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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In Sinhala (4SI1)

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Summer 2019

Publications Code 4SI1\_01\_1906\_ER

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## **A Brief Introduction to the GESE International Sinhala Paper 2019**

This report will be the first analytical examiner's report for the International GCSE (9-1) Sinhala paper in 2019. This report, therefore, is different from its legacy reports. Teachers and students may find it useful to read exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments of the chief examiner for questions 1-7. This is the first examination of the new specification introduced in 2017 and the first opportunity for candidates to sit for the new paper. The intention of this report is to give a very short entry to get an idea of the performance of the candidates who sat for the examination.

This paper consists of three sections. i.e. Section A : Reading Comprehension - 40 marks ( 40% A01), Section B: Writing - 40 marks (40% A02) and Section C : Translation - 20 marks (20% A03).

Section A consists of 4 questions i.e. questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. Section B consists of 2 questions i.e. questions 5 and 6 and Section C consists of 1 question i.e. question number 7.

All these three sections are assessed through a 2 hours and 30 minutes examination. The total number of marks available is 100 for the paper. Every question in each section has a link to any of the themes in the specification.

### **Section A – Reading Comprehension**

A01:

Question 1 is a closed response test which is in another words is a gap fill or word drop question. It contains 6 marks.

Question 2 is a multiple matching (three column multiple matching) question in which candidates read three texts (in three speech bubbles) by three different persons and respond to the statements below marking a cross in the grid provided. It contains 8 marks.

Question 3 is a note taking (note completion) question which is a text from a certain source such as a web page or a paper cutting. Candidates have to fill the gaps appropriately in the statements given below. It contains 12 marks.

Question 4 has two parts i.e. part 4(a) and part 4(b). Part 4(a) is an open response question which is a literary text that is an extract from

a novel, short story, biography etc. Candidates have to write short answers correctly in the spaces given below the text. It contains 10 marks all together. Part 4(b) is an extended writing question based on the question 4(a) in which there is a dialogue between two people as the text. Candidates have to summarize the opinions of each person. This question contains 4 marks i.e. 2 marks per each summary.

The length of each test item is approximately given in the setter's guidelines. For example, word count of question 1 is in between 143 to 154 words. Similarly, the length of question 2 is between 176 to 182 words, question 3 is between 187 to 193 words, question 4(a) is between 220 to 226 words and question 4(b) is between 269 to 275 words. The texts are carefully selected from different sources with a link to a certain topic in five themes in the specification. Total number of marks for the section is 40.

### **Section B – writing**

A02:

These two questions are writing tasks that can either be narrative or descriptive writings according to the task.

Question 5 is comparatively a shorter piece of guided writing of about 85 words. There are four prompts provided in four boxes to support candidates to write on the given topic. It contains 14 marks.

Question 6 is a longer writing task which is also a guided writing. More formal writing with register and style is expected to give a high mark. Candidates have to write a long essay type of about 145 words. There are three options given so that candidates can select one out of them to respond as they wished. The format of the question, for example, is to write a letter, an article, a report or an email etc. This question contains 26 marks in total.

These questions also have a link to a topic of the themes suggested in the specification. Total number of marks for the section is 40.

## **Section C – Translation**

A03:

This section consists only one question that is the question 7 (last question of the paper). A paragraph of about 93 to 99 words in English language is provided as the test item. Candidates have to translate it into the Sinhala language sensibly. The translation is successful if a Sinhala speaker can understand the translation without having understood the English text.

## **Summary of the questions in the paper**

### **Section A – Reading Comprehension**

#### Question 1

Candidates were asked to read a text about varieties of fruits and vegetables in Sri Lanka. What they are, where they are grown and how they are grown, transported and processed etc. Then the candidates were asked to choose the correct word for each statement from the box provided below the text. There were 12 words and an example given in the box. Candidates had to drop the correct letter from the box into the answer grid against every statement.

Majority of candidates had understood the rubrics and responded very well. A very few of them had not understood the task properly, may be, because they were less able to read Sinhala language. An average number of candidates were satisfactory. The most frequent correct answers given were 1(a) cool, 1(b) low country, 1(e) to Maldives Island. Less able candidates had confused 1(c) ..... was not an indigenous yam (correct answer was *Innala*). Most able candidates had answered all questions well. The overall performance was up to the standard.

#### Question 2

Candidates were asked to read three speeches made by three students about transport in Sri Lanka. Then there were six statements with an example in a grid below the reading passages for candidates to put a cross against each statement correctly. One statement i.e. A. (Mentions about *Pel Kavi* literature) did not match with any of the speakers. Statements C and F matched with one speaker each and B, D and E matched with two speakers respectively. Candidates were then asked to put a cross in the right box against each statement under the name of the speaker. Most able candidates had responded the questions very well as a whole. Less able candidates had made a few mistakes. The most candidates had confused statement A (*Pel kavi* with *Gel kavi*). This

mistake was made by the majority of average candidates. Most candidates had successfully answered other statements.

Some candidates had marked crosses in too many boxes unnecessarily thereby failing to score full marks for this question.

