

# GCSE

# BENGALI

Unit 4 Writing  
Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

This was the fourth year of the current specification and the demands of the test were comparable with previous years. As in the last three series, there were three questions to answer: Question 1 (a short list), and Questions 2 and 3 where students had a choice of topics and were required to produce longer answers. Similar to last year, some students were totally unaware of the basic requirements of the examination and wrote answers to all questions: 1, 2(a), 2(b), 3(a) and 3(b).

Students should be reminded that in Questions 2 and 3, the bullet points are not prescriptive – they are there to guide and help the student to formulate an appropriate response to the whole task. To obtain higher marks for Question 2, students had to use a variety of grammatical structures (referring to two tenses) and express their personal opinions. In Question 3, students were required to write descriptively or imaginatively, expressing and explaining ideas and points of view. As in Question 2, they had to use a variety of grammar structures, including two tenses. The stimuli were written in Bengali and the suggested content points were in English. Students are required to include an opinion to obtain 4 Content marks. Highest marks were awarded to those students who used a range of vocabulary, formed well-developed sentences with a range of subordinate clauses, made reference to past, present and future events and gave personal opinions with justification. The standard of written Bengali in the examination was fairly high, however it has to be noted that using regional dialects is increasing year on year.

Students who used English vocabulary, repetitions and who confused tenses and mismatched verb forms, also failed to gain high marks. However, as in previous years, there were a few students who did not have a sufficient command of English to understand the instructions. Students who lacked appropriate examination technique clearly lacked the skills to deal with the requirements of the examination. Some students, whilst clearly understanding what was being asked of them, produced poorly punctuated pieces of work, and very poor spelling. There were also some very untidy and sometimes barely legible scripts which made scrutiny difficult for the examiners. On the other hand, the more able students found the paper well within their reach and attempted the questions very well. The answers provided by the majority of students were well structured and to the point.

## Question 1

Most students obtained the two marks allocated to this question. In this question, students were asked to list four types of **activities** they do in their spare-time. This question was very well answered and the majority of students did not face any difficulty in writing the names of four spare-time activities in Bengali. Full credit was given to students even if there were some spelling mistakes in their answers. Some of the popular correct answers were: সঁাতার করা, খেলাধুলা করা, গল্প করা, বাগান করা. A small number of students wrote English words in Bengali such as রিডিং, which were not credited. Almost all students scored full marks for this question.

## Question 2 – General comments

Students had a choice of topics. They could either choose writing about Lifestyle (personal relationships) in Question 2(a) or Work and Education (school, future plans) in Question 2(b). This question was not well done by less able students as they struggled to display the appropriate items of vocabulary and phrases to logically express their opinion/s and points of view. Compared with Question 2(a), Question 2(b) was answered well: writing about school and future plans seemed to be more popular and enjoyable than writing about family relationships. Although not compulsory, the suggested bullet points were designed to help students express points of view, which were required for accessing marks in the higher bands for Content. It should be stressed that marks given for Range of Language and Accuracy are related directly to the mark awarded for Content.

**Question 2(a)**

In this question, students were expected to express their opinions/points of view in response to the stimulus of a boy's concerns regarding his lifestyle and relationship with his parents. The students' answers were split into two categories. There were either direct replies to the letter (in the stimulus), or reply letters based on the suggested points. This question proved challenging for less able students due to their lack of use of appropriate items of vocabulary and expressions. Similar to last year, many answers contained simple statements written in very simple language and lacking details, variety and confidence eg, আমি বাবা-মা সতে বারা জাই; তমি বাবা-মার কতা সুন; তমি কেলাদলুা কর; বনদ সাত ফন কতা বল, সময় বাল জাবেগি. Due to the fact that most of these answers were written using a single tense and did not contain any opinions, they were not awarded high marks for Content and hence even lower marks for Range of Language and Accuracy. On the other hand, many students managed to write interesting pieces, emphasising the importance of good, family relationships. The guidelines provided in the bullet points were not prescriptive as the students were given a choice to display their own ideas on the theme. This resulted in a number of students scoring high marks for Content. However, a number of students were reluctant to use appropriate tenses and inappropriate language manipulation, displaying inappropriate verb forms/verb endings and so scored fewer marks in Range of Language. Quite a few responses were direct replies to the stimulus and many responses contained simple statements written in very simple language, lacking a variety of structures. However, it was good to see that more able students handled the response well as they applied exam techniques fairly well. Unfortunately though, in some of the expressions used by students, there was heavy reliance on the regional dialect, and so this affected their marks for Accuracy.

