

SINHALA

Paper 3205/01
Composition

General comments

On the whole, the performance on this year's candidates was commendable, with some performing very well indeed.

The topics in both sections proved popular with candidates. In **Section A**, **Question 1(c)** was the most popular, and in **Section B**, **Question 2(d)** was the one most often selected.

Unfortunately, the most noticeable weakness was the poor quality of candidates' handwriting, which inevitably impeded communication. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of presenting their work clearly and legibly.

Candidates generally displayed confidence throughout this paper, although some gave responses that were too brief to merit the top grades. Others wrote in excess of the recommended word limits specified in the question paper: candidates should be reminded that going beyond this does not improve the quality of the work presented and may indeed increase the likelihood of errors occurring.

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.

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.

For all three topics, candidates chose to draw on personal experience and feelings to communicate their responses. This technique was employed with particular success in response to **Question 1(b)**. For all topics, many candidates wrote maturely, demonstrating an awareness of contemporary society.

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 of the candidates who chose **Question 2(a)** wrote essays which included detailed descriptions, which were a pleasure to read. Candidates who selected **Question 2(b)** often showed creative flair and maturity in their treatment of the topic. Many interesting and vivid accounts were provided in response to **Question 2(c)**. The candidates who attempted **Question 2(d)** tended to produce some very interesting essays which demonstrated their linguistic abilities and their skills in organisation.



SINHALA

Paper 3205/02
Translation and
Reading and 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 receive more practice in writing Sinhala, to help improve grammatical accuracy and to get a feel for idiom.

Some common errors included 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 wide range of Sinhalese vocabulary, grammar and idiom, and will help candidates 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 candidates struggled to produce grammatically correct Sinhala, but the most common problem was the poor quality of some candidates' handwriting, which hampered understanding in some cases. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of presenting their work clearly and legibly.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Translation

On the whole, the translation into English was tackled well, with many answers characterised by high levels of accuracy. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the text; there were several excellent translations and only a small number of poor attempts.

Some candidates translated *motoriya* into English either as 'trishaw', 'three wheeler' or 'motorcycle'. Had they read the text carefully before beginning their translation, they would have seen that these translations of the word *motoriya* did not fit within the context of the passage.

Unfortunately, some candidates encountered difficulty in the use of English idiom, which hampered understanding in some instances, and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the passage in others. Only a few candidates were successful in their translation of the Sinhala words *ek vishesha karyayak* as 'a specific task'.

Generally, however, candidates' performance in this translation was commendable.

Most candidates produced a successful translation into Sinhala, with many answers written in clear, idiomatic Sinhala. Some candidates used colloquial Sinhala words and made good use of them in this instance. Candidates demonstrated flexibility in their use of language, many using a wide range of vocabulary.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

There were many good attempts at this section, with several excellent ones. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the text, and provided suitable answers to the questions.