

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 response in the form stipulated in the question (e.g. letter, dialogue etc)
- plan their use of time for each question and allow time for thorough checking of their work.

General comments

In general, candidates performed well in this paper, and many candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

Some candidates did not seem familiar with the basic grammar rules of Sinhala, or with Sinhala idiom, and would benefit from further practice in these areas. Candidates should be encouraged to read more widely to help consolidate spelling and grammar.

A small number of candidates mixed formal and informal registers in their responses, which was not always appropriate. Candidates should be reminded that the formal register is required when writing their answers to this paper, unless specifically stated otherwise in the question. Candidates needed to have a better understanding of the difference between formal/written and informal/spoken Sinhala.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Letter, Report or Speech, Dialogue

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

In **Section A**, candidates generally wrote successfully on their chosen topic. This year, candidates showed better understanding than in previous years of how to compose a letter, a dialogue and a speech.

Question 1(a) (“Write a letter to a large company that is recruiting young people for temporary work experience, stating your qualities and why you are ideally suited to the job.”) was the most popular question in **Section A** and there were many good responses to this question. Some candidates demonstrated good skills of letter-writing. Candidates mentioned how they came to know about the firm, why they were applying for the job, their educational qualifications, why they thought that they would be the best applicant for the job, and their belief that they could serve the company well while gaining some valuable experience by working there.

Question 1(b) (“You are asked to give a speech at your old primary school based on your best memories of your time there. Write that speech.”) was also popular. On the whole, those who selected this topic produced interesting speeches based on their experiences at primary school. Many wrote about memories that one could easily relate to.

Question 1(c) (“Write a dialogue in which you and your friend discuss a Sinhala film you have watched recently.”) was answered adequately by the majority of candidates.

Section B – Essay

Candidates were asked to write an essay of approximately 200 words on one of the four given topics.

All of the topics in this section proved popular.

In general, candidates showed reasonable understanding of the principles of essay writing and of the topics on which they were asked to write. Many candidates drew on their own experiences when writing their answers, particularly when attempting **Question 2(d)** (“Describe a situation where a younger brother or sister got you in trouble.”), which often included realistic and interesting points.

A number of candidates wrote considerably more than the number of words stated in the question. Candidates should be reminded that going beyond the word limit does not improve the quality of the work presented and may indeed increase the likelihood of mistakes occurring. In addition, candidates need to ensure that their handwriting is legible.

SINHALA

Paper 3205/02

Translation and Reading Comprehension

Key messages

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

- 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.

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 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

Generally, the translation into English was tackled extremely well. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passage and provided translations that were clear and accurate. There were many excellent translations.

Question 2: Translation into Sinhala

While this translation was tackled less well than the translation in **Question 1**, most candidates made a good attempt at it. There were a few translations which were less successful than others – this was mainly due to poor handwriting and/or lack of appropriate vocabulary and idiom. Words which some candidates struggled to translate included 'horse', 'fox', 'stable' and 'saddle'.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

On the whole, candidates made a very good attempt at this section. Candidates seemed to enjoy the topic of *Olympic Games*. Some candidates could not demonstrate adequate understanding of the reading passage but, on the whole, performance in this section was commendable.