



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Fifty-five students participated in the VCE Sinhala examination in 2006. This was a record number of students, more than twice the number in the previous year. Overall, the students' performance was very satisfactory and the majority of the students received excellent or very good marks.

Most of the students had a good command of the language and were well prepared for both tasks in the oral examination. However, it was evident that some students had not been properly guided by their teachers and disclosed information that students are not supposed to reveal; for example, their name, their parents' names and/or the school they attend.

Some students had prepared and memorised information for the Conversation and, when asked to speak about their family, they started by giving their own name, then the names of all their family members and continued to talk about their interests and school life even before they were asked. In such instances, the assessors had to revert back to the initial topic by asking a relevant question, to which students responded appropriately.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Criterion 1

Students responded readily and confidently and carried the conversation forward, using highly effective repair strategies. Very few students needed a minimal degree of support to maintain and advance the conversation. The majority had excellent pronunciation and good intonation, stress and tempo. Their capacity to link with assessors was remarkably high.

Criterion 2

Most of the students presented an excellent range of information relevant to their family, friends, school, hobbies and future aspirations. They not only expressed their ideas and opinions clearly and logically, but could also clarify and elaborate on them to demonstrate thorough preparation. There were only a few students who demonstrated inadequate preparation and needed to ask many questions to carry on the conversation.

Criterion 3

Most students expressed themselves accurately and appropriately using a very good range of vocabulary. They used the correct style and register and self-corrected errors when necessary. Here again, a limited number of students tended to rely on rote-learned language and anglicisms.

Section 2 – Discussion

There was a wide range of topics selected by the students for this task. The best presented topics were selected from the sub-topics under the theme 'The changing world'. Many of the topics allowed students to prepare a lot of information so that they were able to discuss their ideas and opinions. Some topics from the Sinhala speaking community, for example 'The folk tales, folk poems and idioms' and '*Ruawna Vali Saya*', were discussed very well, but it was difficult for students to present their own ideas and opinions. Similarly, although the students had done a lot of research on topics like '*Sigiriya*' and 'The national dress' they presented only an informative description.

A list of possible topics is given below.

The Sinhala speaking community

Lifestyles

- The national dress of Sri Lanka
- Domestic violence against women
- The beauty of a village woman

Places of interest

- *Bellanwilla* temple

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- *Bellanwila Rajamaha Vihareya*
- *Aluvihara Temple – Matale*
- *Ruvan vally Saya*

Arts and Entertainment

- Instruments and symphonies used in *Kandyan* dancing
- *Kandyan* dancing – five types
- *Kandy Perahera*
- *Amba Yaluwo* book review

Stories from the past

- *Sigiriya*
- Folk tales, folk poems and idioms

The changing world

Environmental issues

- Clearing weeds in Sri Lanka
- Clearing of jungles in Sri Lanka
- Environmental pollution in Sri Lanka
- Does new technology pollute the environment?
- Methods of collecting waste in Sri Lanka

Technological changes

- Effects of aircraft engineering on society
- Advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones in Sri Lanka
- Negative effects of the Internet on education
- Economic and social effects of the Norochol power station in Sri Lanka
- Media expansion – pros and cons on society as a whole
- Use of nuclear power in Sri Lanka
- Expansion of mass media – differences between Sri Lanka and Australia
- Expansion of mass media – its ill effects
- Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet
- Censoring news in Sri Lanka
- Use of aircraft engineering In Sri Lanka

The world of work

- Sri Lankan women who go to the Middle East to work as housemaids
- Sexual abuse faced by Sri Lankan women
- Does tourism help the development of Sri Lanka?
- Domestic violence against women

Criterion 1

Most students carried on the Discussion with confidence and original input. They used effective repair strategies and their pronunciation was excellent. Except for a few instances where students had memorised the task, their stress, intonation and tempo were good.

Criterion 2

With thorough preparation most of the students had a very good capacity to present information. Some presented their own ideas and opinions on a chosen topic, and the vast majority clearly and logically presented an excellent range of information. They had extensively researched and gathered information on the chosen topic from various sources. Most students were able to elaborate on their topic and defend their opinions and ideas when requested to clarify. However, there were a few instances where, due to inappropriate selection of the sub-topic, assessors had to ask many questions to carry on with the discussion.



