

BENGALI

Paper 3204/01
Composition

Key messages

- It is important that candidates carefully identify the key points required to answer each question and then provide a range of well-developed responses relevant to the chosen item.
- It is expected that candidates write accurately following correct spelling, punctuation and grammar rules.
- A range of sophisticated language that draws interest to the reader with well-linked sentences as well as the successful reference to different time phrases will help candidates to excel.
- Candidates should proofread their responses.

General overview

In the June 2024 session, there were approximately 3,100 entries, with an average mark of 68.6 out of 90. Overall, candidates performed well, though slightly lower compared to the previous year, with nearly all candidates addressing both sections of the paper as required, regardless of their ability.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

In **Section A, Question 1** was the most popular question, selected by approximately 78% of candidates. This question required candidates to write a letter to an expatriate brother about 'বনাঞ্চলে বৃক্ষরোপণের কাজে স্বেচ্ছাসেবক হিসেবে' - volunteering in a tree plantation activity in a forest. Candidates who attempted this question provided realistic and well-prepared responses based on their imagination and secured good marks. They generally demonstrated good organisation and language accuracy. They effectively referenced the required information, though some could have improved their answers by addressing the fourth bullet point 'যে তিনটি কারণে এই ধরণের কাজে অংশগ্রহণ করা উচিত' - three reasons why someone should get involved in such events'. A significant number of candidates referenced volunteering activities here without emphasising the tree plantation or vice versa. Candidates who expressed in a balanced way the importance of both points scored higher. It was also evident from some of the responses that weaker candidates did not quite understand the word 'বৃক্ষরোপণ' - tree plantation' and their descriptions mostly reflected involvement in several volunteering experiences, ignoring the core activity of the plantation. Such responses could not secure high marks.

Question 2

For **Question 2**, candidates were asked to write about 'তরুণ সমাজের ওপর ভিডিও গেমের প্রভাব' - the impact of video games on youth'. This question was less popular with candidates. This could be because of the nature of the writing format as it was a formal speech. Only 22% of candidates chose this question.

Most candidates wrote well-structured speeches with appropriate register and varied sentence structures, responding to all bullet points. Some candidates repeated similar information in both bullet point one (ভিডিও গেমের তিনটি ইতিবাচক প্রভাব) and bullet point three (ভিডিও গেমের প্রতি আকৃষ্ট হওয়ার তিনটি কারণ). A similar representation is also evident from some of the responses about bullet point two (ভিডিও গেমের তিনটি সম্ভাব্য

ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব) and bullet point four (ভিডিও গেম সম্বন্ধে তিনটি ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতা বা মতামত). Candidates were expected to present varied information relating to these bullet points.

Section B

Question 3

Question 3 required candidates to write an essay about 'পছন্দের কোনো একজন জ্ঞানী ব্যক্তির/মনীষীর জীবন এবং আদর্শ' - the life and ideals of a chosen thinker'. About 6% of candidates selected this essay topic, making it the least popular choice. The overall quality of responses was good, with many candidates providing biographies of several national and international role models. Some candidates chose role models from their own lives, such as their parents or teachers. It was evident that candidates had thoughtfully integrated their role model's contribution and work in society and how they were inspired by this. However, some essays lacked the balance in justifying role model's ethos and ideals and how these might have influenced or will have an impact on candidates' personal life.

Question 4

In **Question 4**, candidates were asked to write an essay about their 'ভ্রমণের অভিজ্ঞতা - travelling experience'. Approximately 83% of candidates chose this topic, making it the most popular essay title this year. While some candidates provided vivid descriptions of travelling experiences, many others strayed from the essay's focus. Their narratives often emphasised a camping adventure and sightseeing rather than detailing the travelling alongside it. Some responses included a memorised version of the journey by boat or train. There was another variety of representation where candidates described solely the importance of travelling. Some respondents also mentioned different modes of travel. Although there was varied content from different aspects of travelling on this topic and all perspectives were credited, coherent presentations had personalised travelling experiences of both the mode of transport and the destination as well as an inclusion of the importance of travelling with a justifiable introduction and conclusion.

