

Examiners' Report January 2009

O level

O level Bengali (7606)

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General comments

About 1254 candidates were entered for the GCE O Level Bengali examination in January 2009 mostly from the existing centres. The majority of candidates found the paper accessible. A good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks in the paper. The demand of the paper is generally comparable with January 2008 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 occasions, candidates' performances were not as good as expected due to their lack of tense concepts, knowledge of grammar and also appropriate transmission skills.

Question 1

The stronger candidates were able to transmit the major key ideas from the Bengali passage into English with only a few spelling mistakes. They also applied the use of correct grammatical structures and the appropriate use of tense. However, the weaker candidates often struggled to translate some words and phrases such as কুটির শিল্প, নিবিড়ভাবে, পণ্যদ্রব্য, শিল্পগুণে, লোকশিল্প, নকশী কাঁথা, রঙ-বেরঙের সূতার বিচিত্র নকশা তোলা কাঁথা সেলাইয়ের রেওয়াজ, পানের বাটা পাশে নিয়ে পা মেলে বসতো, বেত দিয়ে তৈরী শীতলপাটি, মৌলিক বৈশিষ্ট, সুদক্ষ কারিগর, হাতির দাঁতের, সুপরিষ্কৃত উপায়ে, রুচিশীল, পণ্যের, and সমাদৃত As such, proper transfer of those words were, often unsuccessful and quite a few candidates used the transliteration of these words instead. Also they had difficulty in transmitting structures such as 'পানের বাটা পাশে নিয়ে পা মেলে বসতো' 'বেত দিয়ে তৈরী শীতলপাটিও আমাদের লোকশিল্পের আর এক নিদর্শন' or similar. Also, quite a few candidates misinterpreted words phrases i.e., কাঁথা সেলাই as weaving, পান as tobacco, বেত as wood, stone, straw or stick, and যাদুঘর as the magic house. The average score recorded for this question was 16.

Question 2

As compared to question 1, this passage was more accessible to most candidates and so the majority of the candidates succeeded to transmit the content of the passage fairly well. The stronger candidates did not find the text very challenging and so performed the translation task in standard Bengali with a good flow. There has also been occasions though the time sequence and the tense concept was not transmitted appropriately. Weaker candidates often struggled to transmit words such as, **cherished, treasure classical music, maestro, little genius, and formal disciple**. It could be due to their lack of knowledge or unfamiliarity re the corresponding Bengali meaning of these words. However, on the whole, candidates performed quite successfully, displaying good literacy skills in both languages. The average score recorded for this question was 18

Question 3

It is quite pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to translate all five sentences though at varied levels where they were tested on specific grammar points. 3(a), (3b) and 3(c) were pretty straight forward and very well responded by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates on occasion struggled transmitting in the appropriate tense though in 3(e) The average score recorded for this question was 14.

Question 4

4a as well as 4b were responded by the stronger candidates. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures followed by comparisons personal feelings and reactions, so scored good marks. However, on occasions, candidates overlooked the main focus of the content and wrote about incidents occurred in their own families and so scored less marks than expected. Amongst the essay/letter options, **4d was quite popular & well attended**. Again, there was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis and opinion. Unfortunately it was not evident amongst the majority of the candidates. On average, the responses were mainly descriptive. Also not very many candidates used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases. The manipulation of language was very basic on occasions. The use of syntax and wrong use of tenses gave the impression as if it 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, **4b** was the least popular. But those who attempted this scored good marks. The average score recorded for this question was 25.

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 occasions, candidates' performances were not as good as expected due to their lack of good grasp of a range of structures and tense concepts, and knowledge of grammar. Also a wide display of transliterated words/phrases were evident in the candidates' performances across the board.

Statistics

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	72	64	56	51	41

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