

SINHALA

Paper 3205/01
Composition

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates should:

- ensure that they answer one question from Section A and one question from Section B
- adhere to the word limits specified
- ensure that their work is legible, accurate and logically presented
- ensure that they present their responses in the form stipulated in the question (e.g. letter, dialogue, etc.)
- show an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing and sentence structure
- demonstrate adequate control of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- understand and be able to employ a range of apt vocabulary
- be able to order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- plan their use of time for each question and allow time for thorough checking of their work.

General comments

In general, candidates performed very well on this paper and most seemed to have been well prepared for the examination. Most candidates were able to present their compositions in the style required by the questions (e.g. letter, report or dialogue).

Some candidates did not seem familiar with the basic grammatical rules of Sinhala or with Sinhalese idiomatic usage, and would therefore benefit from further practice in these areas. Some candidates wrote their essays in the spoken form, which was not appropriate. Candidates should be encouraged to read widely (e.g. books, newspapers and magazines) to help consolidate spelling and grammar, as some candidates' responses included misspellings.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a), which asked candidates to write a letter to a hospital thanking the staff for the excellent service given to the candidate's grandmother, allowed many candidates to demonstrate their familiarity with letter writing conventions. Some interesting responses were produced, and the strongest candidates managed to include some well-structured sentences and a wide range of lexis.

Question 1(b), which asked candidates to write an essay about the best TV show of the year, was selected by a relatively small percentage of candidates. Again, some interesting responses, which frequently focussed on popular dramas, were produced and the strongest candidates included some adventurous vocabulary and well-constructed sentences.

Question 1(c), which asked candidates to write a dialogue between a candidate and a teacher, proved to be a very popular choice. It was clear that many candidates had used their personal experiences when answering this question and many of the answers were realistic and interesting. Some candidates' responses included frequent misspellings.

Section B. In this section, candidates seem to have understood the topics well and many successfully demonstrated that they were well prepared to write essays to the required standard.

Question 2(a) was generally tackled well and the most successful candidates organised their work clearly into paragraphs, were able to spell the majority of words in their essay correctly and demonstrated a solid control of grammatical features.

Question 2(b), which asked candidates to describe their ideal school, was a particularly popular topic. The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the topic and drew on their own personal experiences to develop their ideas. Some interesting and engaging essays were written.

Question 2(c), which asked candidates to write an essay based on the proverb 'it takes two hands to clap', understood the proverb well and tended to write about the necessity for unity among people in order to improve society.

Question 2(d), which asked candidates to write an essay about their last holidays, also proved to be a popular choice and some interesting essays were produced. Again, most candidates who selected this question used their own experiences to answer the question in an authentic and engaging way.

SINHALA

Paper 3205/02
Translation and Reading
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:

- ensure that they plan their time for each question and allow time for thorough checking of their work
- ensure that their work is legible and logically presented
- read the translation passages carefully before beginning to translate.

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well on this paper, and were relatively successful at translating from Sinhala to English, and from English to Sinhala.

Candidates should be encouraged to read a variety of books and newspapers in Sinhala as this will increase their exposure to a wide range of Sinhalese vocabulary, grammar and idioms. This would help candidates to improve their writing skills and reading comprehension skills.

Candidates should try and present their work in an organised fashion and ensure that their handwriting is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Translation into English

On the whole, the translation into English was tackled well. The most successful candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passage and managed to translate effectively, using accurate grammatical structures and the appropriate vocabulary.

Question 2: Translation into Sinhala

Again, the majority of candidates dealt relatively well with this translation, although some seemed to struggle to provide an appropriate translation into Sinhala for some words. As mentioned above, if candidates are encouraged to read a wide variety of sources, such as newspapers and books, in Sinhala, then this will increase their vocabulary base, and they will be able to utilise this when translating and writing in Sinhala.

Section B. Many candidates performed well on the reading comprehension exercise. Many candidates scored 20 or more points out of the possible 25, and demonstrated that they had understood the passage well and managed to locate the correct answers within the passage.