



---

GCSE

**BENGALI**

8638/WH: Writing Higher  
Report on the Examination

---

8638  
June 2019

---

Version: 1.0

---

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2019 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.  
AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

## **General comments**

The quality of work produced for this new examination was encouraging. The paper differentiated very well in that students were able to achieve marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well.

Where students failed to achieve marks, it was due to inaccuracies which caused a delay in communicating messages. The usual reasons for this were either wrong verb formation or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, something which created greater chance of error. Another barrier to achievement was the omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2.

### **Question 1**

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of work seen was generally good, with many students able to provide extended responses which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misinterpretation or omission of bullet points and to their quality of language, which at this level led to more scope for error.

### **Content**

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of all bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that a response cannot achieve a mark above 6, given that for a response to be awarded a mark between 7 and 10 all aspects of the task must be covered.

### **Quality of Language**

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

Students were able to show a variety of vocabulary in relation to the four bullet points of their chosen question. This variety came about automatically as they were asked to write about diverse topics.

Both questions elicited language which referred to past, present and future events and students had the opportunity here to show knowledge of different tenses. This was not always done successfully, in particular with the bullet points requiring reference to the past.

When giving opinions, many students were able to use different verbs and adjectives which lent greater variety to their writing. Two bullet points per question directly elicited opinions.

Complexity at this tier was achieved in various ways: infinitive constructions; subordinate clauses; the use of longer sentences formed using connectives; comparatives; negatives and the use of

adjectives. At this level, the subjunctive is probably being used in the form of a set phrase, but it still adds complexity to the writing.

The other strand in Quality of Language is the accuracy of the writing. The more common, major errors were with verbs, either with the wrong person or the wrong tense of the verb.

### Question 1.1

This was the more popular choice with students. It was a topic with which students are familiar, but it is important to remind students that this new specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than writing about an unconnected topic. This question was well answered by the vast majority of students who achieved maximum marks in this question, but a number of responses did not address one or two bullet points as they failed to address a bullet point with enough precision or misunderstood the fourth bullet ‘future target or aim’

ভবিষ্যতে তুমি যা হতে চাও .

### Question 1.2

This question was well answered by the vast majority of students and some achieved maximum marks, but a small number of students did not address one or two bullet points as they did not understand the meaning of few Bengali words eg ‘উৎসব’ (festival/ celebration), ‘পরিকল্পনা’ (plan).

### Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include opinions as required by the task.

### Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total on two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage. The quality of responses was generally high with most students able to cover both bullet points in the question they chose. They were also able to demonstrate the ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and with a variety of language. The philosophy behind this new specification is that students use their linguistic knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than just reproduce pre-learned language. Students were less successful where they had misinterpreted a bullet point or had written very lengthy responses, something which created more room for error.

The final bullet point on the front page of the question paper should have stated “In order to score the highest marks for Question 2.1/Question 2.2, you must write something about each bullet point. You must use a variety of vocabulary and structures and include your opinions and reasons”. At the end of this bullet point the words “and reasons” had been omitted. Manual checks were completed by the Lead Examiner in order to ensure no students were unfairly disadvantaged by this omission.

## **Content**

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of the bullet points), the amount of information conveyed, the clarity of communication and the expression and justification of opinions. Students usually had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions, but there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘ambiguities’) and this had an impact on the marks which could be awarded.

## **Range of language**

The key features of the criteria for assessment are variety of language and the ability to produce complex sentences in a confident and fluent manner. It is worth noting that reference is not made to time frames or tenses in the criteria, but the use of these were considered as an attempt at complexity. From that point of view, it was pleasing to note the wide range of tenses and verb forms that were used, including the conditional and subjunctive. The criteria for assessment for Range of Language also refer to style and register but this did not prove a problem given the nature of the questions.

## **Accuracy**

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations, and the type of errors that students make. It is to be noted that a ‘major’ error is one that interferes with communication, and a ‘minor error’, although still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of students were able to produce responses worthy of three marks and above. Common major errors included the inappropriate use of infinitives and past participles and poor formation of the perfect tense. Minor errors included gender errors, inaccurate adjectival agreements and minor mis-spellings.

## **Question 2.1**

This question was well answered by the majority of students as they are familiar with the topic ‘healthy lifestyle’. They expressed their opinions and justified them properly. However, repetition of the same ideas, an inability to expand the ideas and/or poor language ability, prevented some responses from being able to achieve the highest marks.

## **Question 2.2**

This was the more popular choice with students, the vast majority of whom were able to write clearly about environmental pollution. Opinions and justifications were regularly included and it was obviously a topic with which they were familiar. Unfortunately, a good number of students who opted for this question wrote about environmental or social problems without linking them directly to their own experience of their own town/city; rather, they thought of environmental problems in relation to the whole world. The second bullet point was also misinterpreted by a good number of students. They wrote about what people generally or the government could do to save the environment not what they themselves should do. Solutions here tended to be couched in general terms or were non-existent.

## **Advice to students**

- Aim to write roughly the number of words required. The emphasis needs to be on quality and not quantity.

- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response. Answer the question which is there. If তুমি or তোমার is in the rubric, make the response personal and link it to yourself in some way.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points in some way.
- When including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate.

### **Question 3**

For this question, there are 6 marks for Conveying key messages and 6 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

In the translation, the sentences were divided into 13 key messages.

### **Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures**

Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were still communicated. These inaccuracies were considered when deciding on the mark for the application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. For example, wrong word order or slight misspelling did not affect communication, but were taken into account under this area of assessment.

### **Advice to students**

- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the shorter words.

**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.