General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011

Bengali **46354**

(Specification 4635)

Unit 4: Writing

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: aqa.org.uk

General Remarks: Specification

This year was the first examination of the new specification and students were assessed according to new assessment criteria. All students attempted a single tier examination worth 50 marks and 25% of the total marks. In this component students were expected to write, in Bengali:

- a short list in order to demonstrate their ability to write single words in Bengali (Question 1).

- a continuous piece of writing from a stimulus in Bengali and rubrics in English. This question offered the students the opportunity to use a variety of structures, using at least two time frames. They also had an opportunity to express personal opinion, giving reasons. (Question 2).

- a continuous piece of writing from a stimulus in Bengali and rubrics in English. This question offered the students the opportunity to write descriptively and imaginatively, expressing and explaining ideas and points of view, using structures in three time frames (Question 3).

- Students were offered a choice of Contexts and Purposes for Question 2 and Question 3. Question 2(a) was set from the context Lifestyle; Question 2(b) from Work and Education. Students had to attempt **either** Question 2(a) **or** Question 2(b). Question 3(a) was set from the context Leisure; Question 3(b) was set from Home and Local Environment. Students had to attempt **either** Question 3(a) **or** Question 3(b).

General Remarks: Student Performance

This single tier paper proved more challenging for less able students compared with other components. There were instances where questions were left totally blank or written in English. It was pleasing to see that a good number of students attempted all three questions, although the quality of their response was varied. There were occasions where students expressed opinions with appropriate reasons. It was also evident that a number of students performed better in Question 3 compared with Question 2. A pleasing number of students scored good Content marks due to a sound grasp of the main content of both questions. Fewer marks were awarded for Range and Accuracy of Language due to a heavy reliance on dialectical expressions, as well as reluctance in using required time frames.

Question 1

In this question students were expected to complete a list of items pupils carry in their school bag and an example was given. It was pleasing to see that a good number of students scored the full two marks. However, there were instances where this question was left totally blank or answered in English, due to the fact that students either did not read the instructions on the front page or they appeared unable to produce even a single word in Bengali.

Question 2(a)

In this question, students were expected to express their opinions/points of view, responding to the stimulus blog about unhealthy living. Alternatively, they were able to write about their own ideas. This resulted in a number of students scoring good marks for Content. However, they were reluctant to use the required time frames and scored fewer marks for Range of Language. There were wide variations in students' ability to express themselves and they
consequently scored fewer marks for Accuracy. There were, however, some pleasing performances on this question.

Question 2(b)

This question was about school clubs and facilities. Both questions were of a similar standard. Similar issues occurred in Question 2(b) as in Question 2(a).

Question 2(b) was a popular option but those who attempted Question 2(a) scored comparatively better marks. The majority of students found Question 2(b) more accessible and were able to write about their school clubs and concerns, though at varied levels of ability. Many students grasped the contexts well and expressed their points of view, appropriately displaying varied structures.

Question 3

Students were also offered a choice here, as in Question 2.

Question 3(a)

In this question students were expected to express their opinions/points of view in responding to the stimulus about pastimes and concerns. Alternatively, they were able to write about their own ideas. This again resulted in a number of students scoring good marks for Content. However, they were reluctant to use the required time frames and scored fewer marks for Range of Language. There were wide variations in students' ability to express themselves and they consequently scored fewer marks for Accuracy.

Question 3(b)

This was more popular than Question 3(a), as the majority of students found it more accessible to write about their home and to express opinions about their future home. Students were offered the opportunity to write about their own ideas in both Question 2 and Question 3 but they often seemed reluctant to use the required time frames. Also, due to the heavy influence of dialectical expressions, some students gained fewer marks for Range of Language and Accuracy.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion

Guidance Notes for Examiners

The following guidance, provided to examiners during the marking period, is reproduced below for information.

1.   Principles of marking

1.1   All marking must be done in accordance with the published criteria for assessment.

1.2   The stress is on effective communication. Credit should be given for the language successfully conveying the target message without ambiguity.

1.3   In Questions 2 and 3 there is no need to count the number of words used to answer each question. The sole criterion is completion of the two tasks.

2   Mechanics of Marking

2.1   Question 1 Content

Marks	Content
0	No understandable words
1	1-2 words conveyed without ambiguity
2	3-4 words conveyed without ambiguity

2.2   Question 2 - Suggested content points are not compulsory. No automatic penalty can be applied if candidates choose not to address these particular points in their answer.

2.3   Question 3 – Suggested points are not compulsory.   No automatic penalty can be applied if students choose not to address those particular points in their answer.

2.4   Assessment Criteria for Questions 2 and 3

Content	
Marks	**Criteria**
13-14	**Very Good** Fully relevant and detailed response to the task. Sound ability to convey information clearly, express and explain ideas and points of view. Well organised structure.
10-12	**Good** Mostly relevant response to the task and shows ability to convey a lot of information clearly, express and explain ideas and points of view.
7-9	**Sufficient** Response to the task is generally relevant with quite a lot of information clearly communicated. Points of view are expressed and ideas are developed.
4-6	**Limited** Limited response to the task with some relevant information conveyed. Simple opinions are expressed and there is some development of basic ideas.
1-3	**Poor** Very limited response to the task with little relevant information conveyed. No real structure.
0	The answer shows no relevance to the task set. A zero score will automatically result in a zero score for the answer as a whole.

Range of Language	
Mark	**Criteria**
5	Wide variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures. More complex sentences are handled with confidence and verb tenses are used successfully.
4	Good variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures used. More complex sentences are attempted and are often successful.
3	Some variety of vocabulary and structures used. Including attempts at longer sentences using appropriate linking words which are sometimes successful.
2	Vocabulary is appropriate to the basic needs of the task and structures are mostly simple.
1	Inappropriate vocabulary with little understanding of language structure.
0	No language produced which is worthy of credit.

Accuracy	
Mark	**Criteria**
5	Largely accurate, although there may still be some errors especially in attempts at more complex sentences. Verbs and tense formations are secure.
4	Generally accurate with errors occurring in attempts at more complex sentences. Verb and tense formations are usually correct.
3	More accurate than inaccurate. Verb forms and tense formations are sometimes unsuccessful. The intended meaning is clear.
2	Many errors which often impede communication. Verb forms are rarely accurate.
1	Limited understanding of the most basic linguistic structures. Frequent errors regularly impede communication.
0	No language produced which is worthy of credit.

2.5   The mark awarded for Range of Language must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content. (See table below)

2.6   The mark awarded for Accuracy must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content. (See table below)

2.7   If a mark is awarded for Content, this will inevitably lead to the award of a mark for Range of Language and for Accuracy. (See table below)

2.8   If a mark of zero is awarded for Content, this will automatically result in a zero score for Range of Language and for Accuracy. (See table below)

2.9

Content	Marks for each of Range of Language and Accuracy
0	0
1-3	1-2
4-6	1-3
7-9	1-4
10-12	1-5
13-14	1-5

2.10   To score a mark of 5 for Range of Language, the candidate needs to use successfully a minimum of two verb tenses.