

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

General comments

Overall, performance was good. Even the weakest candidates attempted both sections, whilst the more able ones clearly relished the opportunity to show their command of the language.

However, a small number of candidates lost marks for illogical argument, insufficient material and/or irrelevant information. A small number of candidates wrote essays which did not refer to the rubrics, hence their work was largely or completely irrelevant.

Candidates should bear in mind that frequent and unnecessary use of English words in a Bengali exam cannot be rewarded. Quite a significant number of candidates seemed to struggle unnecessarily with the transcription of foreign words in the target language, especially since equivalent words in Bengali were readily available. Punctuation plays an important role in essay writing. Misuse or lack of punctuation creates confusion for the reader.

Two further problems need to be addressed. The first is candidates ignoring the word limit and writing essays which are unnecessarily long. Some candidates even wrote essays that went as much as three times over the word limit. The second problem was the fact that a sizeable group of candidates started off well, but then appeared to lose their way, deviating from the topic. Candidates must strive to maintain relevance at all times.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates chose this topic and scored good marks. There was ample scope to write from real life experience. Candidates who answered according to the bullet points in a logical and concise way gained comparatively higher marks, whilst others scored low marks as they ignored the bullet points. A few candidates appeared to be confused by the word 'concert' and often ignored the second bullet point, thus losing out on marks. A few candidates who were mindful of the word limit ended their essay rather abruptly. A pre-planned structure would very likely have prevented this from happening.

Question 2

Candidates who attempted to answer this question, managed it well. However, a few candidates ignored the demands of this question, and did not elaborate on why the suggestions they were making were valid or relevant. Quite a few candidates wrote their own name and address instead of the ones provided in the question paper. A very small number of candidates gave unnecessary and long self-introductions that inevitably increased the number of words and meant that their work eventually exceeded the limit. Centres could perhaps remind candidates to refer to all parts of the question and to stick to the word limit.

Question 3

Most candidates who attempted to answer this question performed very well. Almost all candidates established their case successfully. A very small number of candidates, however, could not establish their argument in a logical fashion. Such candidates merely listed their opinions without attempting to substantiate them.

Question 4

Quite a large number of candidates attempted this question and wrote enthusiastic essays. Most candidates used their own imagination which was significantly influenced by science fiction. A few candidates failed to maintain consistency throughout the text, and they would have definitely benefitted from a pre-planned structure for their story.

Question 5

Another interesting question that inspired many to write good, topical essays. A handful of candidates however, tended to repeat their arguments or even presented views that were self-contradictory. This had a serious impact on their score, as their work lost validity and cohesion. Centres are advised to bring this matter to the attention of all future candidates in order to enhance performance.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02
Language Usage and Comprehension

General comments

In general most candidates performed well. All candidates attempted every exercise, regardless of their ability. Most candidates presented their work neatly while a few were careless. Despite the instruction on the cover, a few candidates still used correction fluid. Centres are strongly advised to bring this to the attention of all future candidates.

Comments on specific questions

A1

Most candidates scored reasonably high marks, although a significant number of candidates had difficulty with **Questions 4 and 5**.

A2

A vast majority of candidates coped well with this question.

A3

A significant number of candidates copied the whole question instead of transforming the sentence. This could have been avoided if candidates had read the instructions more carefully and rephrased the sentences accordingly.

A4

Some candidates found this task rather hard, although the text was based on a familiar topic. A handful of candidates copied the whole text, and among those a few did so without identifying the missing words. Centres are strongly advised to remind candidates that copying the whole text in a gap filling exercise does not contribute any extra marks and wastes valuable time. Examiners look for the missing word set against each question number.

B5

A small number of less able candidates was confused as they did not appear to have read the text thoroughly. Most candidates, however, took the opportunity to score high marks on this multiple-choice exercise.

C6

Quite a few candidates used the opportunity to show their command of the language by answering the questions in their own words, while a majority simply copied the sentences from the text for their answers. Centres and candidates are reminded that copying sentences from the text without tailoring the response to the question cannot be rewarded, as candidates must show that they can manipulate the language effectively. Answers should be to the point and worded in sentences that are clearly the candidate's own.

Candidates may use vocabulary from the text, but they must show that they can create their own syntactic structures.

It appears that some candidates did not understand the text, perhaps due to a lack of careful reading. It is equally important to read and understand all parts of the question.

C7

A wide variety of performance was noticed. A small minority did significantly well, while most struggled to work out the meaning of the words. A few candidates clearly guessed, while others even gave English translations.