Question 5

For **Question 5**, candidates were asked to write an essay on 'প্রতিযোগিতায় জয়ী হওয়াই বড়ো কথা নয়, অংশগ্রহণই মূল লক্ষ্য' - winning the competition is not a big deal, participation is the main goal'. About 11% of candidates chose this topic, making it the second most popular essay option this year. The strongest responses effectively compared the outcome of winning competitions and the benefits of participation in competitions addressed logically, keeping in line with the demand of the question. Exemplar responses were supported by well-argued examples and deserved good marks. However, some candidates overwhelmingly undermined the importance of winning competitions to highlight participation only.

Some generic erroneous examples from this series

Weaker responses contained some erroneous articulation that requires special attention to be addressed by teachers. Some of the common occurrences were:

- Associating formal and informal address in a sentence or incorrect pronoun-verb agreements, such as a sentence beginning with তিনি ending with করে or starting with তুমি and completing with করি.
- Incorrect use of *chandrobindoo*, such as আকাশের তাঁরা instead of আকাশের তারা or পাচ instead of পাঁচ.
- Inaccurate use of aspirated and unaspirated sounds, such as বালো, বরো where the correct spellings should be ভালো, বড়ো.
- Tendency to use anglicised words where words are available commonly in Bengali, for example, টেন্ট instead of তাঁবু.
- Missing punctuation in several instances.
- Colloquial expressions in writing, such as করবা, খাবা, যাবা, আসবা.
- Tendency to use য় incorrectly where ই should be used, such as ভালোয় কেটেছে in case of ভালোই কেটেছে.
- Incorrect word separation, such as কাজ গুলো, দিন গুলি instead of কাজগুলো, দিনগুলি.
- Frequent spelling errors, such as ভ্রমন, মনমুঞ্চকর, অভিগ্যতা.
- Inconsistent use of vowel signs, such as বন এ instead of বনে.
- Candidates attempting to create non-existent words, such as অবাকিত.

- Inconsistencies around the use of modifiers such as *jaw-fola* and conjuncts/joint letters. For example, **জন্ম** instead of **জন্য** and **বল্ল**, **যাচ্ছে** instead of **বললো**, **যাচ্ছে**.

General comments and recommendations

Section A

To score highly in **Section A**, candidates need to ensure all bullet points are covered thoroughly and expanded on, rather than presenting all elements of each bullet point in only one or two sentences. Use of good vocabulary, correct spelling, varied sentence structures and appropriate tenses is also required to access the highest marks.

Weaker responses may miss bullet points, have spelling errors, use dialect forms of the language, or misuse tenses or idioms. Candidates need to ensure they read each question carefully and address the specified event accurately. Preparing and practising responses in various formats (letters, reports, dialogues, speeches) can be beneficial for candidates in preparing for the exam.

Section B

In **Section B**, essays that addressed the question consistently with a clear, sophisticated style, proper vocabulary, logic, correct spelling, idiomatic language, varied sentence structures and tenses received higher marks. Creative use of imagery, similes and proverbs was noted positively, though some candidates were stronger than others. Candidates need to focus their essay writing on content, style, organisation and accuracy to score highly. Issues such as digression, inconsistencies and incorrect spelling affected some essays. Candidates should carefully identify key points in each essay question and provide well-developed responses. Accuracy in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sophisticated language and well-linked sentences are crucial for higher scores. Drafting a plan before starting to write is recommended.

Candidates should ensure they answer the specific question set; responses to a different or similar pre-prepared question will receive lower marks. Particular attention should be paid to word limits, spelling accuracy and appropriate idiom use. Candidates are recommended to double-check their chosen question number and proofread their responses.

BENGALI

Paper 3204/02
Language Usage and Comprehension

Key messages

- It is important that candidates carefully identify the key points required to answer each question.
- It is expected that candidates write accurately following correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar rules.
- Candidates should proofread their responses.

General comments

The entry for this paper in June 2024 was 3102. This paper comprises of the Bengali language use and comprehension which is comparable to last year's Question paper. Students were tested on their knowledge of grammar, manipulation of sentences and comprehension skills through a variety of tasks. It was pleasing to note that most students had completed the paper within the time allowed. There were very few examples of unfinished or partially answered questions.

