

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

General comments

On the whole, candidates performed very well this session. Most attempted both sections of the examination, regardless of their ability. The best candidates showed linguistic excellence in well-organised, logically-sequenced work in which paragraphing, varied vocabulary and apposite use of idioms and proverbs were put to effective use. A few candidates scored low marks as a result of weak or illogical presentation and structure and inconsistency. Some of the weaker candidates answered without referring to all the bullet points in **Section A**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question performed well. The linguistic quality of their work was good and they made appropriate reference to all bullet points without exceeding the word limit. Some candidates, however, addressed bullet points 1 and 2 at too great a length which inevitably led to them using up a large proportion of the number of words they were allowed to use. Such candidates often only touched very lightly or not all on the 3rd and 4th bullet points, which meant they lost marks for insufficient material. Candidates should take note that each bullet point has equal weighting and that every part of each bullet point must be referred to in their answer.

Question 2

Those who attempted this question did reasonably well. Quite a few candidates only addressed bullet point 3 in part and ignored the bullet point 4. Once again it was apparent that some candidates wrote an unnecessarily lengthy introduction to their letter. More often than not the content of such introductions bore no relation to the information asked for in the bullet points and could therefore not be credited.

Section B

Question 3

Those candidates who attempted this question usually did quite well. A few candidates used their excellent linguistic ability in a precise and constructive way to describe their dreams for the future. It was impressive to see that nearly all candidates presented relevant facts in a well-organised way, although some work somewhat lacked conviction and imagination. A small number of candidates wrote they had no aim in life, which, although it was a perfectly valid and potentially interesting stance, often led to rather aimless essays.

Question 4

Most candidates achieved a good and logical presentation in this task. A few candidates rather limited themselves to describing the typical, frequent power cuts in their local area without going into a great deal of depth. Examiners were looking for an overall picture of what life without electricity might be or may have been like. There were some very engaging scripts that gave detailed accounts of the history of electricity up until the modern era where life without this precious resource is almost beyond imagination. Such work usually included appropriate facts and rich detail, including relevant examples from day-to-day life. It was also good to see that most of these essays were concise and within the word limit.

Question 5

This was the most popular topic in this section. Almost all candidates got off to a good and imaginative start to the task and quite a few were able to sustain the high quality of their work in a logical and engaging manner throughout their essay. Others lost momentum halfway and their essays fizzled out towards the end. A fairly large number of candidates produced as the conclusion to their composition the rather hackneyed, sudden realisation that they had been asleep and that it had all been a bad dream. Candidates should perhaps be reminded that originality and imagination are considered important assets in this part of the examination.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02
Language Usage and Comprehension

General comments

All candidates attempted each exercise, although some seemed to have difficulties with time management. Nevertheless, many candidates were able to show their expertise in the language, and there were some considerably high scores.

In general, candidates are to be reminded that they must read the rubrics more carefully in order to be able to answer precisely as instructed. It was noticed that some candidates used different spellings for the same word, even within the same sentence or paragraph. Centres are advised to encourage their future candidates to use correct spelling and maintain consistency throughout the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section A1

Questions: 1-5

Most candidates did very well here, though quite a few lost marks for spelling mistakes, especially in **Questions 1** and **3**. It is imperative that each word is written correctly in order for a question to qualify for full marks. Systematic practice is the only way to achieve this.

Section A2

Questions: 6-10

A vast majority of candidates did very well in this section. Nearly all achieved full marks. A small number of candidates answered **Question 6** incorrectly, however.

Section A3

Questions: 11-15

Almost all candidates made good attempts to answer the questions in this exercise. Many candidates were able to use the double negative correctly in order to transform the positive sentences in **Questions 12** and **13**. Quite a few candidates, however, struggled to transform the sentences in **Questions 14** and **15** correctly. A few simply deleted the speech marks in **Question 14** in an attempt to transform direct speech into indirect speech. In doing so, they also ignored the requirement to change the tense in the original sentence in accordance with the tense used at the start of the sentence they were asked to complete. The weakest candidates could only reshuffle the words of the original sentence.

Section A4

Question: 16-25

While a small majority of the candidates did very well, other found it difficult to select the appropriate word to for each of the gaps, with some even appearing to have resorted to guesswork. Candidates are strongly advised to read the sentence carefully and, if necessary, more than once in order to find the word that fits best. Some candidates wrote the correct answer number next to an incorrect word, or vice versa. In order to avoid such problems in future, candidates ought to be reminded that they are only required to write down the correct answer number, as stated in the rubric for this exercise.

Section B5

Questions: 26-32

It was pleasing to note that the vast majority of the candidates did very well in this exercise. Only a small number of weak candidates had problems, particularly with **Questions 26** and **29**.

Section C6

Questions: 33-38

Most questions in this exercise were attempted, but with varying degrees of success. Quite a few candidates had difficulties with **Questions 33** and **38**. In **Question 33**, candidates were expected to describe the changes in Mr Tandon's life with regards to the railways. A significant number of candidates, however, wrote about the changes that had occurred in the Indian railway business in general, especially the changes that had happened in its catering services. In **Question 38**, quite a few candidates wrote about Mr. Tandon's work rather than his personality. A handful of candidates relied heavily on guessing and copied large swathes of text in response to nearly all of the questions. It is recommended that Centres remind their future candidates about the importance of reading the text and questions thoroughly before any answers are attempted, but also of the crucial importance of answering the questions in one's own words, as candidates are assessed on the linguistic quality of each response.

Section C7

Questions: 39-43

All candidates attempted this section. Some candidates came up with very good synonyms, showing their depth of knowledge of Bengali. Others gave multiple meanings for each word. It was left up to the Examiner to decide which of the word definitions was the correct one. It is therefore important that candidates are made aware that they have to provide the meaning of the word as it occurs in the text from which it is taken. Only contextually correct definitions can receive credit. In **Question 40** and **41**, quite a few candidates gave ambiguous synonyms. Centres are advised to encourage their candidates to read as often and as widely as possible so that they acquire the requisite word power with which they can tackle this exercise.