Criterion 3

Students used a wide range of vocabulary with appropriate structures and expressions. In a very few instances, students used English words which were self-corrected most of the time. The students consistently used the appropriate style and register throughout the discussion.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In Section 3 of the examination some students exceeded the word limit. This sometimes resulted in them not meeting certain criteria as the extra writing was disregarded by assessors. In general, most students demonstrated the capacity to understand the specific aspects of the texts and were able to identify and analyse the information provided.

In answering the questions in Sections 1 and 2, students should take note of the number of marks allocated to the question. In general, if a question is worth two marks, they need to write at least two points in their answer.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Text 1

Question 1a.

National Heroes Day

Being a direct question, the correct answer was given by most students

Question 1b.

- to honour the national heroes who sacrificed their lives to save the country
- to honour the patriots who dedicated their lives to the development of the country

Most of the students identified the two correct answers to get full marks. No consideration was given to answers such as ‘honouring/remembering the politicians’.

Question 1c.

Any two of:

- special programs were organised by the government
- school festivals were organised at district level
- the national flag is hoisted on buildings of both government and private sectors and also private homes.

Some students gave all three answers while others gave only one. In the latter case, only one mark was given.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Mr Ratnasinghe is a director of Telecom, a major communication company.

‘Manager’ and ‘the main person’ were also accepted instead of the term ‘director’. Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 2b.

Either of:

- to preserve the religious truth
- to write the religious beliefs.

There were many ways in which this idea could be expressed correctly.

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Question 2c.

Positive views about modern communication	Negative views about modern communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speed of communication• globalisation/get to know the whole world while sitting at home• to enhance or to develop knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• effects on the climate due to satellites• commit unethical acts• criminal behaviours• effects on the environment

Students needed to provide three positives and three negatives. Any appropriate term for 'unethical acts' was accepted.

Question 2d.

To develop a Code of Ethics/to implement strict rules

'set of good rules' and 'set of good habits to practise' were also accepted instead of the term 'Code of Ethics'. Some students did not answer this question although they had noted the correct answer in Sinhala in the notes column.

Text 3

Question 3a.

To request an entry form/application for the competition.

Most students answered this correctly. 'To take part in' and 'to participate in the competition' were not accepted.

Question 3b.

Any two of:

- she studied in Sinhala up to Year 5
- she won first place in poetry, essay and speech competitions earlier
- she speaks Sinhala well
- she reads Sinhala newspapers and books
- she watches Sinhala videos and films.

This part of the question was answered well.

Question 3c.

She has been attending Sinhala classes for three years.

Some students did not understand the question and repeated the answer for part b. again.

Question 3d.

- The teacher's signature is required.
- The school stamp or the seal is required.

One mark was awarded for each point. Quite a number of students gave only one point. 'School sign' was not accepted.

Part B

Text 4

Question 4a.

Sri Lanka has become a paradise for vendors of mobile phones.

There were a few incorrect answers given here. 'Mobile phones have become popular' and 'mobile phones are an essential item' were not accepted as correct answers.

Question 4b.

- Mobile phones have become a necessity in the context of the present economy.
- They are used extensively in society, by tri-wheel drivers, pavement hawkers and school children.

Most students answered this question correctly.

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Question 4c.

- availability due to smuggling of the goods or phones
- the low cost of calls

There were many correct answers to this question.

There were both direct and analytical questions asked on Text 4. Although the questions were rather straightforward, some students could not identify the correct answer.

Text 5

Question 5a.

Sri Lankan/Sinhala community

There were many correct answers to this question. The answer 'sisters or brothers' was not accepted.

Question 5b.

Any two of:

- simple and repetitive language
- rhyming lines with a familiar tune
- emphasis on reasonably priced goods
- designed to interest people who are missing their home country, food or utensils.

This is an indirect question which was based on the language, but many students answered correctly.

Question 5c.

Any two of:

- availability of Sri Lankan food such as rice and curry, string hoppers, fish *ambul thiyal* and coconut *sambol* and spices like cloves, nutmeg and goraka (foods)
- availability of Sri Lankan newspapers videos and books, *sesath* and wall hangings at cheaper prices, pots and pan for cooking and *pittu* and string hopper moulds (goods)
- eat in and takeaway facilities, open every day at convenient times, social opportunities (other attractions).

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Text 6

Question 6a.

Major change: The government took over the tea estates.

Effects:

- more tea leaves were picked
- tea production increased
- profits were shared with the workers
- the welfare of the labourers was looked after.

This question was in two parts. One mark was available for the first part, and two marks for two correct responses to the second part. Most students successfully identified this and responded to both parts.

Question 6b.

- Sri Lanka supplied quality tea.
- Tea was supplied to the market in a timely manner.

