



GCSE

BENGALI

8638/WH: Writing Higher
Report on the Examination

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General comments

The quality of work produced for this examination was encouraging. The paper differentiated very well and students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was generally of a higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well.

Where students failed to score marks, it was often due to inaccuracies which caused a delay in communicating messages. The usual reasons for this were either wrong verb formation or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, something which created greater chance of error. Another barrier to achievement was the omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of work seen was generally good, with many students able to provide extended responses which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misinterpretation or omission of bullet points and quality of language, which at this level led to more scope for error.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of all bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10 all aspects of the task must be covered.

Question 1.1

This was the more popular choice with students. It was a topic with which students are familiar, but it is important to remind students that the specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than an unconnected topic. This question was well answered by the vast majority of students, many of whom who achieved maximum marks in this question but a few of students failed to answer one or two bullet points or misunderstood the 3rd bullet 'mojar ghotona' which means a fun incident/occasion and which led to them scoring fewer marks.

Question 1.2

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. Students were able to show a variety of vocabulary in relation to the four bullet points of their chosen question. This came automatically as they were asked to write about diverse topics. Both questions elicited language which referred to past, present and future events and students had the possibility here to show a knowledge of different tenses. This was not always done successfully, in particular with the bullet points requiring reference to the past.

This question was well answered by a good number of students who achieved maximum marks in this question but a few numbers of students failed to understand the term answer one or two bullet points as they failed to understand the term 'shebamulok kaj' (which means charitable work) and this led to them scoring fewer marks.

Question 1.3

This was the more popular choice with students. It was a topic with which students are familiar, but it is important to remind students that the specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than an unconnected topic. This question was well answered by the vast majority of students, many of whom achieved maximum marks in this question but a few students failed to answer one or two bullet points, which led to them scoring fewer marks.

Quality of language

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When giving opinions, many students were able to use different verbs and adjectives which lent greater variety to their writing. Two bullet points per question directly elicited opinions.

Complexity at this tier was achieved in various ways: infinitive constructions; subordinate clauses; the use of longer sentences formed using connectives; comparatives; negatives and the use of adjective. At this level, the subjunctive is probably being used in the form of a set phrase, but it still adds complexity to the writing.

The other strand in Quality of language is the accuracy of the writing. The more common, major errors were with verbs, either with the wrong person or the wrong tense of the verb.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include opinions as required by the task.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total on two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage. The quality of responses was generally high, with most students able to cover both bullet points in the question they chose. They were also able to demonstrate the ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and with a variety of language. The philosophy behind this specification is that students use their linguistic knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task, rather than just reproduce pre-learned language. Students were less successful where they had misinterpreted a bullet point or had written very lengthy responses, something which created more room for error.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of the bullet points), the amount of information conveyed, the clarity of communication and the expression and justification of opinions. Students usually had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions, but there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘ambiguities’) and this had an impact on the marks awarded.

Question 2.1

This question was well answered by a good number of students. They expressed their opinion and justified them well. However, due to some repetition of the same ideas, misunderstanding or muddling up two terms ‘uthshob’ (festival) and ‘onushttan’ (event/celebration), or rather limited language, a number of students scored rather fewer marks than might otherwise have been the case.

Question 2.2

This was a less popular choice with students; however the vast majority of students who answered this question were able to write clearly about the health issues of the teenagers and achieved high or full marks. Opinions and justifications were regularly included and it was clearly a topic with which they were familiar.

Question 2.3

This question was popular and well answered by the majority of students. They expressed their opinion and justified them well. However, due to misunderstanding of the term ‘school jiboner smriti’ (school memories) students who either wrote about their school or present activities and restricted targeted their responses to the present time frame, or did not respond to both bullets, scored fewer marks.

Range of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment are variety of language and the ability to produce complex sentences in a confident and fluent manner. It is worth noting that reference is not made to time frames or tenses in the criteria for this question, but the use of these was credited as an attempt at complexity. From that point of view, it was pleasing to note the wide range of tenses and verb forms which were used, including the conditional and subjunctive. The criteria for assessment for Range of Language also refer to style and register but this did not pose any issues, given the nature of the questions.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations and other points of accuracy in writing. It is to be noted that a ‘major’ error is one that interferes with communication, and a ‘minor error’, although still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of students were able to produce work worthy of three marks and above. Common major errors included the inappropriate use of infinitives and past participles and poor formation of the perfect tense. Minor errors included gender errors, inaccurate adjectival agreements and minor mis-spellings.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the number of words required. The emphasis needs to be on quality and not quantity.
- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what is required in terms of a response. Answer the question which is there. If ‘tumi’ (you) or ‘tomar’ (your) is in the rubric, make the response is personal and link it to yourself in some way.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points.
- Particularly when including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 6 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

The sentences were divided into 13 key messages, as in the table below.

1	I always do ...	আমি সবসময় ... করি ।
2	... my homework on time.	... আমার হোমওয়ার্ক/বাড়ির-কাজ সময়মত ...
3	When I have spare time, ...	আমার অবসর সময়ে (যখন হাতে সময় থাকে তখন) ...
4	... my friend and I আমার বন্ধু ও আমি ...
5	... work for a charity একটি চ্যারিটিতে কাজ করি ।
6	... to raise money পয়সা উঠাতে ...
7	... for poor people.	... গরীব লোকদের জন্য ...
8	Yesterday, I bought ...	গতকাল, আমি ... কিনেছি ।
9	... a special gift একটি বিশেষ উপহার ...

10	... for my grandma's 80th birthday.	... আমার দাদীর/নানীর ৮০তম জন্মদিনের জন্য ...
11	Next year, I will go ...	আগামী বছর, আমি ... যাবো
12	... on holiday to Kolkata ছুটি কাটাতে কলকাতা ...
13	... and meet my uncle there.	... এবং সেখানে আমার চাচা/মামার সাথে দেখা/সাক্ষাৎ করবো।

Most of the students achieved high marks, although some scored less well, often due to a limited knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. These inaccuracies were considered when deciding on the mark for the application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. For example, wrong word order or slight misspelling did not affect communication, so were taken into account under this area of assessment.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the 'little words'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.