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.

The published Mark Scheme has been updated to more accurately reflect the version used by examiners during marking, including a clearer breakdown of mark allocation, particularly for Section B. It remains consistent with previous years, and no changes have been made to the marking approach.

General Overview

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the performance of candidates who sat the Cambridge O Level Bengali (3204/01) examination in the June 2025 session. It also offers recommendations aimed at enhancing outcomes for future cohorts.

Approximately 3,070 candidates were entered for the examination this session, achieving an average mark of 68.7 out of a maximum of 90. On the whole, candidate performance was good, with a slight increase compared to the previous year. Encouragingly, the majority of candidates responded to both sections of the paper as required, irrespective of their overall proficiency.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Directed Writing

Question 1

This question was the most frequently attempted, with 95.5 per cent of the candidates selecting it. Candidates were required to write a letter about their first cooking experience (প্রথমবারের মতো রান্না করার চেষ্টা).

Most responses were well-developed, realistic, but occasionally imaginative at times, displaying sound linguistic competence and a clear structure. Candidates generally referred effectively to the content demanded by the question. However, a notable number of candidates failed to fully elaborate on the fourth bullet point, which asked for three aspects of learning from this cooking experience (এই অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে কী শিখলে). Regarding the first bullet point, a few candidates did not pay attention to the required information of 'where ('কোথায়')' and missed part of the communication. Some responses either focused disproportionately on first-time cooking experiences with minimal reference to the reasons for cooking or vice versa. The highest-scoring responses conveyed a balanced account of all four aspects.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write a dialogue on the use of the internet in education (সর্বত্র শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে ইন্টারনেটের ব্যবহার). Despite being a popular topic, only 4.5 per cent of the candidates opted for it. This relatively low selection rate may be due to the format of the task – 'dialogue' writing, which appeared more demanding to the candidates.

Among those who attempted it, the majority demonstrated a good grasp of the required structure and tone, incorporating appropriate salutations and a variety of sentence constructions. Nonetheless, there was a tendency to repeat content across bullet points. Responses that successfully presented varied and distinct points for each bullet scored higher. Some candidates did not achieve full marks because they did not fully followed the format of this task.

Section B: Composition

Question 3

In this question, candidates were asked to write an essay on 'balanced diet for keeping healthy' (স্বাস্থ্যরক্ষায় সুষম খাদ্য). This was the least popular topic; 17.7 per cent of the candidates chose to write about this topic.

Responses were generally good. Candidates wrote on a wide range of food habits, both healthy and unhealthy. However, the idea of a balanced diet was missing in most of the responses. Several responses lacked a clear connection between a balanced diet and health. Most of the responses were heavily focused on avoiding unhealthy and junk food. Candidates who presented their views on the importance of a balanced diet and how it helps to maintain a healthy life secured higher marks.

Question 4

This essay focused on 'experience of travelling to a historical place' (কোনো ঐতিহাসিক স্থানে ভ্রমণের অভিজ্ঞতা) and was the most popular option in **Section B**, attempted by approximately 64.4 per cent of the candidates.

While many candidates delivered vivid and engaging narratives, a significant proportion diverged from the central theme of referring to a historical place. Some focused primarily on travelling with very little description of the place visited. In some cases, essays presented visits to places without historical importance.

Despite this variation, responses that combined with the journey and a historical destination, alongside reflections on the history of the place, framed within a coherent introduction and conclusion, were rewarded accordingly. The most successful essays displayed originality, coherence, and a clear connection to the topic- a visit to a historical place.

Question 5

This topic required candidates to write an essay on 'a favourite novel you have read' (তোমার পড়া প্রিয় উপন্যাস). 17.9 per cent of candidates attempted this question, making it the second most popular essay topic.

Stronger responses demonstrated a balanced reflection on the selected novel, the reasons for their choice, the way they emotionally attached to it, and the details on the protagonists. These essays were often supported by well-coherent examples. However, several candidates focused too heavily on their preference rather than on depicting the theme and the characters of the novel, neglecting to acknowledge how the story captured their utmost attention. Balanced and nuanced perspectives were rewarded with higher marks on this question.

Common linguistic and orthographic errors

Several recurrent linguistic and spelling issues were observed among weaker responses. Careful attention will support the avoidance of these errors in the future.

