

SINHALA

Paper 3205/01
Composition

General comments

On the whole, the performance of the candidates was commendable, with some performing very well indeed. The topics in both sections proved popular with candidates, although some candidates failed to adhere to the stipulated number of words when writing their responses.

Candidates displayed confidence throughout this paper, although some gave responses that were too brief to merit the top grades. Some candidates were not familiar with the basic grammar or idiomatic usage of Sinhala, and the most common errors occurred mainly in the areas of spelling, subject-verb agreement, and tenses.

Unfortunately, the most noticeable weakness was the poor quality of candidates' handwriting, which inevitably impeded communication. However, some candidates did produce clear and legible scripts.

Comments on individual questions

Section A – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

Candidates were asked to write a response of approximately 120 words to one of the three given topics.

In **Section A**, all topics were attempted, with topic **(a)** proving the most popular. For all three topics, candidates chose to draw on personal experience and feelings to communicate their responses.

Section B – Essay

Candidates were asked to write one essay of approximately 200 words, from a choice of four topics.

All four topics were popular with candidates. Many candidates attempted topic **(b)**, demonstrating their linguistic abilities on the topic of television and the Internet. Candidates who chose topic **(d)** showed flair in creative writing.

SINHALA

Paper 3205/02
Translation and
Reading Comprehension

General comments

In general, the performance of the candidates was of a commendable standard. However, it would be of benefit to some candidates to have more practice in writing Sinhala, to improve accuracy in grammar and to get a feel for idiom. Some common errors included the use of the Sinhala word *āya* to mean both 'he' and 'she', and the use of the feminine forms of verbs such as *giyaaya* and *kalaaya* where the masculine forms should have been used. Despite this, the overall level of understanding and the quality of the written language was good. Candidates should be encouraged to read widely, as this will increase exposure to a broad range of Sinhala vocabulary, grammar and idiom, and will help them to acquire a better feel for the language. Some candidates mixed formal and informal registers in their responses, which was not appropriate. Candidates should be reminded that the formal register is required when writing this examination.

Some struggled to produce grammatically correct Sinhala, but the most common problem was the poor quality of candidates' handwriting, which hindered understanding in some cases.

Comments on individual questions

Section A – Translation

On the whole, the translation into English was attempted well by candidates, who seemed to enjoy the text. There were some excellent translations. Unfortunately, some candidates encountered difficulty in the use of English idiom, which hampered understanding in some instances. Common problems included the translation of 'it disappeared along the ramp' as 'she disappeared...'. For the word *niladhaariya*, candidates selected a variety of options, such as officer, person and agent.

Most candidates attempted the translation into Sinhala quite successfully, with many answers written in clear, idiomatic Sinhala. Some candidates selected words from everyday vocabulary, and used these effectively.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

There were many good attempts at this section, with several excellent ones. However, a few candidates did not attempt this question at all. Most candidates showed good understanding of the text, and provided suitable answers to the questions.