempt to manipulate the language and tailor the answer to the question could not score marks for content or accuracy. In a number of average and weaker scripts, candidates had difficulty with **Question 38**. Some candidates gave their answer for **Question 37** in response to **Question 38**.

Exercise C7

For this exercise, candidates are required to give the meaning of five words from the comprehension text. As it is open-ended and tests productive knowledge of Bengali, this exercise is aimed at the stronger candidates, many of whom performed very well. **Questions 39, 41** and **42** in particular posed problems for weaker candidates. To improve performance in this exercise, candidates are advised to read widely in order to develop a strong vocabulary and gain further familiarity with the meaning of words in context.