- **Mixing formal and informal forms of address** (e.g., starting a sentence with 'তিনি' and concluding it with a verb form such as 'বলে'– তিনি বলে).
- **Incorrect pronoun-verb agreement,** such as, 'সে যাই, আমি করে'.
- **Misuse of diacritics and modifiers**, including the chandrobindu, e.g., writing 'কেঁটে (cut)' instead of 'কেটে (cut)' or 'কর্বে' instead of 'করবে'.
- **Incorrect use of aspirated consonants**, such as 'পরলাম' (read) or 'বাইড়ে' (outside) in places of 'পড়লাম' or 'বাইরে'.
- **Unnecessary Anglicisation**, e.g., using 'ফ্যাটি' rather than the widely recognised Bengali word 'চর্বিযুক্ত'.
- **Use of colloquial expressions** inappropriate for formal writing, such as 'জানাবা', 'বলবা'.
- **Misuse of vowel markers**, such as 'ভালোয় লেগেছে' instead of 'ভালোই লেগেছে'.
- **Improper word separation**, e.g., 'কাজ গুলো' instead of 'কাজগুলো or 'গিয়ে ছিলাম' instead of 'গিয়েছিলাম'.
- **Common spelling errors**, e.g., 'ভ্রমন', 'মনমুগ্ধকর', 'অনাকাংখিত'.
- **Incorrect conjunct formations and compound letters**, such as 'জন্' for 'জন্য', and 'বল্ল', 'যাচ্ছে' instead of 'বললো', 'যাচ্ছে'.
- **Invented or non-existent words**, e.g., 'অবাকিত'.
- **Choice of incorrect words,** such as 'জলে' (burn) instead of 'জ্বলে'.
- **Missing or incorrect punctuation** and **inconsistent use of tense**.

General recommendations

Section A (Directed Writing)

- Ensure that all bullet points are fully addressed and expressed in detail, rather than being reduced to a few brief lines.
- Employ a wide vocabulary with accurate spelling and varied sentence structures. Ensure appropriate use of tense.
- Avoid dialectal and colloquial language in formal compositions.
- Carefully read and interpret the question prompt to ensure relevant and focused responses.
- Practice writing in a variety of formats (letters, reports, speeches, dialogues, etc.) to develop flexibility and accuracy.

Section B (Essay Writing)

- High-scoring essays consistently address the given title, demonstrating clarity, creativity, and command over style, vocabulary, and grammar.
- Responses should be well-organised, incorporating logical progression, idiomatic expression, and sophisticated linking of ideas.
- Creative literary devices, such as imagery, similes, and proverbs, should be used judiciously and relevantly.
- Plan responses before writing to ensure coverage of all aspects: content, organisation, and linguistic accuracy.
- Adherence to the specific essay question is essential; off-topic or memorised responses score poorly.
- **Maintain word limits** and **review** responses for grammatical and spelling accuracy.
- Check question numbers and proofread all written work before submission.

This report aims to support teachers and candidates in recognising both strengths and areas for development in preparation for future examination sessions. Careful attention to linguistic accuracy, structure, and relevance to the question set will significantly enhance overall performance.

BENGALI

Key messages

- Candidates must carefully identify the key points required to answer each question.
- Candidates must write accurately, following correct spelling, punctuation and grammar rules.
- In **Section C – OE comprehension,** candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to manipulate language by writing in their own words and avoiding direct lifts from the text.
- Candidates should proofread their responses.

General comments

The entry for this paper in June 2025 was about 3070. This paper assesses candidates' use and comprehension of the Bengali language. Candidates were assessed on their understanding of grammar, sentence construction and reading comprehension through a variety of tasks. The majority of candidates managed time well and were able to complete the paper within the allocated time. There were very few examples of unfinished or partially answered questions.

The performances of several candidates were outstanding, but some candidates could have performed better if they had practised and embedded relevant exam techniques for this examination. Most candidates managed the basic grammar tasks and comprehension questions competently, although performance varied. The quality of Bengali used in responses ranged widely. Some candidates demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very skilfully. However, there were instances where some candidates were unable to write answers in their own words, even at a very simple level. It should be noted that candidates who rely too heavily on the text cannot gain access to the higher marks for the quality of their language. On the other hand, responses that show an effort to use original language are more likely to receive higher marks, even if they contain inaccuracies – provided those inaccuracies do not hinder overall comprehension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question A1: Separation of words (1 – 5)

This question requires candidates to combine 5 separated words. This task was quite straightforward to answer following the grammatical rules to combine words. Candidates who have practised this technique, as part of their learning, successfully scored full marks. Many candidates were unable to achieve full or partial marks due to a lack of awareness of grammatical rules and correct spellings, which were essential components of the assessment.

In answering **Question 1**, many candidates have written অত্যাধিক instead of অত্যধিক. There was a higher number of mistakes in **Question 3**, where the correct answer was গবাক্ষ. Wrong answers included গক্ষ, গরোক্ষ, গবেক্ষ, or even গায়ক, which has no similarity in the meaning of the word spelling of the correct answer. Many candidates answered **Question 2** correctly, with উদ্ধার as the answer. Others have written উপহার or উদার. Some candidates have answered উদধার, which did not use the combined letter দ্ধ. No mark was credited for this. Only a few candidates made mistakes in answering **Question 5**, where the correct answer was ব্যর্থ. Some candidates made spelling mistakes like ব্যার্থ, which did not earn any marks. Some candidates answered meaningless words such as বীর্থ or বের্থ. The average mark scored was 4 marks.

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. The majority of candidates were able to answer this question correctly, though there were instances where a small number of candidates struggled to lift the correct idioms, proverbs or words in pairs. This was particularly evident on **Question 6** and **Question 7**. The average mark scored on this question was 8 marks.

