



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students performed very well in the Sinhala oral examination and demonstrated thorough preparation. They used a range of resources from which to collect their information, including the Internet, newspapers, brochures and textbooks. They also collected information from professional people, elders and by carrying out surveys. Almost all students had prepared visual aids such as posters, pictures, photographs, charts and even models and replicas.

In presenting their information, some students appeared to have memorised the content and did not sound natural.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

Most students maintained the level of conversation at a very high standard. The outstanding students had an excellent capacity to link with assessors and responded to the questions confidently. They needed minimal support and used adequate repair strategies. Although the majority of students were very good at pronunciation and intonation, there were a few instances where the student had significant problems with pronunciation.

Content

The majority of students presented an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions relevant to the questions asked. There were exceptional cases where the student was able to clarify, elaborate on and defend their ideas and opinions successfully. On the other hand, there were instances where the assessors had to ask many questions and provide a large amount of support to enable the student to continue with the conversation, as the student's responses were very brief and conversational repair strategies were not applied.

Language

There were excellent students who used a wide range of vocabulary and culturally appropriate expressions and structure. There were also some weaker students who relied on a narrow range of structures and vocabulary and also on rote-learned language and anglicisms.

Section 2 – Discussion

The students had chosen their sub-topics from the two themes 'The Sinhala speaking communities' and 'The changing world'.

Students who selected sub-topics from 'The changing world' performed far better than those who selected from 'The Sinhala speaking communities'. Most of the topics selected from 'The Sinhala speaking communities' were rather descriptive and students did not have an opportunity to present their own ideas and opinions. Students who selected the sub-topic of 'Customs and traditions' generally performed very well when they discussed the positive and negative sides of the issues and traditions and presented their own ideas and opinions rather just describing the customs.

Areas covered included the following.

The Sinhala speaking communities

- Customs and traditions
- Stories from the past
- Polonaruwa era

The changing world

- Environmental issues
- Technological change
- The world of work



Communication

The majority of the students carried the discussion forward confidently and used highly effective repair strategies. Most of them had very good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo, although there were a few who experienced significant difficulties in these areas.

Content

There were instances where students demonstrated thorough preparation of their topics, presenting an excellent range of information both clearly and logically. They were able to elaborate on their ideas and opinions and they successfully clarified and defended them. They responded to the questions confidently with facts and figures where necessary. However, some students, although well-prepared with factual information, could not present their own ideas and opinions. Only a few students revealed gaps in the preparation of their topics.

Language

Most students used a very good range of vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately. They usually corrected their own errors. There were a few instances where students found it difficult to express themselves due to a limited range of vocabulary, and they often used inappropriate style and register and/or anglicisms.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

It was evident that some students had difficulty responding in English. In some instances, students had taken correct notes that were in line with the question's requirements, but then wrote a different answer in the space provided. Some students wrote long answers even when short responses were expected, while others wrote short answers when the question asked for an explanation. The responses to analytical questions were not very sound. It is a general rule that if four marks are allocated to a question, students should attempt to give three or four facts/reasons to get the full marks. When there are two parts to a question, such as, 'who is affected and why', students have to match the responses appropriately. Students are advised to read the questions carefully.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1: Listening and responding

Part A – answer in English

Text 1

1a.

- German–Sri Lankan Friendship Day
- He promised to increase the aid given to Sri Lanka

Most students answered correctly; however, a few students mentioned 'Friendship Day' instead of the full title. The answer to the second part of the question was expressed in many ways, such as 'he promised to give finance/money to Sri Lanka'.

1b.

The poor economy/poverty of the country.

Some students gave the answer as 'poor people in the country'.

1c.

- Beautiful scenery
- Warm beaches
- Historical ruins

The majority of the students identified the correct reasons for this question

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Text 2

2a.

'Event you were looking forward to/waiting for impatiently'.

2b.

- To enjoy the karaoke night
- For the opportunity to sing Sinhala and English songs
- To win a DVD set
- To win 10 DVDs

2c.

To raise funds to buy modern equipment for blind children.

Almost all students who attempted the questions on Text 2 answered all parts correctly.

Text 3

3a.

The only female Olympic medal winner produced by Sri Lanka.

- She won a medal at the Sydney Olympics
- She is a national asset
- She is a role model for athletes
- Sri Lankans are proud of her

There were two parts to this question; however some students overlooked the first part and only gave the reasons for Susie being interviewed. Some students answered the first part as, 'Susie is Susanthika Jayasinghe', rather than giving the answer above.

3b.

An Olympic medal was brought to Sri Lanka after 57 years.

Almost all students answered this question correctly.

3c.

Any three of:

- poverty
- malnutrition
- lack of opportunity for proper training
- no running shoes or sporting gear.

There were a small number of incorrect answers, as the major obstacles that Susie had to overcome were listed in different parts of the text.

3d.

Any two of:

- dedication
- application of skills
- strong will.

This was an analytical question, and some students found it difficult to respond correctly.

Part B – answer in Sinhala

Text 4

4a.

