

## LOTE: Sinhala GA 2: Oral examination

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### GENERAL COMMENTS

Students performed well at the oral examination and a number scored high marks having acquitted themselves creditably due to good preparation.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Part 1 – General conversation

Student talked confidently about family, school, leisure, work and future aspirations. Most students spoke about future aspirations. Their comments were interesting and conversation moved forward naturally.

#### Part 2 – Report and discussion

Students reported on topics that were familiar to them. Topics varied from well known literary figures to environmental degradation, refugees and tourist attractions such as *Sigiri* frescoes and *Kandy Perahera*. Naturally, these topics lend themselves to discussion and the student responses indicated prior preparation and thorough investigation of the topic. Most reports were well structured. One or two students, however, struggled to explore the topic in depth.

#### Part 3 – Situational role-play

##### Capacity to develop the contents of the role-play

Most students were able to put on a good performance in the role-play. Their competence with the use of language coupled with the skill in adopting the appropriate linguistic form for the particular role made the task look easy. Students who showed good negotiating skills scored high marks.

##### Accuracy, variety and appropriateness in overall language

Students who did well showed good language control; their ideas were coherent and intelligible, their utterances were generally accurate and mostly spontaneous. Some students used a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures to drive home their ideas and opinions and to assert their points of view.

##### Communicative Competence

Most students used the language effectively to link with their conversational partner. They were confident and the conversation moved smoothly.

##### Skills in presentation, manner of delivery and degree of accuracy in pronunciation (sounds phrasing and intonation)

Most students scored because eye contact and appropriate body language together with correct pronunciation of different words added to the quality of their responses.

## LOTE: Sinhala GA 3: Written examination

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### GENERAL COMMENTS

Student responses to the written examination, showed varying degrees of ability. Some were very good while many scored only at a satisfactory level. Students who scored low marks had difficulty in understanding the spoken passages, making notes and answering questions to the point. Students must be trained to make notes whilst listening. Many students had problems responding to the evaluative question on both spoken passages. In some cases students used material not in the texts. Most students achieved creditably, scoring top marks in Paper 2 Part A, Writing in Sinhala. A few students greatly exceeded the word count and were penalised.

Students must be familiar with conventions such as understanding discourse forms and the different kinds of writing. In reorganising written information (Paper 2 Part B) many students failed to handle the question appropriately. Students need to read the instructions carefully before writing. Many responses were extracted only from one passage and as a result the report to the transport minister was not balanced and well rounded. The need for regular exercises for this kind of writing cannot be overemphasised. It must form an integral part of preparation for the examination.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Some students experienced difficulty in selecting the relevant information. This may be due to inexperience, but material external to the texts is inadmissible. The most successful students only used the information provided in the texts to answer the questions using language and sentence structures of their own. Students who exceeded the specifications regarding word length not only wasted valuable time but lost marks.

There was evidence of students having scribbled notes, but no evidence of having made either a list of relevant points or a short outline of the article they proposed to write. If they had done so, the finished product would have flowed smoothly and convincingly.

Several students wrote about the insurgency of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and how the young people are committed to fighting them, when in fact the question was about evaluating the view that many young people today are accountable and committed. Students must respond to the question in context and must be aware that it should not include irrelevant information either from the texts or from other sources, e.g. there was no mention of Tamil Tigers in the text.

#### Paper 2

##### Part A – Writing in Sinhala

Students had a choice of topics involving five different text types and kinds of writing. Student selection was well spread, although the imaginative piece was most popular. Prior preparation was obvious in many of the pieces. The quality of information and ideas was not particularly high. Students who did well were those who dealt with the topic in some depth using language appropriate to the topic and within the specified word length. Most students did not have many problems with language use but found organising the context and ideas more challenging. There were not many quality pieces of writing.

##### Part B – Recognising written information

Students were required to produce a report to convince the Minister that the public transport system in Colombo needed changing. It was a challenging task for most students to produce a report in 120 to 150 words from so much material (the two texts). Some well-chosen arguments and ideas from both passages were included in the report produced by the top students. Others merely reproduced what was in the texts without prioritising the arguments or comparing the two systems. Some students made no attempt at all to compare the two systems for the report. Many failed to observe the cultural appropriateness and the conventions of the discourse form for the report. The address and salutation to the minister were inappropriate. Some treated the minister of transport as an intimate friend (*Amba yahuwo*). In Sri Lanka, however friendly you are with a minister of state, there is a certain degree of detachment signified by the honorifics one uses to address him.

At Year 12 level, students must be familiar with the text type for writing a persuasive report. Many students failed to include quality information and forceful arguments. Others simply reproduced slabs of information from the original text without making an effective comparison of the two systems of transportation in Singapore and in Colombo. For a readable report, linking ideas and proper paragraphing must form an essential part of the mechanics of writing. Many linking devices could be used according to the subject matter. Very few students showed ability in this area.