

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

O Level

O Level Sinhala (7641)

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7641 O Level Sinhala

General Comments

Congratulations, both teachers and students, on yet another excellent session of exams! It was a pleasure marking a large number of answer scripts which displayed a secure grasp of both Sinhala and English.

However, the two main problem areas remain -

- subject verb agreement
- definite and indefinite articles

Question 1 : *translation - Sinhala to English*

The majority of candidates were able to transmit effectively the main points of the text, recognizing and transmitting most or all points of detail.

Effective transmission does NOT mean sentence for sentence transmission. It is imperative to emphasize to candidates that they should attempt to understand the passage and convey the main points and detail, using sentence structures appropriate to the language.

The following words proved to be challenging to a large number of candidates:

- decade
- parallel

Question 2: *translation - English to Sinhala*

It was evident that this passage about King Kasyapa was the 'favourite' of most candidates. The gist of the narration was mostly secure, with occasional lapses in tense concepts/time referents.

The following words proved to be challenging to candidates:

- persuaded
- swamp

Suggestions for translation:

STEP 1 - Read the passage for understanding.

STEP 2 - Read the passage again, paying attention to detail.

Identify the type of text. Is it a narrative? Does it describe a place/ person/event? Is it informative?

Note use of tense concepts.

STEP 3- Take a closer look *with a pencil!* Read the first paragraph and jot down the main points. Then translate the paragraph. Compare with the original for inclusion of ALL points/details, correct use of tense concepts and idioms.

Try your hand at translating a variety of texts - from newspaper articles, to passages from novels, brochures, and formal letters.

Question 3: *translation - 5 sentences - English to Sinhala*

There was a marked improvement in this section from last summer! Candidates scored very well in this section, with the exception of the word 'cane' in sentence 1.

Question 4: *Essay*

- a) 'Mobile phones are a waste of time.' Do you agree?
- b) Write a story beginning with 'If I were a movie star...'
- c) Write a story beginning with 'I was alone at home, when...'
- d) Write a letter of complaint to the Ministry of Transport about the unpunctuality of the school bus that you take every morning.

The most popular essay this session was (a), on mobile phones. There was a number of engaging arguments presenting balanced views, conveying a strong personal tone.

However, a number of candidates had misunderstood the task and had written about the 'usefulness' of mobile phones. Even though some of these essays were well presented, they were unable to score a high mark for lack of relevant material.

Imaginations ran riot with (c), the next popular choice, with robbers breaking in, ghosts, and even the occurrence of a tsunami. While a large number of these essays were engaging, it is important to reiterate to candidates on the 'believability' of the content of the essay.

Topic (d) was the third popular choice, with most candidates showing a grasp of the task, with a few exceptions of candidates who had misunderstood the task.

Overall, there should be more practice in this section. Candidates could experiment with interesting beginnings to their essays, and also work on conclusions to avoid abrupt endings.

A very small number of candidates had not attempted this section

Statistics

Sinhala 7641

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest Mark for award of grade	80	66	52	48	43

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