

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE O Level

GCE O Level Bengali (7606)

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Content

O'Level Benglai 7606 Examiner's Report	01
Statistics	03

O'Level Bengali 7606

General comments

About 2004 candidates were entered for the GCE O Level Bengali examination in June 2007 mostly from existing centres. The majority of candidates found the paper accessible. A good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks which was evident while monitoring candidates' marks item by item. The demands of the paper is generally comparable with June 2006 Paper.

Candidates had every opportunity to produce good and proper translations. Some key words and phrases helped to differentiate between good and adequate performance of the candidates. Also a number of outstanding pieces of translations including examples of continuous pieces of writings were evident from a number of items.

The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved though on occasion, candidates' performances were not as good as expected due to their lack of tense concepts, grammatical and also appropriate transmission skills.

Question 1

Q1 had addressed a short story of a grandma who often forgets what and where she keeps things. Her belongings may not seem important but if they ever go missing then there is a state of chaos in the house. She managed to prove though that in spite of her forgetfulness, she could be the best grandma in the world.

The stronger candidates were able to translate the Bengali passage into English with only a few spelling mistakes and with the use of correct grammatical structures, and so scored high marks. It was also pleasing to see that the majority of the candidates transmitted the passage fairly accurately using simple language with appropriate use of tense. However, the weaker candidates often struggled to translate some words and structures such as ভুলোমনা, হৈ চৈ, তন্নতন্ন, আতঙ্কিত, নারী সম্মেলন, স্বস্তির নিশ্বাস and বেমালুম. As such, proper transfer of those words were often unsuccessful and quite a few candidates used the transliteration of these words instead. The average score recorded for this question was 17/18.

Question 2

This passage was about the Pre Colonial Bengal Textiles. As compared to Q1, this passage was a bit more difficult for weaker candidates and so resulted in transliterating a number of words into Bengali. Overall, candidates' performances indicated that the majority do not have a good grasp of the historical background of Bengal textile, e.g., Dhaka Muslin. Weaker candidates often struggled to transmit words such as, pre-colonial, provincial, fabrics, patronage, weavers, yards and ultimate. The stronger candidates, although finding the text challenging, performed the translation task in standard Bengali with a good flow. It was also noted that on occasion the time sequence and the tense concept were not transmitted appropriately. However, on the whole, candidates performed quite successfully, displaying good literacy skills in both languages. The average score recorded for this question was 16/17.

Question 3

It is quite pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to translate all five sentences where they were tested on specific grammar points. Q3(a), Q3(b), Q3(d) and Q3(e) were pretty straight forward and very well responded by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates often struggled transmitting the appropriate meaning of **smoke** and **see off**. The average score recorded for this question was 13/14.

Question 4

Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures followed by comparisons personal opinions and reactions, so scored good marks. However, on occasions, candidates overlooked the main focus of the content. Instead, they wrote about pleasure in reading books and so scored less marks than expected. There were occasions where candidates started with long irrelevant introductions. Some scripts also contained repetitions. Amongst the essay options, Q4c was quite popular. But the letter option, i.e, Q4d was the most answered. Again, there was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis and opinion. Unfortunately, this was not evident amongst average candidates. On the whole, the responses were mainly descriptive. In addition, not many candidates used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases. The manipulation of languages was very basic on occasions. The use of syntax and wrong use of tenses gave the impression that Bengali is the second language for a number of candidates, so they scored less than expected. On the other hand, candidates who fulfilled these criteria and displayed a coherent piece of writing obviously scored the top range marks. Amongst the essay options, Q4a was the least popular. But those who attempted this scored very good marks. The average score recorded for this question was 23/24 and to sum up candidates overall performances in this question were better than expected. Centres are requested to incorporate:

- a range of structures, vocabulary
- knowledge of orthography
- knowledge of time concepts
- appropriate connectives to display a good flow and coherence
- opinion/s, comparisons and analysis of facts and the main focus in preparing candidates for the examination.

Conclusion

On the whole, this paper appeared to be fair and well balanced. The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved though on occasion, candidates' performances were not as good as expected due to their lack of tense concepts, grammatical as well as appropriate transmission skills.

Statistics

Bengali 7606

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest Mark for award of grade	68	61	54	49	41

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