The performances of several students were outstanding, though there were examples of students who could have achieved better if they had practised and embedded adequate and relevant exam techniques for this examination. Most students coped well with basic grammar tasks and the comprehension questions at a varied level. The quality of the Bengali in answers was very broad. Some students demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very skilfully. There were also instances where students were unable to write answers in their own words, even at a very simple level. It should be noted that students who rely too heavily on the text cannot gain access to the higher marks for the quality of their language. On the other hand, attempts to write answers that make an effort to manipulate language are rewarded more generously, even when this results in increased inaccuracy, so long as it does not interfere with comprehension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question A1: Separation of Words (1–5)

This question comprises the task to separate 5 combined words. This task was quite straightforward except **A1(2)**, **A1(3)** and **A1(5)** where several students committed spelling errors to combine the words correctly.

Many students found **A1(2)** difficult, where instead of displaying the correct answer উৎ + হত they have written উৎ + ধত, উদ + ধত, উঃ+ ধত, উ + অন্ত etc. Similarly in A1(3), instead of the correct answer নে + অক many students responded wrongly as নাঃ + অক, ন + আয়ক, না + উয়ক etc. In **A1(5)** instead of writing সৎ + ভাব, most students displayed সড় +আব, সৎ + অভাব, সঃ + ভাব etc. The average score recorded was 4.

Question A2 (6–10): Idioms, Proverbs, and Words in Pairs

This question comprises a gap filling task followed by idioms, proverbs, and words in pairs to be lifted in the appropriate gaps in 5 set sentences. It was pleasing to see the majority of students were able to answer this question correctly, though there were instances where many students struggled to lift the correct idioms/proverbs/words in pairs. In **A2(8)**, several students picked পথে বসা instead of the correct answer খয়ের খাঁ and were not able to score any marks there. The average score on this question recorded was 6 marks.

Question A3 (11–15): Sentence Transformation

The task comprises transforming sentences based on clues either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence. This question was responded to well by able learners. However, less able students responded poorly, particularly on **Question 11**. They often struggled to manipulate particularly the essence of A11 appropriately and so scored 0. Students needed to transform the sentence into an imperative or interrogative sentence. Instead, they copied the stimulus changing the word order of one or two words. For example, they simply wrote as অনেক টাকা উপর্জন করতে সকলে/সবাই চায়. However, most candidates answered **Question 12**, **Question 13**, **Question 14** and **Question 15** correctly. Some students came up with wrong answers in **Question 15** due to their lack of knowledge about differentiating between direct and indirect speech. On the other hand, able students understood what was required of them to correctly answer this question in changing indirect speech to direct speech. The average score recorded on this question was 8 marks.

Question A4: Cloze Passage (16–25)

This is a gap filling exercise where students had to choose the 10 correct words from the word list provided. There is no pattern in their answers. Performance in this section was mixed. Very few students answered all the questions correctly. However, many students found **Questions A4 (16)**, **A4 (21)** and **A4 (22)**, **A4 (24)** and **A4 (25)** challenging and came up with wrong answers. The average score for this question was 12.

Section B

Question B5: Multiple Choice Comprehension (26–32)

The performance on this section was quite good. By and large, candidates answered questions correctly, though **Question 29** proved really very challenging for them. In answering **Question 29**, many candidates opted for **A** or **B** instead of **D** which was the correct answer. The average mark scored was 12.

Section C

Question C6: OE Comprehension (33–38)

This question comprises of OE comprehension followed by a set questionnaire. Most students performed well on this question particularly on **33**, **34** and **35**. However, **Question 36** was moderately scoring for most students, and **Questions 37** and **38** posed severe challenge for most weaker students. In general, several students answered the questions without any manipulation of language simply by lifting chunks of text, which prevented them from scoring well. The average mark scored was 28.

Question C7: Vocabulary (39–43)

Overall, the performance of the students was mixed. Hardly any student could score full marks in this section. Most students answered **Question 39** correctly. In answering **Question 41**, many students used a paraphrase rather than a single phrase. For example, the synonym of Bengali word ক্লান্তি are শ্রান্তি /অবসন্নতা/দুর্বলতা etc., but they used paraphrases such as শক্তি কম বোধ করা or শরীর যখন শক্তিহীন হয়ে উঠে. Also, the word is a noun, but many students answered in adjective, for example, instead of দুর্বলতা/শ্রান্তি/অবসন্ন they have written দুর্বল/শ্রান্ত/অবসন্ন etc., which are adjectives. Many students could not answer **Question 42** correctly. They have instead used words like আসল, ঘটনা which have no relevance to the word রুট. **Question 43** was answered very well. Most students scored full marks for this question. The average mark scored was 6.