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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

SINHALA

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3205/01

Composition

General comments

Performance was generally satisfactory and commendable, at times even excellent, with a large number of candidates scoring high marks. Writing skills were of a high standard and most candidates appeared to be familiar with the basic grammar and idiomatic usage of Sinhala. Candidates must be encouraged to read extensively Sinhala books and newspapers as this will increase their vocabulary and range of expression. Nevertheless, candidates presented rich and interesting ideas, even if the level of expression could not always match these. Future candidates will need to be reminded to keep to the required length of the letter and essay, as the general tendency was to exceed it this year.

All candidates seemed to have been well-prepared for the examination. Nearly all followed the instructions given in the rubrics. A small number of candidates had weak knowledge of basic Sinhala grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

Question 1

- (a) *Letter*: This was the most popular choice, and all candidates correctly understood what was expected of them. As the subject of their letter, the majority of the candidates selected an international cricket match held in Colombo between Sri Lanka and India or Sri Lanka and the West Indies. They even gave the exact scores for each side as well as personal scores of some of their favourite players. A few candidates wrote about a rugby match or a netball match. One candidate wrote an interesting letter about her visit to Athens to see the Olympic Games last year, while another wrote about her visit to London to see the Wimbledon tennis tournament.
- (b) *Dialogue*: a small number of candidates wrote interesting and well-written dialogues. The dialogues were written in spoken Sinhala, which gave a natural flavour to the situation.
- (c) *Speech*: only a very small number attempted this topic, but, most of those who did lacked the required proper understanding of the topic to produce good essays.

Section B – Essay

Question 2

Four topics were given to choose from. These were as follows:

- (a) Write about a job you would like to do and give reasons why you would like to do it.
- (b) "School Days are the best days in your life". Discuss this statement.
- (c) What are the advantages of democracy? Can you think of any disadvantages?
- (d) Describe your favourite place and explain why you like it.

Overall performance was very good. Candidates stuck to the recommended length while a few exceeded it slightly. Those who chose to write about their school days wrote impressive, heart-felt essays. All expressed how much they enjoyed their time at school. Most candidates stated how grateful they were to their teachers.

The few candidates who selected topic (a) produced interesting essays. One candidate said his dream job would be to work as a pilot, while two candidates wrote about the advantages of being an accountant. Another wanted to become a jewellery merchant. Topic (d) was also selected by a few candidates who wrote with very good understanding of what was required. Nuwara Eliya is the favourite place of many candidates, while a few mentioned Kandy as their favourite place. One candidate wrote an interesting essay on a family house by the sea, which he likes to visit during holidays.

Conclusion

In general, the *Letter*, *Speech* and the *Essay* were well written. Linguistic mistakes were noted in many answers, however. Candidates need more practice in writing and need to be encouraged to read Sinhala books and newspapers in order to develop their vocabulary, grammatical awareness and writing skills.

Paper 3205/02

Translation and Comprehension

General comments

Overall, the performance was very good. Most candidates translated the Sinhala into English translation extremely well. The translation from English into Sinhala was also done very well, too, though not quite to the same high standard. Candidates performed well on the reading comprehension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Translation

Question 1

Translation from Sinhala into English

This was the most accessible question in the paper for most candidates, and they did not face any major difficulties or problems in understanding the passage and translating it. However, some key words in the Sinhala passage were translated inaccurately. For example, *bemma* is a very common and simple Sinhala word, the expected translation of which is 'wall', but some candidates gave different translations such as 'hill', 'tree', 'dam' and 'hump'. 'Tree' and 'hump' were not considered as correct translations. *Farangaya* was also translated in different ways. Some candidates correctly rendered it into English as 'race', but others translated it as 'competition', which was accepted as correct. Apart from a few words such as these, none of the other words troubled the candidates. Many candidates scored full marks.

Question 2

Translation from English into Sinhala

Overall performance was commendable. Most candidates understood the passage well. Nevertheless, they could not always score full marks because of grammatical errors in their Sinhala and careless writing. A few candidates produced excellent translations for which they were awarded full marks.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

The standard of Comprehension was excellent. Most candidates appeared to have understood the passage correctly, but some of them answered a few questions incorrectly. None of the candidates were successful in scoring full marks for this section. **Questions 3, 7 and 10** were particularly difficult for most candidates. In the last question, which asked them to give two reasons as to why New Year is so important to Sri Lanka, none of the candidates were able to give two acceptable reasons.

Conclusion

The overall performance of candidates in both the papers was of a high standard, encouraging and commendable. Nevertheless, candidates must pay more attention to correct spelling of Sinhala words and the basic grammar of the language. Important matters in grammar such as agreement of subject and verb and word order should be learned and applied in the writing of letters and essays. Candidates seemed to have enjoyed writing these two papers, which can only have boosted their performance.