



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Sinhala (4SI1)

Paper 01: Reading, Writing and Translation

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Introduction

This report reflects the performance skills of the International GCSE (9-1) Sinhala paper (4SI1/01) held in June 2025. The seventh consecutive analytical report provided regarding the exams, started from the year 2019 aligned with the specification introduced in 2017. So the report is very much similar to the previous years but totally different from its legacy reports prior to that.

The total number of candidates sat for the exam this year was 486 that was comparatively a higher number than the last year. Centres and candidates will benefit from the feedbacks of the Principal Examiner and the candidates' performances analysed based on reading, writing and translation in this report. Essential tips and advice have been provided for questions 1-7 at the end of the report.

The Paper

The paper consists of three sections.

Section A: Reading Comprehension - 40 marks (40% A01). Questions 1- 4

Section B: Writing - 40 marks (40% A02). Questions 5 and either Question 6(a), 6(b) or 6(c)

Section C: Translation - 20 marks (20% A03). Question 7

All these three sections are assessed through a 2 hours and 30 minutes examination. The total 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.

Total number of marks for the section is 40.

Section B – writing (AO2)

These two writing questions can either be narrative or descriptive 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), [with an image to illustrate the topic] option 2(b) [with a short stimulus text] 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 (AO3)

Question 7 is the last question of the paper. A paragraph of about 93 to 99 words in English is provided as the test item. Candidates are expected to translate it into Sinhala sensibly. The translation is successful if a Sinhala speaker can understand the translation without having read the English text. This question contains 20 marks in total.

Total number of marks for the section is also 20.

Summary of the questions in the paper

Section A – Reading Comprehension

Question 1

This year the content focused on ‘Our Food’; varieties of food available in Sri Lanka, cultural influence, and our food culture, etc. Then 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 as usual. 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 satisfactorily. A very few had not understood the task correctly. Majority of candidates had performed very well.

The most frequent correct answers given were 1(a) food, 1(d) different, and 1(e) mostly. Mostly confused answers were 1(b) Indian, 1 (c) tasty and 1(f) hoppers. One or two candidates had written words in the spaces in the statements rather than in the relevant boxes. The mean mark for the question was not much different from the previous paper. The overall performance was up to the standard.

Question 2

The three young people given this year were Monika, Laxman and Abdul. They were talking about “Their Families”. They were expressing their views on how they do their studies, how they spend their time after school, and what their parents do for living, etc.

'Helps in the kitchen' was the example statement and 'Doesn't like maths' (E) did not match with any speaker. Statements B and F matched with one speaker each and A, C, and D, matched with two speakers. Candidates had to put a cross in the right box against each statement under the name of the speaker in the grid provided. Most candidate had performed well though some had made the usual mistake of marking too many boxes this year as well. A very few had crossed against the example or the statement E, the mismatched one to lose marks. Yet the performance rate was satisfactory.

Question 3

The test item this year was "Our Customs", an extract from a web page suitably amended for the purpose that discusses Sri Lankan customs in brief such as greeting and treating, rituals laid in the social and religious settings, etc. The task was to read the text and fill in the gaps in the statements given below. The most frequently correct answers given were (a) greetings and rituals, (e) hospitality (h) Olympic and (f) friends and relatives. Several candidates had shown some success in answering to (b) bowing and handshaking and (h) express love publicly. Less successful candidates had not been able to answer to statements (c) changing (d) not having direct company with male strangers and keep company with friends after knowing them and (g) take off the shirts by males. The mean was very much similar to the previous and the overall performance was satisfactory.

Question 4(a)

The text was extracted from 'Aluth Nagaradhipathi' a short story collection by Ven. B. Rahula. The text was about "An Experience of a Traveller: a holiday tour in England". The task was to answer the questions in the spaces provided. The most frequently correct answers given were (i) For a cup of tea, [as Sheri invited him to her place] (ii) first at the park while she was walking with her dog and secondly at Sheri's house while having a tea, (vi) She likes Sri Lanka or She has been to Sri Lanka for several times and (v) in Sri Lanka. Some candidates had difficulties in answering questions (iii) wake up in the morning and covering the quilt at bed time (iv) wagging the tail and licking the soles and (vii) will go back to Sri Lanka again. A very few had not made any attempt to write anything at all. The mean was very much similar to the last year and the overall performance was satisfactory.

Question 4(b)

Two speakers were Sumudu and Kamalani in this year. They were talking about “Tourist Attractions in Sri Lanka. The dialogue included information about places to visit, transport and accommodation facilities, eco-tourism, etc.” The task was to summarise the two views in the spaces provided. Many had been successful to summarize the text as expected yet some as usual had failed to summarize the bullet points of the first and the second speaker. Majority had failed to summarize the second bullet point of the second speaker. Some had used extra sheets as in every year 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. The mean was very much similar to the last year and the overall performance was the same.

