

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

Key messages

In order to do well on this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can:

- express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- communicate effectively and appropriately
- demonstrate adequate control of paragraphing, vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
- show a sense of audience and an awareness of register and style in both formal and informal situations.

General comments

Candidates' overall performance was quite good. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer both parts of the question paper as required. Most candidates made a consistent effort to address the specific demands of their chosen questions. An increased number of candidates produced outstanding work and gained very high marks.

Where candidates performed less well, it was often because they had omitted to cover certain parts of a question. Quite a few candidates left out entire bullet points in their responses in *Section A*. There were also frequent instances of candidates crossing out parts of their work at random for the sake of word count. This practice is to be discouraged, as in some cases candidates deleted key points that would have gained credit. In *Section B*, there were a few cases of candidates creating their own essay title instead of answering one of the given questions.

Accuracy of language was an area for improvement in many performances. Spelling errors and non-standard language were very often seen even in the work of candidates who otherwise demonstrated adequate cultural knowledge and linguistic ability. Words and phrases like আসা করি, অনুষ্ঠান হয়েছিলো, আমাকে বল, আমি জানতামনা, যায়গায়, বাসাই কেও নাই, উত্তর দাওয়া লাগবে, হাতে নাওয়ার জন্য, ক্লান্ততা পাই, উত্তর দেই নেই, দাদু চিল্লাচিল্লি কর্তে, টিবিতে ফোন দিলাম, ওইখানে যেয়ে দেখি, মেলাই জবার জল, ঠিক আছে, কার্ডক্রম, সব কষ্টের দুঃস্ব মিটে জাই are examples of unsatisfactory language appearing in candidates' responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

A large number of candidates narrated their experience of a 'Reality show' in a very realistic way. However, there were occasional slips in their narration especially in response to particular bullet points. Those who referred to all parts of the bullet points and presented their work in paragraphs, using good language and appropriate punctuation, gained relatively high scores. A small minority of candidates misinterpreted the topic and instead described a football match or a family celebration. There were some inappropriate attempts to translate word-for-word from English, for example এই প্রতিযোগিতায় আমি প্রথম এসেছি (I came first in this competition) or এই শো -তে আমি যোগ নিলাম (I took part in this show).

Most candidates referred to the first and second bullet points reasonably well but the third and fourth bullet points were less well done. For the third bullet point, candidates needed to give some description of the

most challenging phase or সবচেয়ে কঠিন ধাপটির সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা but some candidates mentioned only one part of that phase or when it happened. To gain the full three marks available, candidates were expected to expand on this information.

In response to the fourth bullet point, a significant number of candidates frequently used colloquial language rather than standard Bengali: for example, তুমিও এইরকম শোতে যোগ দিতে পারবা, নিয়মিত বই পড়বা, এই শো -এর খবর রাখবা, which should have been written as পারবে, পড়বে, খবর রাখবে/রেখো। Some candidates came up with a few suggestions that were not necessarily inspiring or encouraging for their friend. Answers to the fourth bullet point were expected to include three concrete suggestions or pieces of advice that would encourage or inspire the friend to participate in a similar show. To gain high marks, it is imperative that candidates read the prompt carefully and address all parts.

Question 2

This question was about a flyover proposed to be built in the candidate's local area. Most candidates referred to the bullet points as required. In response to the first bullet point, phrases such as প্রস্তাবিত সেতুটি আরামবাগ থেকে শুরুয়ে রামপুরায় গিয়ে শেষ হবে, নির্মাণকাজ শেষ হতে প্রায় একবছরের মতো সময় লাগবে were seen, which were satisfactory to score the marks. The second bullet point required three pieces of information about the damaging effect to the area after the flyover has been built. Some candidates wrote about air pollution, noise pollution and increasing crime in the area. Better answers mentioned, for example, the demolition of important buildings and facilities such as libraries, schools, shopping malls or sporting clubs, the loss of playing fields or local markets. This linked in well with the information candidates gave for the third bullet point which required three pieces of information about inconveniences for residents. Where candidates mentioned only the environmental issues during the construction work for the second bullet point, their response to the third bullet point was rather inconsistent.

Responses to the fourth bullet point were variable. A few candidates came up with some unrealistic suggestions such as scrapping the idea of the flyover or building it in another town, although the question clearly states that the City Corporation had decided to build it in this particular area. Therefore, suggestions like এই সেতুটি অন্যখানে নির্মাণ করা হোক, এই এলাকার উপর দিয়ে ভারী যানবাহন চলাচল নিষিদ্ধ করলে কোনো উড়াল সেতুর দরকার হবে না, উড়াল সেতুর বদলে নতুন রাস্তা তৈরি করা হোক, এই এলাকার রাস্তা গুলো আরও চওড়া করা হোক could not be considered as valid. Candidates should be advised to answer each bullet point with due regard to the context given in the question.

Question 3

Candidates were required to write an essay on an evening with heavy rainfall. There were some very strong responses with good language, realistic portrayal of a rainy evening and relevant cultural references. Some candidates started their essay with well-known verses of Tagore such as নীল নবমানে আষাঢ়গগনে তিল ঠাঁই আর নাহিরে, ওগো আজ তোরা যাস নে ঘরের বাহিরে... which were quite relevant in this context. There were also frequent references to ঝালমুড়ি আর গরম চা, পরে খিচুড়ি আর মাংসের ভূনা, খিচুড়ি আর ইলিশ মাছ ভাজা and these gave originality to candidates' work. For this question, candidates were expected to write about a particular evening with continuous rainfall. Some candidates, however, wrote a stereotypical essay just describing what happens during typical rainy evenings. A few candidates narrated the rainy season or a rainy day or simply an evening but without any reference to rain. A small number of candidates narrated an evening of celebration such as বর্ষবরণ সন্ধ্যা which was not appropriate.

