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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

BENGALI

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3204/01
Composition

General comments

Candidates generally performed well on this paper.

The general criteria used for marking this paper are:

Content There should be ample material, ideas should be relevant to the topic and have an interest value. Arguments and reasons given should be persuasive. There should be elements of originality and imagination.

Language Ideas should be well arranged and paragraphed. It should be expressed fluently with good linguistic ability, free of all major errors. A wide variety of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure and linking devices should be used. Descriptions should create atmosphere, show observation and sensitivity. Discussions should present cogent argument with force and economy. Narratives should show appropriate characterisation, description, suspense and pace.

Linguistic ability and use of grammar

The general standard of language and knowledge of grammar needs to be improved. Candidates have shown weaknesses in spelling, tense, conjunction and use of singular and plural numbers. Some candidates have an extensive vocabulary but are not able to use it accurately. For example, one candidate wrote

আমর জীবনের এক বিশিষ্ট ও বিস্ময়কর ভাবেমন হল বুলাবদারেরি।

These two underlined words are completely inappropriate. Another example is, instead of writing

সবাই মন বুলাতে পারে গেল।

the candidate wrote

সবাই বুলাতে পারে গেল।

Expressions such as

এসব বিষয়গুলো অবিকার করা হতন যদি কারণে উদ্ভূত থাকতেন।

are not used in Bengali. Another candidate wrote

এইসব জীব জন্ত

which should be

এইসব জীব জন্ত

which has a different meaning.

Some common spelling mistakes were found in the use of

ভা

instead of

য

in writing

যায়

Hard sounding consonants in place of soft sounding consonants were frequently used. For example, using the sound 'bha'

(ভ)

in place of 'ba'

(ব)

use of 'gha'

(ঘ)

in place of 'ga'

(গ)

use of 'chacha'

(ছ)

in place of cha

(চ)

was found to be very widespread.

One very conspicuous spelling mistake was the inappropriate use of the symbol for 'nasal' sounding words. Example:

কাড়িয়ে, বানিয়ে, ঘাস

etc. instead of

কাড়িয়ে, বানিয়ে, ঘাস উত্থানি।

Another mistake observed was in the misuse of conjunctions

(বিভক্তি)।

instead of writing

ভয় পাচ্ছিল

candidates wrote

ভয়ে পাচ্ছিল

or

কুল

in place of

কুলে ।

Sometimes there is the use of the double conjunction such as

সমুদ্রতে

in place of

সমুদ্রে ।

Very few candidates adhered to the word count specified for both sections of the paper. This manifests the candidates' inability to summarise ideas and be succinct. By writing beyond the specified word count, candidates disadvantaged themselves as lengthy texts expose the candidates' grammatical and linguistic mistakes besides limiting the time that the candidate has to spend on organising their writing and checking their work. Centres should bring to the attention of their candidates the importance of writing within the specified word count.

Comments on specific questions

Part A

Question 1

Candidates are asked to write a letter of approximately 150 words to the police informing them of an act of vandalism in their school and the candidate's willingness to be a witness to the incident. Candidates have to display their ability to format a letter, begin and conclude it and arrange their arguments persuasively and in a logical and coherent way.

Most candidates managed to get the basic format of the letter correct although in many instances the salutation (Dear such and such.....) at the beginning was not done in the traditional Bengali way. They have understood what is expected of them. However, many failed to arrange their ideas systematically or use paragraphs. For example, many candidates did not separate the timing of the incident, what happened, who was involved and what effect it had on the school. When it came to expressing their willingness to be a witness, not many candidates were able to state their reasons clearly and succinctly.

However, the scenarios they portrayed were quite imaginative.

Question 2

In this question the candidate was asked to write about traffic jams. Most candidates failed to give a title to the report.

Again paragraphing was found to be a problem. Many did not use paragraphs to organise their writing into the different aspects of traffic jams such as the cause of traffic jams, when they occur, what effect they have on human life and what are the solutions to this problem etc. It was surprising that only a few candidates mentioned 'pollution' as a major effect of traffic jams and some did not give any explanation how to alleviate this problem, simply saying that governments should take measures without clearly stating what those measures were.