### Question 3

Candidates were asked to read a text provided about Arts and Humanities in Sri Lanka. They were asked to fill in the gaps correctly with appropriate information from the text in the statements given below.

The most frequently correct answers given were (a) written literature AND oral literature, (b) fifth century C.E., (d) public libraries AND university libraries (g) drumming OR dancing.

Less successful candidates confused (c) fiction writers OR poets OR playwrights OR journalists (e) pottery AND basket weaving and (h) South Asian music OR western classical music OR contemporary music OR film songs.

Some candidates had written something with no sense at all while a very few had not made any attempt.

### Question 4(a)

Candidates were asked to read the text provided about Early Settlements of Man, an extract from the translation by W.O.T Fernando from the original work 'Letters from a father to His Daughter' by Jawaharlal Nehru. The candidates were then asked to answer the questions correctly in the spaces given below.

The most frequently correct answers given were (i) villages AND cities (ii) hunting (viii) when he was a hunter.

Less successful candidates had confused (iii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii). Some candidates had written something with no sense at all while a very few had not made any attempt.

### Question 4(b)

Candidates were asked to read the opinions of two speakers for and against 'Life in the Village and the City' and then to summarize the two views in the spaces given below.

Most of the candidates had written reasonably good summaries. Some had used extra sheets to provide their summaries where either they had made a mistake in their first attempt or not being able to manage with the spaces provided. The least able candidates had not attempted to answer the question while some had just copied a line or two from the original text or had written senseless lines of words in the spaces.

## **Section B – writing**

### Question 5

Candidates were asked to write a short account of about school trips. There were four prompts provided to guide candidates to write a full account referring to the past, present and future time lines. The benefits, educational value, a recent trip and a future trip were the four prompts given in the paper as guidelines.

Most candidates had written reasonably good answers to get a considerable score. Most of the answers provided by the candidates were their own personal experience that they had had from their schools trips recently. A much fewer number of candidates had not made any attempt to write anything while some had written something at least to get a mark or two. Most able candidates had understood the instructions as given but less able candidates had not understood them properly. So they had not answered the questions as it should have been done.

### Question 6

Frequently answered option was option 1 'Let's Listen to Adults'. An average number of candidates had chosen other two options 2 i.e. 'An Email to Amisha' and option 3 'Sports in Sri Lanka'. The most able candidates had performed very well covering all three bullet points in each option. Less able candidates had written their entries fairly in general as they had felt the topic that they had chosen to write. A few had no idea of what they were supposed to do, may be, since they had a little knowledge about the format of an essay writing or less ability to handle the language in its style or register.

### Question 7

The passage given (in English language) was 'Social Media in Sri Lanka'. Most candidates had translated the article into Sinhala to secure a reasonable mark. An average number of candidates had roughly translated it as they had understood the text. Most candidates had not translated some words such as social media, developed countries, handheld devices, low income, urban areas and southeast correctly into Sinhala. Sometimes they had misunderstood social media as social networks or web sites. Frequently they had mixed social media with social networks.

## Summary and advice to centres

Marks lost in this examination are most typified by answers provided in the following questions.

### Section A

Qs 1, 2, 3 and 4. These questions tested candidates understanding of key vocabulary items listed in the specification for Foundation level. Candidates should be aware these are the items that will be tested.

### Tips

#### Q 2

The question titled, i.e. 'Transport in Sri Lanka' provides an important clue. Advise candidates to read the rubrics carefully before they start to answer the question. For example: Some of the sentences or people might have more than one cross or none.

Advise candidates to use the reading time available to think about the question title and the key words they are likely to hear.

Candidates sometimes crossed too many boxes in the grids.

Advise candidates to check the number of marks available for each question. These are noted at the bottom of each question set. For example: (Total for Question 2 = 8 marks)

#### Qs 3, 4(a) and 4(b)

These questions asked candidates to briefly respond to questions asked in Sinhala

The questions titled 'Arts and Humanities' and 'Early settlements of Man' are reading passages.

Advise candidates to read (skim or scan) the texts carefully and write correct phrases in the gaps to fit the questions asked.

Short answers only are required. Too much information given can sometimes negate the correct response.

Q4(b) is a summary writing question.

Advise candidates to read the views of the speakers and brief their opinions (the gist of the ideas) in the space provided.

### Section B

Qs 5 and 6. These questions asked candidates to write essays about the given topics in Sinhala

### Tips

Advise candidates to follow the bullet points as guidelines to write compressively a full account to get full marks. For example, in Q 5 School Trips - The benefits, Educational value, A recent trip, A future trip. These suggestions direct students to give a brief introduction to the topic and three time lines that they should use in their piece of writing.

Advise candidates to use style (register of language appropriately) and also to check grammar and spelling.

### Section C

#### Q7

This is the only question candidates get to translate into Sinhala.

Advise candidates to be aware of the Sinhala equivalents for English words.

Advise candidates to carefully read the English text sentence by sentence or meaningful chunk by chunk.

Also advise candidates to translate the text using a separate sheet first and make amendments to it before they write the correct Sinhala text in the exam paper.