Question 4

For this question, candidates were expected to write about the abuse of science. Most candidates presented their work with some authentic references to the abuse of science and its impact on the human race/natural world. Candidates in this category scored relatively high marks. A few candidates simply wrote a comparative study of the pros and cons of science such as বিজ্ঞান আমাদের জীবনে আশীর্বাদ না অভিশাপ; some others wrote a long essay about the contribution of science in our life with the title আমাদের জীবনে বিজ্ঞানের অবদান, which was not relevant. To ensure they give a relevant response to the question, candidates are advised to read the essay title carefully before starting to write their essay.

Question 5

This question asked candidates to write an essay on a book fair they have visited. There were some responses in which candidates wrote about their personal experience of a particular book fair, the arrangements, any memorable events, the different stalls, the experience of meeting their favourite author, buying books, their feelings and opinions, and some suggestions for a better arrangement. Sentences like হঠাৎ দেখি আমার প্রিয় লেখক মুহাম্মদ জাফর ইকবাল একটি স্টলের সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে, আমি তাঁর কাছ থেকে স্বাক্ষর নিলাম, বিভিন্ন বয়সের লোকজন বইমেলায় ভীড় করে, সেখানে দেখলাম বই বেচাকেনার পাশাপাশি সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানেরও আয়োজন রয়েছে, এবারের বইমেলাটি আমি কখনোই ভুলব না all gave originality to their work and helped to achieve high scores. A small number of candidates narrated a book fair but omitted to mention their personal experience or what they had witnessed, whilst the question clearly states তোমার দেখা একটি বইমেলা. They scored less well as a result. Sentences like বইমেলায় অনেক ধরণের বই বিক্রি হয়, এই মেলা সকাল থেকে সন্ধ্যা পর্যন্ত চলে, সেখানে খাবার দোকানও থাকে are merely standard characteristics of any book fair and do not demonstrate candidates' own observations or personal experience. To ensure that their response meets the requirements of the question, candidates are strongly advised to read the question carefully and plan the scenario before beginning to write.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02
Language Usage and 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
- 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

The majority of candidates completed the paper within the time allowed. Most candidates attempted all the questions. Some performances were outstanding. There were a number of examples of candidates who could have achieved a better result if they had been more familiar with the required examination techniques for this paper. Generally speaking, able candidates coped well with the grammatical tasks and comprehension questions, although the quality of performance varied widely. The quality of candidates' written Bengali was also very variable. At the lowest end of the range, there were some candidates who struggled to write answers in their own words. Some candidates were unable to score marks in **Section C6** as they simply copied out sections of the reading comprehension passage in answer to the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Exercise A1

This exercise comprised the task of separating five given words. In general, candidates found the task quite straightforward apart from **Questions 1 and 3**, where a substantial number of candidates struggled to separate the words correctly. Many candidates answered at least three questions successfully; however, only the strongest candidates scored full marks in this exercise.

Exercise A2

This exercise comprised a gap filling task. Candidates were required to select the appropriate idiom, proverb or word-pair to fill the gap in each sentence. The majority of candidates were able to answer the questions correctly, though there were instances where a number of candidates had difficulty selecting the correct option. **Question 9** in particular proved to be challenging to less able candidates, who often selected the incorrect option to fill the gap in this sentence. Only the strongest candidates achieved full marks, but many candidates achieved a mark of 8 out of 10.

Exercise A3

This was a sentence transformation exercise. Candidates were required to transform the given sentence based on cues provided either at the beginning or at the end. Most candidates, including the less able, generally responded well, although minor spelling mistakes were frequently seen. A number of candidates gave unsuccessful answers to **Question 15**. This was because candidates often missed out the appropriate manipulation of the phrase 'next Wednesday' from the reported speech to the indirect speech. Nevertheless, in **Exercise A3** as a whole, most candidates achieved quite high scores.

Exercise A4

Most candidates found this exercise quite accessible. Many candidates scored 16 marks or higher. Questions that weaker candidates found more challenging were **24** and **25**.

Section B

Exercise B5 (MCQ comprehension)

Candidates performed well in this exercise. All candidates were able to answer at least one question correctly, and many candidates scored full marks.

Less able candidates often struggled to choose the correct option (3) to answer **Question 27**; they tended to choose option (2) instead. Similarly, in **Question 28**, quite a few candidates chose option (4) whereas the correct answer was option (2).

Section C

Exercise C6 (OE comprehension)

This exercise comprised a reading comprehension passage followed by open-ended comprehension questions. Many candidates found this exercise relatively challenging. In particular, although some candidates manipulated the language of the text very skilfully, there were many candidates who tried to lift answers from the text instead of writing answers in their own words. A wide range of marks were scored. Less able candidates found **Questions 34, 35** and **38** most difficult. Many candidates mixed up the answers for **Questions 34** and **35**. Many candidates struggled to find four details to answer **Question 38** and instead they lifted heavily from the passage without showing comprehension. Even in performances that showed good reading comprehension skills, many errors of grammar and syntax were seen.

Exercise C7 (Vocabulary)

Here candidates were expected to give the meaning of five specified words from the comprehension text. Most candidates were able to answer at least some of the questions successfully. However, candidates often struggled to write down correct meanings for **Questions 39** and **43**. Many candidates did not seem to be familiar with the words tested in these two questions: there were frequent examples of guesswork in candidates' responses. Often the answers given were unrelated to the actual meaning of the words. To improve performance in this exercise, it is recommended that candidates read widely to gain familiarity with the meanings of words in different contexts.