**Question 2(b)**

This question required students to write an email of reply to a friend who asked for information about the student's current school, likes and dislikes, future plans and job prospects after GCSE examinations. Both questions 2(a) and 2(b) were of an equal standard. Based on the content of answers and the number of students who chose this question, one might conclude that the subject of school and future plans was rather accessible for many students. The guidelines provided in the bullet points were not prescriptive as the students were given a choice to display their own ideas on the theme. This resulted in a number of students scoring high marks for Content. However, a number of students were reluctant to use a range of structures and used inappropriate language manipulation by displaying inappropriate verb forms/verb endings and word order and so scored fewer marks for Range of Language. It was good to see that able students handled the response well and applied exam techniques fairly well.

However, there were often wide variations in students' expressions and, on occasion, heavy reliance on the regional dialect, and so this affected their marks for Accuracy. Those who chose this question provided more developed answers including points of view and explanations. More able students took the opportunity to express likes and dislikes about their current school, made comparisons with their previous school; they also were able to suggest possible improvements and conveyed ways to make school life enjoyable. These students therefore scored in the higher band of marks, e.g., আমার মনে হয় যে, জিসিএসইর পর কাজ করা ঠিক না কারণ লেখাপড়া হচ্ছে আমাদের জন্য খুব গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। ভালো কাজ করার জন্য উচ্চ শিক্ষিত হতে হবে।

**Question 3 - General comments**

Students had a choice of topics. They could either choose to write a response to comments on Leisure (holidays) for Question 3(a), or on Home and Environment (home and local area) for Question 3(b).

Although this question is aimed at the more able students, almost all students attempted it with some degree of success. Again, highest marks were obtained by those students who used a range of vocabulary, formed well-developed sentences with a range of subordinate clauses, made reference to past, present and/or future events and gave personal opinions with justification.

**Question 3(a)**

In Question 3(a), students were expected to express their opinions/points of view in responding to the stimulus about holiday planning within the context of Leisure. Here as well, the guidelines provided in the bullet points were not prescriptive as the students were given a choice to display their own ideas on the theme. This again resulted in a number of students scoring high marks for Content. However, the reluctance to use the appropriate tenses and frequent mismatching of verb forms and verb endings led students to score fewer marks in Range of Language. It was good though to see that more able students handled the response well, as they applied exam techniques fairly well. A number of students also made a good effort to express personal opinions and justify them.

However, heavy reliance on the regional dialect and major spelling errors as well as the use of wrong verbs led students to score fewer marks for Content as well as for Range of Language and Accuracy.

**Question 3(b)**

This question produced the best answers. Most answers were descriptive and detailed enough to be awarded high marks for Content. Students seemed to have enjoyed writing about home and the neighbourhood. They also seemed to enjoy writing about the ways to achieve a cleaner local environment including their points of view.

Less able students struggled to respond to this question and, on occasion, lifted the stimulus heavily and were reluctant to explore own their ideas on the topic of home and local area. As students were offered a choice to display their own ideas, they often felt reluctant to use the appropriate time frames eg, আমি ---- এলাকায় থাকি। এর আগে আমি ---এলাকায় থাকতাম, কিন্তু আমাদের বাসাটা খুব ছোট ছিলো তাই গত বছর এখানে এসেছি। এখনকার বাড়িটা বেশ বড় আর নতুন। আমার এখানে শপিং সেন্টার কাছে। পার্ক ও আছে। স্কুলের পরে আমি জিমে যাই আর খেলি। এখন সময় পাই না তবে পরীক্ষার পরে বন্ধুরা মিলে সবার বাড়ির সামনে গাছ লাগাবো আর পরিবেশ উন্নত করবো।

It was also evident that due to the heavy reliance on dialectical expressions, frequent spelling errors and frequent mismatching of verbs, less able students scored low marks for Content as well as 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 our Website.

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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](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)