

SINHALA

Paper 3205/01
Composition

Key messages

To do well on this paper, candidates need to:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- communicate effectively and appropriately
- show an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing and sentence structure
- express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince
- demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
- understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary.

General comments

Overall, the performance of this year's candidates was commendable, with some candidates performing extremely well. Most compositions were interesting and well written.

In **Section A**, **Question (b)** was the most popular topic, and in **Section B**, all topics proved equally popular.

In a small number of cases, handwriting was so poor as to render parts of the composition illegible. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of using clear, legible handwriting.

A small number of candidates did not seem familiar with idiomatic usage of the Sinhala language and its basic grammar. The most common errors were in subject-verb agreement and spelling. Candidates should be encouraged to read widely in order to help consolidate spelling and grammar.

Candidates are advised to adhere to the recommended lengths as stated in the rubrics. Some compositions were too brief to merit the top marks; others were too long and did not score highly because they were repetitive and did not contain enough facts to substantiate the arguments put forward by the candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

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

In **Section A**, candidates generally wrote successfully on their chosen topic. Many candidates incorporated personal experience in their compositions, which demonstrated awareness of contemporary social issues.

There were some excellent responses to **Question (b)** ("Write a dialogue in which you discuss a school project with your friend."). The range of ideas used by candidates demonstrated that they had been well trained in writing dialogues.

Candidates who opted for **Question (a)** ("Write a letter to a friend describing a visit by a foreign president to your city/country.") often used personal experience to very good effect.

Section B – Essay

Candidates were asked to write one essay of approximately 200 words, from a choice of four topics.

Many of those who selected **Question (a)**, (“Imagine you are on a desert island. Describe what you can see and how you feel.”), displayed flair and imagination.

Those who answered **Question (b)**, (“Compose an essay entitled ‘The worst day of my life.’”), often showed creativity and originality.

There were some thoughtful responses to **Question (c)**, (“I can’t imagine my life without television.’ Discuss.”), as candidates wrote about their own experiences and the effects of television on children.

SINHALA

Paper 3205/02
Translation and
Reading Comprehension

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to make sure that they express themselves in clear, correct and concise language.

In addition, candidates need to:

- show that they can understand and adequately convey information
- understand, order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- evaluate information, select what is relevant to specific purposes and express it in their own words
- show a sense of audience and an awareness of register
- exercise control of appropriate structures
- understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary
- recognise implicit meaning and attitude
- demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing and sentence structure
- demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
- ensure that their handwriting is legible.

General comments

Overall, candidates' performance on this paper was of a high standard. It would be of benefit for candidates to receive more practice in writing Sinhala in order to help improve grammatical accuracy and to get a feel for idiom. Some common errors included the use of the feminine forms of verbs (such as *giyaaya* and *kalaaya*) where the masculine forms should have been used. Despite this, the overall quality of the written language was good.

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.

Some 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.

In a small number of 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 very well. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passage and provided accurate translations.

There were several excellent translations and only a small number of less successful attempts.

Question 2: Translation into Sinhala

Most candidates approached this translation well. Many made a good attempt to translate into clear, idiomatic Sinhala. There was only a small number of unsuccessful translations. Some candidates made appropriate and effective use of colloquial Sinhalese words and this demonstrated their familiarity with different levels of the language.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

There were many good attempts at this section, with several excellent ones. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the reading passage and provided suitable answers to the questions.