Part B**Question 3**

Candidates were asked to write “What would happen if paper was not discovered”? Although it can be a descriptive essay some candidates used their imagination well to create the scenario of a world without paper. Generally candidates performance on this question was good.

Question 4

While there were some candidates who demonstrated the ability to combine ample material that is fully relevant with an interest value, others wrote in a rather flat and unimaginative manner lacking originality.

Some candidates, highlighted the disadvantages of the ‘supermarket’ as they destroy small tradesmen and people choose ready-made meals instead of freshly cooked meals etc.

Question 5

This question falls in the category of fantasy writing and as such demands a vivid imagination, creativity and originality as well as coherent and appealing story telling skills. Most candidates who attempted this question demonstrated original and imaginative ideas but some failed to translate that into a facile narrative. Some of the candidates were obviously influenced by the film ‘Titanic’ as a number of them mentioned the cruise liner being hit by an iceberg.

Conclusion

On the whole the performance of the candidates seemed to be satisfactory. There was ample evidence of high level vocabulary but in many instances usage was not appropriate and inaccurate. There should be ample spelling practice particularly to discriminate between hard and soft sounding consonants. Candidates should be reminded about the importance of adhering to the specified word count.

Paper 3204/02

Language Usage and Comprehension

General comments

All sections of the paper were well attempted by the candidates and they have demonstrated good time management. It is evident that all candidates understood the rubric and were familiar with the examination format. This paper tests the candidates’ use of language, vocabulary and comprehension.

Comments on specific questions**A1 Separation/Combination of Words**

Most candidates were very comfortable with this section and did well. They have understood the task and candidates attempted all questions.

A2 Idioms, Proverbs and Words in Pairs

A large number of candidates found **Questions 6 and 8** *tricky*. It appears that some candidates did not understand the meaning of the idioms and words in pairs.

A3 Sentence Transformation

Candidates did very well in this section. Most mistakes were made in **Question 12**. Some did not use a proper syntax. For example, one candidate wrote

হেনার পবিত্র লিখিত কামনা করি

where the correct sentence should be

প্রোগ্রামের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে সঠিক বাক্য নির্বাচন করি।

Similarly another candidate added phrases which changed the meaning of the original sentence. They wrote

প্রোগ্রামের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে সঠিক বাক্য নির্বাচন করি।

A4 Cloze Passage

Most candidates found this section challenging. More practice is required to improve the performance in this section.

B5 MCQ Comprehension

This was a very well attempted section. Some candidates wrote the answer and some just wrote the number of the correct answer. No differentiation was made when marking but candidates must pay attention to the rubric of each section.

C6 OE Comprehension

Candidates found this section quite daunting. Although candidates attempted all questions, the weaker candidates struggled to complete the answers. They are expected to demonstrate that they have grasped the meaning of the text and are able to reproduce it in their own language rather than lifting paragraphs and phrases from the text. A large number of candidates failed to do this.

It appears from the responses of some of the candidates that they did not read the passage carefully. This was evident from their answers when they named the island as 'Malaysia' and not 'Indonesia', the word Malaysia does not appear in the text at all. Also some candidates thought 'Sumatra' was 'Malaysia'. In **Question 35**, candidates were asked, "What is the name of the golden island?" A large number of candidates thought the name of the island is 'Golden Island' rather than 'Sumatra'.

There was also a tendency to repeat the same answer in **Question 33**, **Question 35** and **Question 36**. Evidence of grammatical and syntax errors was present in their answers. It seems that some candidates were not familiar with the hierarchical transformation of verbs in Bengali. For example, instead of writing

সে হারায়নি

they have written

সে হারান নি

and similar mistakes.

C7 Vocabulary

Candidates were asked to give the synonyms for words in Bengali. Some candidates did not understand the rubric. They responded by giving the meaning of the words in English and as such lost marks. Candidates should be made aware of this. Candidates struggled to give the precise synonyms required and most found it difficult but made efforts to paraphrase the meaning. Candidates found **Question 42** most challenging.