Section B – writing

Question 5

‘Reading, Watching and Listing’ was the title suggested this year to write the short account. The four prompts provided to guide candidates were ‘Your Favourite TV Programme’, ‘Listening to Music Online’, ‘A Film Watched Recently’ and ‘A Book You Want to Read in the Future’. The first and the second prompts referred to the present tense, the third to the past and the fourth prompt referred to the future. Reasonably good answers had been given by the majority to get a higher score. As usual, most answers were candidates' personal experience. Many candidates had understood the instructions as given and written a well organised pieces of writings about their use of media to enjoy their free times, but some candidates had not understood the task clearly. They had not responded to the question as intended. Almost every candidate had made some attempt to write anything at least to get a mark or two. Some had written lengthy answers but missed some prompts not being able to earn full marks. The average performance was satisfactory.

Question 6

The options were (a) to write an essay about voluntary work, (b) an email to one of their friends about a sudden monetary achievement of their family and (c) an online article about a travel agency they travel with. Average performance level was good that most had covered all three bullet points in each option. Some entries were 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 be doing. They might have had a little knowledge about the format of an essay writing or less ability to handle the language in its style or register. The overall performance was satisfactory.

Question 7

The passage given was about a “Daily Routine of a Student” Most candidates had translated the article into Sinhala to secure a reasonable mark. Many had successfully translated the text while some candidates had not translated some words/phrases such as ‘wake up’, ‘gets lights’, ‘as there is time’, ‘quick breakfast’, ‘often delays and traffic jams’, ‘revision’, ‘this summer’, ‘midnight’, and ‘positive contribution’ correctly into Sinhala. Many candidates had mistakenly translated present tense verbs in English as past tense into Sinhala. A few had no clear idea of ‘looking forward to becoming someone.’ means. ‘Revision’ had been mistaken as ‘reading’. The mean mark was pretty much similar to the previous year and the overall performance was 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 4a 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

Q 1

The topic “Our Foods” is a common topic in Sri Lanka and there are a lot of information available in magazines and websites. They see and taste different kinds of food every day. Roadside cafes offer instant food and drinks. 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.

Tips

Q 2

The question titled “Their Families” is again a well-known are candidates should have been taught. A candidate of this age should have read about family relationship between parents and children in Sri Lanka. 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. Advise the candidates thoroughly not to cross too many boxes in the grids. There should be maximum of eight crosses marked. Crossing too many means they are not aware of the way they should answer the question. Also, tell them to be exact to mark the correct number of crosses in the relevant grid. Candidates should have marked both the crosses to get full marks where two answers are expected. Incorrect crosses can invalidate the correct answers.

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

These questions asked candidates to briefly respond to questions asked in Sinhala. The questions titled “Our Customs”, and A Traveller’s Experience” are the two reading passages for Q3 and Q4a. 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) which is also a reading test but 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. Encourage candidates to use the maximum use of the spaces provided for each answer. Let them read the bullet points first and find the relevant information to summarise from the paragraph given.

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 prompts or the bullet points as guidelines to write compressively a full account to get full marks. For example, in Q5 'Reading, Watching and Listening', 'Your Favourite TV Programme', 'Listening to Music Online', 'A Film Watched Recently' and 'A Book You Want to Read in the Future'. These prompts suggest candidates what they should write under 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. The adverbial phrases of time sometimes can suggest the tense that they should use to write a paragraph for that prompt. They can showcase their writing ability by doing so. Also emphasise the importance of subject verb agreement to complete a meaningful sentence paying attention of its syntax and semantic cohesion.

Some candidates 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 (b) the command word/phrase was to 'write an email to a friend'. Though it is a piece of writing to a friend, candidates should use the proper written

Sinhala rather than spoken Sinhala colloquialism. 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. Most of the times candidates had used end verbs in the spoken form of the language. Many had failed to concord the subject and verb agreement either as noted earlier.

N:B: it seems to be most candidates answer the option 6a rather than the other two in question 6, may be the reason why that there is a visual aid to that written task whereas the rest do not have. That should be considered as a plus point from the point of view of the candidates to use that chance to utilise in their answers. at the same time the teachers should raise concerns of the other two as well. There were 20 candidates this year that they had not followed the rubrics as intended. They had not crossed any option but had written answers to one of the options in Q6. Instructions say to indicate an option by crossing a box that they are going to write about. Teach candidates thoroughly to follow the instructions as in the paper that is very important in an examination at this level.

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 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. They needn't write word to word translation but a meaningful piece of Sinhala writing translating all the English words in the text given.

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.