She dedicated her win to the school.

The majority of the responses were correct.

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4b.

Any two of:

- 'I was overjoyed'
- 'I could not express with words'
- 'tears came to my eyes'
- 'I was singing the school song'.

Students were expected to extract phrases from the text to identify the language used by the speaker to express her mood; however, some students did not respond to this question correctly.

4c.

'Music is a part of my life.'

All students responded to this question correctly.

Text 5

5a.

- Eagles flying in the sky
- Punchi Banda was burning off the bushes or chena

Most students responded to this question correctly

5b.

Students suggested many acceptable topics for the text discussion. Some of the suggested topics were:

- about rain
- about drought
- about preparing the land for cultivation.

5c.

The expected answers were:

- will have to look up and wait, doing nothing
- if they have not prepared the land or burnt off the bushes by the time rain comes, they will not be able to do anything.

The responses to this question were not very good. Some students were able to explain the meaning of the commonly used phrase, but most of them could not link its relevance to the text.

5d.

- Mother – a woman with patience, a far-thinking person
- Son – an enthusiastic person, a whinger

Many students failed to analyse the characteristics of the two speakers in the text and were not able to describe them in a word or phrase.

Section 2: Reading and responding

Part A – answer in English

Text 6

6a.

Noise can cause health hazards.

There were a satisfactory number of correct responses to this question.

6b.

- Old people/patients: they do not get proper rest/get disturbed in sleep
- Little children/babies: retarded growth/brain development
- School children: they find it difficult to concentrate on studies/get disturbed in their studies

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There were two parts to this question. Many students identified the groups of people who were affected (only two out of the three groups were needed), but in the second part they failed to match the correct reasons to the groups they had selected. Some even ignored the second part, 'why?'

6c.

- Educating people
- Taking legal action

Most students answered this question correctly.

6d.

By issuing licences to use the loud speakers.

It was not very successful because:

- they had to allow the schools and religious institutions to use the loud speakers for special occasions
- the noise of the hawkers continued
- they could not stop the loud music at the record bars and restaurants.

There were two parts to this question as well. Most students responded to the first part correctly, but failed to answer whether it was successful or not and why.

Text 7

7a.

- The number of orphaned elephants has increased
- The place has been haphazardly expanded
- The number of visitors has increased
- The entrance is obstructed by shops
- There are limited facilities for food or meals
- The information about elephants is stored in a small room

Many students were able to give four correct reasons as to why it is necessary to redevelop Pinnawala. Answers were often in point form, and some students failed to explain the reasons.

7b.

An educational centre will be established with a museum and facilities to view videos.

Some students found it difficult to identify the correct answer to this question. The ability to observe the elephants closely was also accepted as a correct response.

7c.

They are:

- building a lake or a pond for elephants to have a mud bath
- keeping the bay elephants chained at night to prevent them from wandering about and getting injured
- building a hospital for the elephants.

The majority of the responses to this question were correct.

7d.

- It will reserve the status of the park and facilities for lodging
- Food and a library will be provided
- There will be facilities to perform research

Here again, some students could not identify the correct responses from the text.



Part B – answer in Sinhala

Text 8

Students were asked to write an article for a travel magazine, based on a letter from a friend, to give publicity to his business. Most students demonstrated knowledge of the main characteristics of the text type (an article for a magazine) but only a few responses manipulated the language authentically and creatively to meet the requirements of the task. Most students failed to treat the information in depth. Some students reproduced the information in the letter directly into the article. Also, students were asked to imagine themselves as Namal, which some students did not do.

Section 3: Writing in Sinhala

Most students demonstrated a fairly good standard of writing in this task; however, in this section students should be aware that they must:

- complete the task within the word limit
- familiarise themselves with different kinds of writing
- develop the task to create interest in the targeted audience
- use the diacriticals appropriately to make the correct vowel sounds for letters.

Question 9

Students were expected to write a diary entry that described a week they had spent on an imaginary planet and the wonderful things they had experienced. There were only a very few responses to this question. Answers had to present the features of a diary entry, giving the date and entering seven days' experiences. It was not sufficient to merely write about the first day, second day, and so on, and end at the last day. Responses had to be written in the form of a diary entry that named the seven days, rather than in essay form with paragraphs.

Question 10

The majority of students selected this question, which required them to complete a short story that either began or ended with the given phrase. There were a remarkable number of good stories; however, some students exceeded the limit of 250 words. Students need to adhere to the word limit set.

Question 11

This was an evaluative report on the outcome of the Sinhala New Year/Multicultural Day celebrations, written as a member of the organising committee and to be published in the local newspaper. There were quite a few responses to this task, and students wrote about one or both events (equal consideration was given to both). Some reports were one-sided, and did not evaluate both the positive and the negative aspects of the event(s). Some students forgot to give the name of the reporter.

Question 12

This persuasive speech to attract young people to join the Youth and Welfare Organisation was the least attempted question in this section. Answers to this question were generally not very well done, as the response had not been developed to present enough information to influence the targeted audience.