

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students showed a good level of ability in the 2014 Sinhala written examination.

In Section 1 Part A, it was evident that some students had difficulty in understanding the texts and using the appropriate terms to convey the correct meaning. Students should use a Sinhalese–English dictionary.

In both Parts A and B of Section 1 and Part A of Section 2, many students did not identify some of the vital information in the texts that was needed to answer the questions completely.

In Part B of Section 2, and in Section 3, many students did not demonstrate good writing skills in Sinhala. The range of vocabulary was limited and there were some grammatical errors, especially in the use of tenses. Most students had a very good understanding of the format of their writing. It is recommended that students read more books in the language to expand their vocabulary; they should also practise expressing ideas and opinions more effectively in writing.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and Responding Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

The women who seek employment in Middle Eastern countries

‘Women/people who seek employment overseas’ was not accepted.

Question 1b.

Change 1: age limit raised from 18 to 25

Reason: for the safety of the employee

Change 2: job status changed from ‘domestic servant’ to ‘domestic assistant’

Reason: to uphold the dignity of those employed in this important work

‘Age limit changed’ and ‘housework assistant/domestic helper’ were also accepted.

Text 2

Question 2a.

- They have to be dutiful to their elders.
- Even if an elder says something through anger, listen quietly.

Question 2b.

He has not married his cousin as his aunty expected, or Aunty did not agree with his marriage.

Question 2c.

The sister convinced her brother to visit their aunt by saying:

- Aunty would not bear a grudge at this stage
- even the cousin did not bear a grudge against him for not marrying her
- she did not stay unmarried just because her cousin didn’t marry her
- it would show gratitude for what she had done for their father.

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Text 3

Question 3

Any five of:

- it is the biggest floating library/library on a ship
- there are more than 50 000 books from excellent authors
- there are books covering a range of subjects
- more than 42 million people worldwide have visited the ship
- it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity
- you can buy books at a very low price
- the entrance fee is cheap – tickets are 100 rupees for adults.

Part B – Answer in Sinhala

Text 4

Question 4a.

- to inform the sister/family about the date and time of their arrival
- to request the brother to be there on time because they are arriving with two children

Question 4b.

The freeway was built with minimal damage to the environment/The freeway was constructed in an environmentally friendly manner.

‘A construction is done’ was not accepted.

Text 5

Question 5a.

The Veddas lead a healthy life, while the farmers living in the same region suffer from various diseases.

Question 5b.

Any three of:

- they live with nature/among the natural vegetation
- they use only organic/natural fertilisers
- they consume only the food they grow and the meat they hunt
- they work hard
- they walk long distances.

Text 6

Question 6a.

Chinthaka won 1st place for his invention, out of 76 countries.

‘Won 1st place out of 76 countries’ was not a complete answer. The student needed to explain why.

Question 6b.

Chinthaka did not take full credit for his invention because:

- his schoolteacher encouraged him in his interest in electronics
- he received valuable advice from the Institute of Engineers
- his parents sold a part of their land to fund his project.

Question 6c.

- Chinthaka needs funds for his future education so that he can join NASA.
- The announcer requested anyone willing to assist Chinthaka to achieve his goal to come forward.

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Section 2 – Reading and Responding Part A – Answer in English

Text 7

Question 7a.

- nothing from the coconut tree is thrown away that could be made use of
- parts from the coconut tree are needed for weddings, funerals and other cultural events
- people earn a living in small-scale and large-scale industries, making use of the coconut tree
- it is considered a mark of wealth to have a coconut tree in your garden
- people who own a coconut estate are considered rich

Question 7b.

Because people thought coconut oil was the cause of heart disease.

Question 7c.

The number of patients with heart diseases increased, even when the consumption of the coconut oil was reduced.

Text 8

Question 8a.

Any two of:

- holding cultural shows in hotels in the main cities of China
- broadcasting documentary programs about the history and the landscape of Sri Lanka in Chinese.
- teaching Chinese in the universities in Sri Lanka.

Question 8b.

Any two of:

- the food they enjoy, according to Chinese recipes, will be available
- Chinese programs will be shown on TV in hotel rooms
- tour guides who can speak Chinese will be provided
- there will be opportunities for Chinese people to learn Sinhala.

Part B – Answer in Sinhala

Text 9

Question 9

An article for the ‘Reader’s opinion’ page of a newspaper should have a heading and the writer’s name, and this was provided by most students. The language should have been formal, but there were a few instances where students used both formal and informal language. Most students presented their opinion well, referring to facts given in the text to support their opinion, but in some articles not much emphasis was given to their suggestions as to how such incidents can be prevented from happening in the future. Most of the article was used to express an opinion, rather than presenting suggestions or solutions.

Section 3 – Writing in Sinhala

Question 10

The script for this speech should have begun by addressing the audience, the staff and the fellow students, then provided an evaluation of the positive and negative aspects, and then ended by thanking the audience. This was evident in students’ writing. An evaluative writing piece needs to present facts for and against the statement, with appropriate evidence to support any opinions. The language should be informal. The few students who attempted this question wrote fairly good responses.

Question 11

Most students selected this question, and their reports were of a very good standard. The topic of the report was ‘Reading makes a person complete’. Most students indicated the writer’s name. Formal language and past tense should have been used. Most students presented sufficient information about the steps taken by their schools to encourage them to read more books.

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Question 12

A diary entry should indicate the date of the entry. The language could have been either formal or informal and, generally, the entry was written in the past tense. The question instructed students to write a reflective diary entry on the valuable experiences that were associated with life at a language school, but most students reflected on some interesting events and incidents without relating it to the overall valuable experience they gained. Many students attempted this question, but only a few wrote a high-scoring response.

Question 13

Only a few students selected this question. Students were asked to write an imaginative short story entitled 'There are problems on Mars as well'. The name of the writer needed to be indicated. This imaginative short story could have revealed some interesting events and mentioned the prevailing problems on the planet, rather than simply being a description of the trip.