

SINHALA

Paper 3205/01

Composition

General comments

In general, the performance of candidates was of a good standard. A few performed extremely well. Most candidates were fluent and well-trained in writing Sinhala, while a very small number misspelled words and neglected basic rules of grammar.

Most of the candidates were well prepared for the format of this examination and followed the instructions given on the paper carefully. However, infringement of the rubric, such as exceeding the recommended length for the letter and the essay occurred in the case of a small number of candidates. All candidates selected one topic only from each Section, according to instructions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A - Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech.

Candidates were given a choice of three topics.

All three topics were almost equally popular. Some candidates used their own experiences for writing a letter to the local transport authority. Typical and common problems of the public transport system in Sri Lanka facing the commuters were pointed out in these compositions. The candidates who chose to write a report on the improvement of the local environment wrote interesting reports, showing their awareness and understanding of this topical issue. Those who opted to write the dialogue used their experiences as eye-witnesses to similar incidents and, thus, produced impressive dialogues.

Section B - Essay

Of the four topics, (c) 'Birds of a feather flock together' was only selected by a very small number of candidates. The most popular topic was (a) 'Which is your favourite festival and why do you like it?' Most of the candidates mentioned the Sinhala New Year festival as their favourite, and explained well why they liked it. Some candidates who were from a non-Sinhala backgrounds also selected this as their favourite festival and gave reasons for choosing it over the famous festivals of their religions or communities. Apart from this topic, some wrote on the topic of the age until which they thought schooling should be compulsory. The candidates who wrote their essay on this topic showed good understanding of the subject and thought that every child should attend school until the age of 18.

Except for some grammatical and spelling errors, the standard of the essays was satisfactory to very good.

A small number of candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the neatness of their writing and could have performed much better had they been more attentive to it as it was unclear what some of their sentences meant.

Overall, content was of a high standard, considering the age of the candidates. Most used their personal experiences rather than repeating stereotyped essays picked up from text books or exam guides.

SINHALA

Paper 3205/02

Translation and Comprehension

General comments

The overall performance was very good. Most candidates translated the two passages well and accurately. However, as is usually the case, **Section B** proved to be more challenging for most candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A - Translation

Most candidates scored full marks for **Question 1**, while some almost scored full marks for **Question 2** as well. Only one or two candidates could not translate "*mudu molok*" (gently) correctly in the last sentence in the first passage.

1 Translation from Sinhala into English

Candidates had no major difficulties with this passage. Understanding of the passage, on the whole, was therefore excellent.

2 Translation from English into Sinhala

Most candidates performed well. Understanding of the passage and the English used in it were of a good standard. The English word 'hello' was rendered in Sinhala in different ways by the candidates. Although rendered in spoken Sinhala as 'hallo' or 'hello', some candidates attempted to find Sinhala equivalents such as *aayubovan* or *suba udeesanak*, which Examiners found to be a positive approach to translation. Only a few candidates were unable to translate the term 'low season' correctly.

Section B - Comprehension.

Performance, in general, was satisfactory to good. Candidates appeared to have enjoyed reading this passage, as it was about the popular Sri Lankan cricketer Muralitharan. They understood the passage well and most of them scored well in this section as a result. However, more attention should be paid to spelling, basic rules of grammar and idiom in written Sinhala. Candidates must be encouraged to read Sinhala books as well as good magazines and newspapers to increase their vocabulary and enhance their style.