The quality and the timely supply to the market were expressed by students in many different ways and most responses were accepted.

Question 6c.

Any two of:

- the government stopped giving aid to the private sector
- taxes were increased

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- replanting the crops was not done
- the lack of new technology.

Most students were able to identify two correct responses.

Question 6d.

Any three of:

- cheaper prices from other countries
- need for new technology
- new technology may reduce employment opportunities
- resistance of the present employees to getting trained.

A few students missed out on full marks because they did not give three responses.

Text 7

Question 7a.

Students were asked to suggest a title and justify their choice. One mark was awarded for a suitable title and the other for the explanation.

Some of the suggestions were 'The Cunning Beggar', 'The Gullible Woman' and 'Return from the Other World'. There were many other suggestions which were accepted if the students had justified their choice. Some students suggested a title without giving a reason – if the topic was acceptable, one mark was given.

Question 7b.

- The mother is a kind woman because she felt sorry for the beggar and offered him food.
- She is a gullible woman because she believed every thing the beggar said.
- She is a foolish woman because she gave jewellery and money to a stranger.
- She loves her daughter very much and felt sad when her daughter did not come because the daughter did not have jewellery.

Four marks were allocated to this analytical question. Any two impressions of the woman with reasons or one impression with three reasons were given full marks. If only the impressions were written without reasons, two marks were given for the first two impressions only. Quite a few students got full marks, although there were instances where only the impressions about the mother were written, without reasons.

Question 7c.

- He said he is married to the daughter.
- He said that the daughter did not come with him because she did not have jewellery to wear.
- He will tell the daughter that he met the mother.
- He said he is going back to the other world and can take anything to her daughter.

There were good responses to this question and most students received full marks.

Question 7d.

The father responded to the situation:

- with humour
- by saying to tell the daughter that the jewellery is from the mother and the horse is from the father.

Either of the above responses was accepted. Many students gave the second response.

Part B

Question 8

Ten marks were allocated for Question 8 as follows:

- three marks for the format (one for the address, one for the topic of the letter and one for the ending)
- two marks for indicating the problem
- two marks for suggesting a solution
- two marks for persuading why a speedy response was necessary
- one mark for the language (formal language).



Students were expected to write a formal letter to the Mayor of Panadura and reorganise the information given. Most students received either full marks or at least two for the format and the one mark for the language. Out of the six marks available for the content, many students received four marks for indicating the problem and suggesting a solution, but many failed in their persuasion of why a speedy response was necessary. Some students included personal information which was not included in the text and there were also some instances where the information given in the text was directly reproduced. On the whole many of the responses were quite good.

Section 3 – Writing in Sinhala

There were 15 marks allocated to this section, in which students had to choose one of four questions.

Question 9

Students had to produce an informative piece of writing as a newspaper article on pollution. There was a high percentage of responses to this question and there were excellent to good reports written on this topic.

Marks were allocated as follows: one for the topic; one for the name of the author; one for the introduction; one for the conclusion; two for language (formal language was expected); and nine marks for a discussing of how we are responsible for causing pollution (at least three points and three marks for each point).

Question 10

Students were expected to write a script for a speech evaluating a book or a film. Few students attempted this question. It is important to note that in an evaluation, both positive and negative aspects should be discussed.

Marks were allocated as follows: one mark for addressing the audience; one mark for the introduction; one mark for the conclusion; two marks for language (informal language was expected); four marks for two positive aspects with reasons; four marks for two negative aspects with reasons; and two marks for the final opinion.

Responses to this question were satisfactory.

Question 11

The task was to write an imaginative story about a situation based on the joyful scenario given. Some students did not seem to understand this situation and there was even a sad story written. Although there were many good responses, some pieces exceeded the word limit and therefore the appropriateness of the task was lost. The main weakness was the length of the story exceeding the specified word limit.

Marks were allocated as follows: one mark for the title; one mark for the author's name; one mark for starting with the given line; two marks for the language (formal or informal as appropriate); and 10 marks for the content (appropriateness, event as a group, sequence, feelings, etc.)

Question 12

Students were expected to write a personal letter to a friend describing a very amusing personal experience. Only a few students attempted this task. Most responses described an incident rather than focussing on an amusing story.

Marks were allocated as follows: three marks for the format of the letter (one mark for the address, one mark for the greeting and addressing the person, one mark for the ending); two marks for language; and 10 marks for the content (one mark for the beginning, one mark for the ending and eight marks for appropriate sequence and feelings).