



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Sinhala (4SI1) Paper 01

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## **Introduction**

This is the examiner's report for the International GCSE (9-1) Sinhala paper in 2023. This will be the fifth analytical report provided by the chief examiner regarding the examinations, started from the year 2019. So therefore, this report is going to be very much like the previous one and totally different from its legacy reports before that. 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. As mentioned above, this is the fifth examination of the new specification introduced in 2017 and the fifth opportunity for candidates to sit for another paper alike they have already seen in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022.

The intention of this report is to give a short entry to get an idea of the performance of the candidates who sat for the examination in 2023. 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 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 must 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 must 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 must 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 referring to past, present, and future events. The question 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 are supposed to write a long essay type of about 145 words. There are three options i.e., option 1(a), option 2(b) and option 3(c) 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, a blog, an email, etc. Also needs to be referring to the past, present, and future events. This question contains 26 marks in total. Each option has 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 are expected to translate it into 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 "Animal Care" a shelter for cats and dogs in Sri Lanka. The content was focused on looking for some volunteers for the centre to look after the needs of the rescued animals brought to the centre, cook food for them, 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 (each letter represented a word/phrase) 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 correctly, may be, because they were less able to read Sinhala language or not knowing the type of the question set to test their reading ability. An average number of candidates were satisfactory. The most frequent correct answers given were 1(b) near, 1(c) free roam, (d) support and 1(e) prepare. Less able candidates had confused 1(a) animal lovers, and 1(f) lower the number. Most able candidates had answered all questions very well. The less able candidates had made common mistakes such as mixed answers with the wrong boxes. One or two candidates have written letters in the spaces in the statements rather than in the relevant boxes. The overall performance was up to the standard.

### Question 2

Candidates were asked to read three speeches made by three students i.e., Nirasha, Ibrahim and Selvam. They were talking about "The Climate in Sri Lanka," its behaviour patterns, statistics, and the changes, etc. 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., E (Speaks about the direction of the wind.) did not match with any of the speakers. Statements C and D matched with one speaker each and A, B, and F 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 statements A and C (Says the climate has changed and Sri Lanka is close to the equator.) This mistake was made by most average candidates. Most candidates had successfully answered the other statements. Some candidates had marked crosses in too many boxes unnecessarily thereby failing to score full marks for this question. And a very few had crossed against the example or the statement E, the mismatched one to lose marks.

### Question 3

Candidates were asked to read a text about “Creative Activities”, a description of a programme for children conducted by a well-known person in Sri Lanka. Then candidates 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 (c) mental and physical, (e) total person and appreciate arts to live happily as excellent human being. Several candidates had shown some success in answering to (a) competitive and put huge pressure (b) formal and informal (d) under fifteen and (g) Somalatha Subhasingha. Less successful candidates had not been able to answer to statements (h) once a year and (f) aesthetic subjects. Some candidates had written anything with no sense at all while a very few had not made any attempt. Overall performance was satisfactory.

### Question 4(a)

Candidates were asked to read a text provided about “Importance of Saving”, an amended extract from “Dhanawatheku Wiime Maga” a book written by Dr. Chandima Gomes. Candidates were then asked to answer the questions correctly in the spaces given below. The most frequently correct answers given were (ii) for the betterment of the world (iii) to give an engineering advice and (iv) Kirulaponne. Less successful candidates had difficulties in answering questions (i) to save for himself and save for others, (v) knew the writer is coming to meet the businessman (vi) fully light up with colourful lights and music came through the walls and (vii) about the wasteful lifestyles of some people and energy can be used in a positive manner. Some candidates had written anything with no sense at all while a very few had not made any attempt. Overall performance was satisfactory.

### Question 4(b)

Candidates were asked to read the opinions of two speakers (Thamara and Kingsley) talking about “Saving for Future.” And then asked to summarise the two views in the spaces given below. Most candidates had given reasonably good summaries. Some had used extra sheets to provide their summaries where either they had made a mistake in their first trial or not being able to manage with the space 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 “An Exemplary Role”. There were four prompts provided to guide candidates to write a full account referring to the past, present, and future timelines. The four prompts provided to guide candidates were "The person you liked most", "Reasons for liking them", " Importance of having a role model" and "Future impacts of their influence". The first prompt referred to the past tense, the second and the third to the present and the last prompt referred to the future. Most candidates had written reasonably good answers to get a considerable score. Most answers proved to be candidates' personal experiences that they had chosen their mother or father as their role model. Most able candidates had understood the instructions as given and written a well organised pieces of writings about the worl recognised personals, but less able candidates had not understood the task properly. Those less able candidates had not answered the question as intended. A very few candidates had not made any attempt to write anything while some had written something at least to get a mark or two. Some had written a lengthy answer but missed some prompts not being able to earn full marks. The average performance is satisfactory.

