

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE O Level

GCE O Level Sinhala (7641)

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Contents

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | 7641 Sinhala Examiner's Report | 4 |
| 2. | Statistics | 6 |

General Comments

The essay was the highlight of this examination session. It was encouraging to read and mark essays by the majority of the candidates. They were engaging, well-presented, and at times, even philosophical.

This series candidates found Sections 1 and 2 rather challenging.

Question 1: translation - Sinhala to English

The important points of the text, mainly narrative and concrete, were conveyed successfully for the most part, although many candidates struggled with the word ‘worshipped,’ which was literally translated, describing the action in detail.

The majority of candidates were also not aware of the past tense of ‘kneel.’

The most demanding feature in this section was the direct question in the fourth paragraph, which indicated lack of awareness of nuance and idiom of both languages.

Overall, this was the most challenging question for the majority of candidates.

Question 2: translation - English to Sinhala

Despite a number of ‘literal’ translations, the meaning of this extract was successfully conveyed by a large number of candidates.

The difficult words proved to be:

- ‘thick’ skin
- muscles
- west
- south-east Asian
- domesticated

Question 3: translation - 5 sentences - English to Sinhala

This section showed a remarkable improvement. Candidates were able to communicate the meaning in the target language. The only surprising fact was that many misinterpreted the word ‘raw’ fish.

Question 4: Essay

On the whole, the essays were well-planned, with relevant detailed description, narration and expansion of topics.

Essay topics this year were

- (a) 'Money does not buy happiness.' Do you agree?
- (b) Write an essay about a person you admire.
- (c) Your friend has agreed to look after your pet while you are on holiday for two weeks. Write a letter to your friend instructing him or her on how to look after your pet.

All three topics were very well received, with the most popular one being 'Money does not buy happiness.' While the majority agreed that money does not buy happiness, with justification of opinions, there were a few who presented a balanced opinion.

The most popular choice for essay (b) was 'mother' and the bulk of essays were full of clichéd expressions about mother. It might be useful for teachers to think about discussing different perspectives of a single essay topic - to help the students to think 'outside the box'.

Those who answered essay (c) produced well planned essays with appropriate information.

Statistics

7641 Sinhala

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

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