
GCSE

BENGALI

8638/LH: Listening Higher
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

As with the Foundation tier paper, it was pleasing to see a number of high scoring scripts in the first Listening examination of this new GCSE specification. Most students achieved marks consistently throughout the paper. The paper differentiated well between the students at whom it was targeted. The most able students responded well to all the questions, in particular the Bengali questions in Section B. Less able students appeared to struggle with the more demanding questions, particularly those in the latter half of the examination. Although the number of students leaving blanks in multiple-choice questions was low, there were still instances of these. Teachers should encourage students to attempt all such questions. Questions requiring a written answer discriminated well. The majority of these questions were aimed at the higher grades and required precise answers. Some questions also required students to draw simple conclusions and to understand material which contained more complex and less familiar language in line with the requirements of the subject content. Students handled the paper really well and were clearly well prepared from the specimen assessment materials.

Teachers should remind students to maximise the 5 minutes' reading time for the Listening examination by:

- reading all the questions carefully, particularly those in Section B;
- checking questions with emboldened words which asked for, for example, negative views or the most relevant option;
- looking at any examples given, as these point out the level of detail required;
- underlining key words which have been highlighted in the rubrics/questions;
- identifying the questions which have two or more parts to answer from the same utterance;
- sign-posting Section B as it requires answers in Bengali;
- being careful about listening to the question numbers in Section B as these are announced in Bengali.

Section A

Questions 1-4

These questions were overlap questions with the Foundation tier examination, and as expected students performed significantly better at Higher tier. On question 1, almost four fifths of Higher tier students achieved the marks, compared to just over half of Foundation tier students. The response to question 2 on the Higher tier was impressive with over four fifths of students achieving the marks, whereas for the same question at Foundation tier, just under three fifths of students achieved the marks. Responses on question 3 provided a clear indication that students were rightly entered for Higher Tier. In the Higher tier examination, about three quarters of students selected all three correct options on question 3, and in Foundation paper, the figure was 10%.

Question 5

This question was accessible to most students; students performing equally well on each part of the question. The topic area of this question was the environment and the vocabulary was familiar to students. About 88% of the students secured the mark on question 5.1 and on question 5.2, 86% responded correctly.

Questions 6-8

These questions were assessing the topic of future careers and were answered well by many students. About 95% got question 06 correct, 83% got question 07 correct and 93% got question 08 correct. Students clearly understood the complex vocabulary and grammatical structures used in these questions very well and were able to choose the correct answers with a high degree of success.

Questions 9-11

The number of students achieving the marks on these questions indicated that they coped well with the relatively abstract nature of some of the language used in this question about mental health issues. Approximately 82% of students got question 09 correct and impressively about 90% of students gained the marks for question 10 and question 11.

Questions 12-14

Students appeared to find questions 12 and 14 more accessible than question 13. The key to a successful answer to this type of question lies in deducing from all the details given. The vocabulary being tested may not be used with high frequency, but to achieve marks for questions targeting the higher grades students must be able to use higher linguistic skills and sum up all the information elicited. For instance, in response to question 13, it was not enough to state that Masud learnt Bengali by watching Bengali programmes on the TV, as the question was asking what most helped Masud to learn more Bengali vocabulary. Students needed to acknowledge the emboldened word 'most' in the question and to identify what the most helpful way for Masud to learn Bengali was from the utterance. Less than half of students achieved the mark for this question.

Questions 15-18

These were designed to be challenging questions and were handled quite well by students. This type of question (Positive + Negative) appeared to be the most difficult for students to pick out the correct answers in response to. On question 15, many students understood the reference to watching a newly released movie at the cinema as a positive comment, but did not also recognise spending lots of money on tickets as a negative view. Students should be reminded that, in such exercises, they are required to listen to the whole utterance in order to identify the overall opinion.

Question 19

Question 19 was designed to target the highest grades, with written answers in English required and two answers to be found in one recorded speech. It was an inferential type of question. There were some extremely good answers to this question which included all the details required. About 65% of students achieved the mark for question 19.1. On question 19.2, more students correctly identified the most important thing for a healthy living from the utterance they heard.

Question 20

This question was answered reasonably well. As was the case with question 19, this question targeted the highest grades and again there were some very good answers, with about 67% of students achieving two marks on question 20.1 and just over half of students achieving two marks on question 20.2. Students were not fazed by the length of the text; they were clearly able to understand the scenario and cope with the complex vocabulary.

Question 21

This question was relatively demanding, with students having to understand complex language and then use some inference to select the correct answers from the context of the importance of reading. Less than half of students selected all three correct options. This question tested detailed understanding of the language heard and there were some challenging distractors too.

Questions 22-24

There was a mixed response to these questions. Questions 22 and 24 were answered very well, with more than 95% of students achieving the marks for these. There was a relatively poor response to question 23 with many students appearing not to understand '*rashayonik drobber babohar (use of chemicals)*'. The word '*rashayonik (chemical)*' is part of the prescribed vocabulary, but more than half of the students did not answer correctly.

Questions 25-26

These questions were targeted at the higher grades and generally students answered them well: about 45% of students selected the two correct options for question 25 and 65% of students selected the two correct options for question 26. This question type tests students' ability to listen to Bengali informal dialogue and to ascertain attitudes; it is a commonly used question type, particularly at Higher tier. It is advised that students practise the vocabulary that is commonly used to express opinions in order to help them achieve marks on this type of question.

Section B**Questions 27-29**

These questions were overlap questions with the Foundation tier examination, and as expected students performed significantly better at Higher tier. On question 27, impressively about half of students selected both correct options, whereas at Foundation tier only a small proportion of students (less than 15%) achieved two marks on the same question. Similarly, on question 28 and 29 students performed more strongly than on the same questions in the Foundation tier examination, with around four fifths of students selecting the correct answers at Higher tier and less than half of students selecting the correct answers at Foundation tier.

Question 30

This question was targeting the highest grades and therefore many students appeared to find it challenging. This question was well-answered. A little more than half of the students managed to grasp the language well enough to understand the idea of marketing the national fish of Bangladesh.

Questions 31-32

Students appeared to find question 31 more accessible than question 32. About three fifths of students achieved both marks on question 31, whereas on question 32 about half of students selected both correct options. Many made the link between Fatima's abilities in different subjects, but fewer appeared to cope with the more demanding language whereby Shumi's habit of spending her pocket money was uttered. Overall, students are to be congratulated for their success in answering these questions.

Advice to students

- Students must make sure that they make their final answer clear to the examiners, by writing legibly and using the spaces provided.
- If students change their minds about an answer, the final choice must be clearly signalled to the examiner and be placed as near as possible to the appropriate space.
- Give precise answers avoiding lots of details.
- Attempt all questions.

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.