### Question 6

Candidates were asked to write option (a) an essay, (b) article and (c) blog entry. Frequently answered option was option (a). ' Write an essay for a children’s magazine about a trip you made.'. A considerable number of candidates had also chosen the option (b) “Imagine you are a member of a Youth Sports Club in Anuradhapura. Write an article for a sports journal to outline the benefits of regular exercise for a healthy life.” An average number of candidates had chosen the option (c) i.e., “Write a blog entry giving examples of how Sri Lanka uses technology to communicate as a country.” 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. One candidate had crossed the second option and answered the to the first option. May be by mistake, so didn’t penalise.

## Question 7

The passage given (in English language) was "Traditional costumes 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. Some candidates had not translated some words/phrases such as traditional costume, research, native people, garment, minimal, functional, office women, cultures, and professions into Sinhala. Many candidates had mistaken garment with garment factory, cultures with nations and native with local. A very few could distinguish the meaning between national dress and the traditional costume in Sinhala. The overall performance is satisfactory.

### **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 4b.

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

#### **Question 1**

The topic "Animal Care" is now a well-known thing in Sri Lanka and there are a lot of discussions available. People such as Otara Dell has been publicly known for the subject so that candidates should know what they are going to read about. Advise candidates to read the rubrics in Sinhala carefully before they start to answer the question. For example: Fill in the blanks; write the correct letter in the box. Advise candidates to use the reading time available and select the correct letter from the box to fit properly in the blanks. Emphasise them write the "letters" in the appropriate boxes instead of writing the words in the spaces.

## **Question 2**

The question titled "Climate in Sri Lanka" is again a well-known area the candidates should have been taught. Almost every news bulletin ends in briefing the weather report of the day. A child of this age should have read about the weather, climate, and seasonal changes in Sri Lanka as they learn Sinhala. 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) Therefore, there should be maximum of eight crosses marked. Crossing too much means they are not aware of the way they should have answered the question.

## **Questions 3, 4(a) and 4(b)**

These questions asked candidates to briefly respond to questions asked in Sinhala. The questions titled "Creative Activities", and "The Importance of Savings" 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 therefore, no full sentences are expected to write in the spaces given. Too much information provided 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 as guided. One line is provided for each answer. Tell them not to pick the lines from the text to write the answers. Some not being able to manage the space given usually go for extra papers so that ePen system cannot be used to mark the papers. So encourage candidates to use the maximum use of the spaces provided for each answer.

## Section B

### Questions 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 AN Exemplary Role (Role Model) - "The person you liked most", "Reasons for liking them", "Importance of having a role model" and "Future impacts of their influence". These suggestions direct students to give a brief introduction to the topic and three timelines that they should use in their piece of writing. Advise candidates to use style (register of language appropriately) and to check grammar and spelling. Advise candidates to read the prompts carefully before they start writing their essays. Mother or father can be the candidate's best role model but there are plenty of other well-known persons, too rather than their own parents so teach them to think broadly into a topic given to assess their writing ability.

One candidate had selected one option from Q6 but answered to another by making mistake such as crossed 6(a) and answered 6(b) or 6(c). Many had not met the basic requirement to get full marks because of either not being able to cover all three bullet points or not being able to show the ability to use past and future tenses correctly as the question intended to use. Some had written very long yet others had very short answers. Advise candidates to see the number of words required in the instructions. And ask them to use a formal language to suite the task rather than using the day-to-day spoken language. For example, Q6 option (a) the command word/phrase was to 'write an essay'. therefore, candidates should use the proper written Sinhala rather than spoken Sinhala. Most candidates had used simple spoken language as they generally speak in Sinhala rather than using the standard written language as expected in the guidelines. Especially, candidates had written past tense wrongly. Many had failed to concord the subject and verb agreement.

## **Section C**

### **Question 7**

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

### Tips

Advise candidates to take one English phrase/clause/sentence separately and translate it into Sinhala first and then rewrite all of them as a meaningful passage with correct sequence marks to make the translation a proper Sinhala version of the given English text rather than translating word to word as in the English text. The marks given to correct number of phrases written so missing words/phrases may affect to reduce the number of marks available.

