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GCSE

**BENGALI**

8638/RF: Reading Foundation  
Report on the Examination

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## **General comments**

The first Reading examination of this new GCSE specification differentiated well between students of different abilities. Many were able to gain some marks for each question, though negative expressions, as always, continue to prove challenging and are not always understood. The question styles mirrored those in the Specimen Assessment Materials. This helped students to understand what was required. A good number of students responded well to the questions set and displayed a good range of knowledge throughout the paper on a variety of topics.

Section B of the examination, where students are required to understand questions in Bengali and in some cases respond in Bengali, proved challenging for many. The most able students were able to gain high marks in this section. A small number of students answered questions in the wrong language in Section B where answers in Bengali are required.

Section C of the examination, where students are required to translate a short passage into English, proved demanding. Few students scored high marks on this section, where specific vocabulary is being targeted and a precise rendering of the Bengali into English is required.

As a general principle, students were given credit for all answers which conveyed the key idea intelligibly and without ambiguity, whether the answer was in English or in Bengali. Marks were not awarded where errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar led to a failure to communicate the key ideas without ambiguity. Students need to be discouraged from giving alternative or additional information in an answer that isn't necessary as this may make the key idea ambiguous and therefore not able to be credited.

## **Section A**

### **Question 1**

Q01.1 and Q01.3 were the least successfully answered in this section (just under 35% and just under 30% answering correctly, respectively) with the numerical 7 and 18 appearing not to be known in Bengali. Question 01.2 was correctly answered slightly more often (just over three fifths answered correctly).

### **Question 2**

Students generally did well on this question. Over half of students provided a correct response for 02.1; just over 70% for 02.2; just under 70% for 02.3 and around half of students provided a correct response for 02.4. Some students appeared to be confused as to what game was being played in 02.1 and some confused where the location of the park was in 02.4, and so did not achieve these marks.

### **Question 3**

Many students gained the two marks available in question 03.1. Most achieved at least one mark in both question 03.1 and 03.2. Failure to gain marks was usually due to the fact that many appeared to be confused between the negative and positive statements.

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#### Question 4

Just over half of students got full marks here except in 04.2 (around one fifth gained full marks) where students generally were not able to differentiate between 'False' and 'Not in Text'.

#### Question 5

The question style here appeared in the specimen materials and tested students' ability to recognise the relationship between past, present and future events. In the first part of 05, with reference to *going out with mum*, the most popular answer was '*playing*', perhaps because students did not recognise the immediate future, and so did not achieve the mark. In the later parts of 05, the majority of students answered correctly. This showed a good ability to recognise the relationship between the three timeframes.

#### Question 6

This was the first overlap question with the Higher tier examination based on a literary text, set in the target language. The question style was a True/False/Not Mentioned question. Students were asked to identify the *true*, *false* and *not mentioned* statements by using the abbreviation provided. On average, 06.1 - 06.7 was generally answered well by able students. However in 06.2 and 06.3 some students struggled to differentiate between a *false* statement and a statement *not mentioned* which resulted in them not achieving the marks for the parts mentioned.

#### Question 7

It was disappointing to note that only a relatively small proportion of students appeared to be familiar with this question style and so managed to achieve marks. This was one of the tasks targeting the highest grades on this paper and many students struggled to infer the information and relate it to individual persons. It is advised that students practise answering this type of question in order to help them achieve marks in the examination.

#### Question 8

This was a set of multiple choice questions and students appeared to find it challenging. About 35% of students were able to answer correctly on each part of this question.

### Section B

#### Question 9

This is the first question in Section B and proved challenging to many students as the stimulus and tasks are in the target language. Just under 40% provided the correct answer on 09.1 and around 35% on 09.3. Quite a few students appeared to struggle with the Bengali word for *footpath* and came up with *cycle* or *road* and so did not gain marks. On 09.3 quite a few students appeared to struggle with the Bengali word for *gym* and so came up with *some games* and so did not gain marks.

#### Question 10

This was a set of multiple choice questions. Part 10.1 was not well answered which appeared to be because students were not able to identify the correct numbers in Bengali.

**Question 11**

Student performance varied on different parts of this question. The topic of family relationships is clearly well known. However, students found this question challenging as they did not seem confident in identifying positive and negative opinions. Around a third of students selected the correct answer for part 11.1; around 28% selected the correct answer for part 11.2; just under half of students selected the correct answer for 11.3 and just over half of students selected the correct answer for 11.4.

**Question 12**

This was the second literary question as well as the overlap question with the Higher tier examination in Section B. Students appeared to find this question challenging with only a very small proportion managing to achieve all four marks. However, around 65% of students managed to achieve two marks or above out of the four available. Many students struggled to identify the true statements, and so ended up with a variety of responses other than the correct ones.

**Question 13**

This was the second overlap question in Section B. Only around 43% of students gained the mark on question 13.1; around 34% selected the correct response for 13.2; around 35% selected the correct response for 13.3; and around 35% selected the correct response for 13.4.

**Section C – Translation**

Here students were required to translate a short passage into English. This question discriminated very well. The nine sections of the translation demonstrated a wide range of answers; it should be stressed, however, that precision is necessary in successfully completing these tasks. Details such as tenses and pronouns must be conveyed fully in English. Paraphrasing is to be avoided and

students should follow the original text closely. For example, in the sentence *গতোকাল আমি একটা নতুন ল্যাপটপ কিনেছিলাম এবং এটা বেশ দামী ছিলো* the past tense, the connective *এবং* and the adjective

*দামী* must all be translated. An answer such as “I go to the shop and I bought a laptop” would not be creditworthy. Only a minority of students gained six marks or more from the nine available marks for this question. Just under a third of students gained four marks or more. A significant proportion of students did not achieve any marks on this question.

**Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.