



GCSE

BENGALI

8638/WH Paper 4 Writing Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

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General comments

The overall performance of students this year was encouraging. The vast majority of students were able to answer all the questions and it was rare to see blank responses. The paper differentiated very well and students achieved marks in variety of questions. Students' performance this year was better than last year. The majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a higher standard than that at the Foundation Tier paper. 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 gain marks, it was due to inaccuracies in their answers which did not communicate the messages. The usual reasons for this were either wrong verb formation, omission of punctuations or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, something which created greater chance of error. Another reason for poor performance was the omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

For this question, there were 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students were required to write approximately 90 words in total, on four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there was 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 due to poor quality of language used.

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 a response cannot achieve a mark above 6, given that for a response to be awarded a mark between 7 and 10 all aspects of the task must be covered.

Quality of Language

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 variety came about 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 opportunity here to show knowledge of different tenses. This was not always done successfully, in particular with the bullet points requiring reference to the past.

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 adjectives. 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.

Question 1.1

This was popular choice with students. It was a topic on school and homework with which students are familiar. It is important to remind students that this 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 majority of students and some achieved maximum marks in this question, but a number of responses did not address one or two bullet points as their responses were not precise enough or misunderstood the Bengali terms in bullet 2 and 3. For example ‘বাড়ীর কাজ’ (homework), ‘সময়মতো’ (on time) and the fourth bullet ‘ভবিষ্যতে যেভাবে স্কুলের লেখাপড়া করবে’ (how you will study for schoolwork in the future), rather responses were about their future career / job / study.

Question 1.2

This question was well answered by the majority of students and some achieved maximum marks in this question. However, a good number of students did not address one or two bullet points or they misinterpreted the fourth bullet. They wrote about what people could do generally or the government could do to encourage music, not what they themselves should do. The response should have been personal and link to him / herself eg, আমি ... করবো/নিবো (I will do / take ...).

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all of the bullet points and try not to omit any.
- 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.

The final bullet point on the front page of the question paper should have stated “In order to score the highest marks for Question 2.1 / Question 2.2, you must write something about each bullet point. You must use a variety of vocabulary and structures and include your opinions and reasons”. At the end of this bullet point the words “and reasons” had been omitted. Manual checks were completed by the Lead Examiner in order to ensure no students were unfairly disadvantaged by this omission.

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 which could be awarded.

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, but the use of these were considered as an attempt at complexity. From that point of view, it was pleasing to note the wide range of tenses and verb forms that 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 prove a problem given the nature of the questions.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations, and the type of errors that students make. 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 responses 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.

Question 2.1

This was also a popular choice with students as they are familiar with the topic ‘environmental pollution’. They expressed their opinions and justified them properly. However, repetition of the same ideas, an inability to expand the ideas and / or poor language ability, prevented some responses from being able to achieve the highest marks. Unfortunately, a good number of students who opted for this question wrote about environmental or social problems without linking them directly to their own experience of their own town / city; rather, they thought of environmental problems in relation to the whole world. The second bullet point was also misinterpreted by a good number of students. They wrote about what people could do generally or what the government could do to save the environment, not what they themselves should do. A few students failed to understand the term ‘পরিবেশ’ (environment), rather thought ‘পরিবার’ (family) and some could not express opinions properly or justify at all.

Question 2.2

This question was well answered by the majority students, the vast majority of whom were able to write clearly about ‘use of social media’. Opinions and justifications were regularly included and it was obviously a topic with which they were familiar. Unfortunately, a good number of students who misunderstood the 2nd bullet ie, they understood, ‘how people feel about using social media or should keep their safety’ instead of ‘how **you** will keep yourself safe and secure at the time of using social media’ and some students failed to understand the term ‘সামাজিক মাধ্যম’ (social media), and therefore failed to achieve full or some marks.

Advice to students

- Aim to write approximately within the number of words required. The emphasis needs to be on quality rather than quantity.
- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response. Answer the question which is there. If তুমি (you) or তোমার (your) or করো/করেছিলে/করবে/করতে চাও (verbs that denote to yourself) is in the rubric or in the bullet points. Then make the response personal and link it to yourself in some way.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points in some way.
- 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.

In the translation, the sentences were divided into 13 key messages.

1	I like playing ...	আমি ... খেলতে পছন্দ করি।
2	... football in the park.	... পার্কে ফুটবল ...
3	During my free time, ...	আমার অবসর সময়ে ...
4	... I go to the cinema in our town centre আমি ... শহরে/শহরের কেন্দ্রে সিনেমা দেখতে যাই ...
5	... with my friends আমার বন্ধুদের সাথে...
6	... or try new food at restaurants.	... অথবা রেস্টুরেন্টে নতুন নতুন খাবার খাই।
7	Last week, we attended ...	গত সপ্তাহে, আমরা ... গিয়েছিলাম।
8	... our cousin's wedding আমাদের চাচাতো/খালাতো/মামাতো ভাই/বোনের বিয়েতে ...
9	... in Bangladesh. বাংলাদেশে ...
10	Next year, ...	আগামী বছর/বৎসর ...
11	... I will study for my A-levels and আমি এ-লেভেলের জন্য পড়বো এবং ...
12	... start a part-time job পার্ট-টাইম/খণ্ডকালীন চাকরি শুরু করবো।
13	... at a pharmacy.	... একটি ফার্মেসীতে/ওষুধের দোকানে ...

In order to gain full marks, they have to answer all the numbered items.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were still 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, but 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 shorter words.
- Make sure to keep the word order following the Bengali grammar / sentence structure eg, subject » object » verb, in order to make sense and form accurate sentences eg, (আমি করি একটি কাজ ঔষধের দোকানে is incorrect; আমি একটি ঔষধের দোকানে কাজ করি is correct).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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