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GCSE

**BENGALI**

8638/LF Paper 1 Listening Foundation Tier  
Report on the Examination

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8638/LF  
June 2023

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## General Comments

The number of students who sat the June 2023 GCSE Bengali Listening Foundation paper was 154. The paper has differentiated well between the students for which it was set. The mean mark on the paper was approximately 15 out of 40, lower than the previous year's mean mark. It was good to see that some students understood a great deal of what they had heard and were able to respond well to the questions; but a significant number of students could not comprehend a very basic level of utterances. In Section B students had to understand questions written in Bengali, and some found this challenging with only the most able students scoring highly. In some cases, basic items of vocabulary were not well known by students; intensifying or emphasising expressions also proved challenging for some. Only a few students wrote their answers in the wrong language.

Teachers need to remind students to utilise 5 minutes of reading time in the listening paper by:

- reading all the questions carefully, particularly those in Section B
- checking questions with emboldened words where it might have asked for a particular point of view or the most relevant option to choose
- looking at any examples given, as these point out the level of detail required
- underlining keywords which have been highlighted in the rubrics / questions
- identifying the questions which have two or more parts to answer from the same utterance
- sign-posting Section B as it requires answers in Bengali
- being careful about listening to the question numbers in Section B as these are announced in Bengali.

## Section A

### Questions 01-03

Questions 01 and 02 were non-verbal multiple choice questions. Question 01 was an accessible start to the paper where a reference to a particular time of the day was asked, and only around 60% of the students answered it correctly. Students appeared to find question 02 comparatively easier where a meeting place was to be identified with almost 75% students gaining the mark. In this specification, comprehension questions cannot test single lexical items, even at the lowest grades, and this means that questions of this type must contain distractors; it was comforting to see that students coped well with these distractors and were able to choose the correct answer in a large majority of cases.

Question 03 provided the description of an unusual wedding with an open-ended question format. Students found this question comparatively difficult. This might be because some students did not read the question title and the stem carefully where 'gorib celemeyeder (poor children)' was very important, for choosing the unusual context, to identify the correct answer for this question. On question 03.1, about 25% got the answer correct. Question 03.2 caused difficulties for many and about 15% of the students got it right.

### Questions 04-06

The idea of questions 04-06 was about an app and these were sentence-completion type questions. The targeted assessment words for these questions were gaantir kotha (lyrics of the song), shobder ortho (word meaning) and bhasha shekha (language learning), respectively. Many students found these words challenging to comprehend.

### Questions 07

Question 07 provided information about some students staying back after school for several reasons. This question is again a non-verbal multiple choice type. An impressive 50-78% of the students gained marks on different parts of this question and students have handled it well.

### Questions 08

Question 08 was about a menu at a restaurant where the barbequed chicken was described as spicy (moshaladar) and the fish of the day was mixed with mustard (shorisha). Many students got the first part correct but only around 6% could answer the second part correctly as rather than writing 'mustard', they wrote 'mustard oil' and hence could not score. A few students wrote the key points in the transliterated form such as 'moshala' and 'shorisha' which needed to be avoided. This question was an open-ended short-answered question.

### Questions 09-11

These three questions are again open-ended questions. The topic was a kite festival. For question 09, students were expected to identify the colour of the most favourite kite which was 'laal (red)'. It was surprising to find that almost 18% of the students could not get this right. A significant number of the students referred to all of the colours they heard in this question and did not achieve any marks. For question 10, the target was 'kacher goora (powdered glass), but only 2% of the students could answer this correctly. A majority of the students have written 'scissors' instead and could not score. Question 11 was accessible to most of the students (about 85%). These questions were set at the mid-level of difficulty.

### Questions 12-14

These questions did not pose too many difficulties for most students, with about 80% getting question 12 correct, around 68% scoring a mark for question 13, and approximately 75% on question 14. Most students were comfortable with the topic of 'eating habits' as well as familiar with the vocabulary used in these questions. Students were found to be more successful on non-verbal multiple choice question types like these ones.

### Questions 15

Question 15 was a sentence completion type of question about 'recycling' with two parts. In the first part, 36% of the students scored a mark but struggled in the second part where the key idea was about 'shariye (repair)'. Only about 2% of students got this answer correct.

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### Questions 16-17

These were overlap questions which talked about local neighbourhood and targeted higher levels of demand. The expectation was to be able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the mentioned local area. It was evidenced that a significant number of students knew some of the key vocabulary such as 'dokan (shops)', 'bari bhara (house rent)', 'oporadh (crime) and 'shahajjo (help)' tested in questions 16 and 17. Almost 6% of students scored 2 marks on question 16 and a little less than 4% on question 17. These questions have discriminated well.

### Question 18

This question captured the time phrases on using technology now, in the past and future. Students coped well with this long passage. It was evident from their annotation that many had been well prepared. They recognised from the numbering (18.1, 18.2, 18.3) that all three questions were to be answered in one go. In 18.1, about 40% of students correctly selected the correct tense. For 18.2, about 35% of students selected the correct answer and almost 33% were able to gain the mark on question 18.3, showing their understanding of the utterance in three different tenses.

### Questions 19

This question was aimed at the higher grades in the foundation tier and was an overlap question. Students performed better on question 19 which was about holiday planning. Almost 39% got the option correct in question 19.1, Just under 30% in 19.2 and almost 50% in question 19.3. Students were found to be more familiar with the key vocabulary related to this topic.

### Questions 20

The topic for question 20 was about celebrating International Mother Language Day. Question 20 did pose difficulty as expected. Approximately, only 2% of the students managed to identify the key information needed to answer this question. This question discriminated well between those who understood fully what was being said and those whose understanding was only partial. Many students struggled to understand the word 'prodorshoni (exhibition). Students would benefit from more practise on the vocabulary listed in the specification.

## Section B

### Questions 21

This question was a straightforward introduction to Section B, about a miracle Bengali boy. Around 27% of students got all four options correct, and almost 50% got three options correct. Although the vocabulary used here was relatively simple, the questions in the target language did pose a challenge.

### Questions 22-23

These were overlap questions and it was pleasing to see that many students attempted both questions. In question 22.1 approximately 43% got the correct option and 34% in question 22.2. Those who picked out the lexical items 'brishti (rain)' and 'kharap abohawa (bad weather)' got the answers right in question 23. On question 23.1, about 49% got both options correct and on question 23.2, this was around a third of students. These were expected to be challenging questions and did indeed prove to be so.

### **Advice for students**

- Finally, students must make sure that they make their final answer clear to the examiners, by writing legibly and using the spaces provided.
- If students change their minds about an answer, the final choice must be signalled to the marker and placed as near as possible to the appropriate space.
- Students should give precise answers avoiding lots of details.
- Try answering all questions.
- It is expectation to learn the vocabulary from the provided vocabulary list in the Specification and this would help to prepare better for the exam.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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