

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, dialogue, etc.). On the whole, this year's compositions were of a higher standard than last year's.

Some candidates did not seem familiar with the basic grammar rules of Sinhala or with Sinhalese idiom and would benefit from further practice in these areas. Some candidates wrote their essays in spoken idiom, which was not appropriate; candidates need to become more familiar with literary Sinhala traditions. Candidates should be encouraged to read more widely (e.g. books, newspapers) to help consolidate spelling and grammar; there were some lapses in spelling seen in candidates' responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Letter, Report or Speech, Dialogue

Candidates were asked to write a response of approximately 120 words in Sinhala on one of the three given topics.

Question 1(a), which asked candidates to write a letter about their first day at secondary school, was the most popular question in **Section A**. It was clear that many candidates had used their personal experiences when answering this question and many of the answers were realistic and interesting. Candidates often mentioned that they had felt nervous and took time to get used to the new teachers and other students when they joined their new school. The majority of candidates demonstrated an awareness of the techniques of letter writing. Some candidates misread the question and wrote instead about their first day at primary school.

Question 1(b), which asked candidates to write a report about the ways in which waste was polluting a local river, was generally tackled well. Most candidates produced good reports with an adequate range of ideas to explain how the river had become polluted.

Question 1(c), which asked candidates to produce a dialogue between an employee at the airport and a passenger complaining about his lost luggage, was also very popular. On the whole, candidates produced lively and realistic dialogues.

Section B – Essay

Candidates were asked to write one essay of approximately 200 words in Sinhala from a choice of four topics.

Question 2(a), which asked candidates to write an essay on whether or not it was the government's responsibility to provide free housing for the poor, was generally tackled well. The majority of candidates argued that the government should provide housing for those in need. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the housing problems facing the poor in their country. Responses to this topic usually contained interesting ideas and arguments.

Candidates who selected **Question 2(b)**, which asked them to write an essay on the proverb 'too much of anything is good for nothing', generally showed good understanding of the saying. They used examples from contemporary society and daily life to support their arguments.

Question 2(c), which asked candidates to describe the kinds of films that they liked watching and why, was a popular topic. Some candidates wrote with good understanding of the different kinds of films available to them and why they preferred certain kinds of film over others. Most said that they preferred films made for teenagers and those on historical themes.

Candidates who chose **Question 2(d)**, which asked them to write an essay stating their opinion on the age at which people should be allowed to vote in elections, generally agreed with the current voting age in their country. Some candidates thought that the age at which people are eligible to vote in their country was too low and suggested a higher age as being more suitable.

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

Overall, candidates' performance on this paper was of a high standard. This year, performance on **Question 1** was generally better than performance on **Question 2**.

Candidates should be encouraged to read a variety of books and newspapers in Sinhala as this will increase exposure to a wide range of Sinhalese vocabulary, grammar and idiom, and will help candidates to improve their writing skills and reading comprehension skills. In some cases, candidates' grasp of grammar and/or spelling was so poor that it rendered the answers unintelligible.

In a few cases, handwriting was so poor as to render answers illegible. Candidates need to make sure that their work is tidy and legible.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Translation

Question 1: Translation into English

On the whole, the translation into English was tackled extremely well. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passage and provided accurate translations.

Question 2: Translation into Sinhala

Generally, candidates engaged with this translation well and most made a good attempt at it. Some candidates struggled to provide an appropriate Sinhala translation of some of the words.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

On the whole, candidates made a good attempt at this section and most scored very good marks here. Such candidates demonstrated very good understanding of the reading passage and gave suitable answers to the questions.