Question A3 (11 – 15): Sentence Transformation

This task requires candidates to transform sentences based on clues either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence. Able learners generally responded well to this question. Some candidates struggled, particularly with manipulating the structure of item A12, and as a result, scored 0 or 1. They were expected to change the negative sentence into a positive form. For example, for full marks, candidates were expected to write লোকটি শিক্ষিত হলেও অভদ্র or যদিও লোকটি শিক্ষিত কিন্তু সে অভদ্র and similar. However, many candidates answered in a negative form. For example, many have written লোকটি শিক্ষিত হলেও ভদ্র নয় or similar. For this, candidates received 1 mark instead of 2. For **Question 13**, candidates were expected to transform শিক্ষকের আদেশ আমি সর্বদা মান্য করি into a negative sentence, having শিক্ষকের আদেশ আমি কখনও অমান্য করি না। কখনও and অমান্য as key words. Many candidates did not change সর্বদা to কখনও, thus receiving only 1 mark. Many candidates found transforming **Question 14** into exclamatory sentences very challenging. To achieve 2 marks, they were expected to use the word কী and ছিলো. Those used only কী or omitted ছিলো, receiving only 1 mark. Candidates who have answered বেশ চমৎকার ছিল সূর্যাস্তের দৃশ্যটি or similar did not get any mark as the sentence was not exclamatory without the use of কী or কী না. For answering **Question 15** correctly, most candidates knew that they were expected to change the indirect speech to a direct speech. However, most candidates obtained only 1 mark as they have omitted the key word আপনি বা তুমি. A small number of candidates have answered in indirect speech such as ভদ্রলোকটি বললেন যে, 'আমার পাশে বসতে হবে'. The average mark scored was 7 marks.

Question A4: Cloze Passage (16 – 25)

This is a gap filling exercise where candidates must choose the 10 correct words from the word list provided. Performance in this section was mixed, showing no pattern in candidates' answers. Very few candidates answered all the questions correctly. Several candidates provided varied wrong answers for **Questions A4(16)**, **A4(20)** and **A4(25)**.The average mark scored was 14 marks.

Section B

Question B5: Multiple Choice Comprehension (26 – 32)

Candidate performance in this section was generally strong. Overall, candidates responded well to most items in this section, but **Question 30** proved particularly challenging for many. In **Question 29,** many candidates selected options **A** or **B** instead of **D**, which was the correct answer. The average mark scored was 10 marks.

Section C

Question C6: OE comprehension (33 – 38)

This year, candidates performed reasonably well in this section. Despite its inherent difficulty, requiring responses to be written in their own words rather than lifted directly from the text, many demonstrated a sound understanding of the task. Except for a small number of high-achieving candidates, very few managed to attain full marks in this section. There was a wide spread of marks. Many candidates performed well on **Question 34**, whereas performance on **Question 35** was more varied. Some candidates lifted the whole sentence from the stem and added the word পরিবেশ. This was not accepted as an answer worthy of credit. Many candidates used text from the quotation by Rabindranath written in the 1st person, which was not a

valid answer. Few candidates lifted text from the insert without any manipulation and did not achieve any marks for the whole section. More able candidates achieved marks by changing one word. For example, in **Question 33**, instead of writing এই শান্তিনিকেতনের as written in the insert, some candidates wrote এর. Similarly, some candidates scored marks by simply changing the order of the sentences. For example, in **Question 36**, the insert stated: "এই শান্তিনিকেতনের আকাশে বাতাসে রবীন্দ্র সঙ্গীতের সাথে সাথে কবি গান, বাউল গান ধ্বনিত হয়" and many candidates reproduced the information as রবীন্দ্র সঙ্গীতের সাথে সাথে কবি গান, বাউল গান ধ্বনিত হয় এই শান্তিনিকেতনের আকাশে বাতাসে.

Question 38 showed the highest incidence of lifting and the lowest performance within this section (C6). Some candidates misinterpreted Rabindranath Tegore's contribution with the ways people at home and away remember him, which lead to scores of 0. Many candidates also appeared to have confused **Question 36** with **Question 37**, and vice versa – likely due to not reading the rubric carefully. As a result, their responses followed the sequence of the content in the insert rather than addressing the specific requirements of each question. This issue should be highlighted to centres so that it can be addressed as part of exam preparation. The average mark scored was 26 marks.

Question C7: Vocabulary (39 – 43)

Candidates need to practise finding appropriate synonyms for each word following the rubric. Spelling mistakes were another factor for candidates scoring less marks than they might have otherwise achieved. Overall, candidates' performance was below the expected level. For **Question 39**, many candidates answered মাঠ which means field, not courtyard. Some came up with words such as বাগান, প্রকৃতি etc. Performance on **Question 40** was moderate, whereas **Question 41** was well-answered. Some candidates scored only 1 mark due to wrong spellings like সম্পূর্ণ as সমপূর্ণ. Performance on **Question 42** was mixed. Many candidates were not able to respond to **Question 43**. There were some instances of spelling mistakes, such as সম্পূর্ণ to সমপূর্ন; সন্তুষ্ট to সনতুস্ট; উদাহরণ to উদাহরন. The average mark scored was 3 marks.