



GCSE

Bengali

8638/WH Paper 4 Writing Higher Tier

Report on the examination

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General comments

The quality of work produced in this examination was encouraging. The paper effectively differentiated between levels of ability, allowing students to score marks across a variety of questions. Most of students were appropriately entered for this tier. The standard of responses to the overlap questions was notably higher than those at the Foundation tier. Many students demonstrated an impressive ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language and were able to express and justify their opinions effectively.

Where students did not score marks, it was often due to inaccuracies that hindered clear communication. Common issues included incorrect verb formation and responses exceeding the suggested word count, which resulted in an increased number of errors. Another key barrier to achievement was the omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

For this question, there are 10 marks available for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, covering four different bullet points. While all bullet points must be addressed, equal coverage is not necessary.

The overall quality of work was generally good. Many students provided extended responses that demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions, and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, it was mainly due to the misinterpretation or omission of bullet points, or weaknesses in language quality, which at this level resulted in a higher likelihood of errors.

Content

Assessment criteria focus on four key areas: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication, and expression of opinions. Students should be reminded that addressing all bullet points is essential. Misinterpreting or omitting even one bullet limits the maximum mark for Content to 6, as marks in the 7–10 range require full coverage of all aspects of the task.

Question 1.1

This was an unfamiliar topic for many students, as most of them have not had the experience of attending a TV programme. It is important to remind students that the specification requires them to respond precisely to the task, using their knowledge appropriately, rather than writing about a loosely related topic.

Only a small number of students answered this question well and were able to achieve maximum marks. However, a large number of students misunderstood the task. Many thought they were required to write about a TV programme they had watched, or about a community or social event, such as a wedding or birthday celebration. Additionally, the third bullet point '*opinion on such a TV programme*' was often misinterpreted. As a result, many responses did not fully meet the task requirements and received lower marks.

Question 1.2

The key features of the assessment criteria for this task are variety of language, attempts at complexity, use of different time frames, and accuracy. Students were generally able to demonstrate a good range of vocabulary in relation to the four bullet points of their chosen question. This occurred naturally, as the prompts required them to write about diverse topics.

Both questions encouraged the use of language referencing past, present, and future events, giving students the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of different tenses. However, this was not always done successfully—particularly in response to bullet points requiring reference to the past.

This question was well answered by a good number of students, many of whom achieved full marks. However, a small number of students had difficulty understanding one or two of the bullet points; particularly the third, *'your opinion on expenditure at weddings'*, which led to lower marks.

Quality of Language

The key features of the assessment criteria here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, use of different time frames, and accuracy. Students generally demonstrated a good range of vocabulary related to the four bullet points of their chosen question. This variety often came naturally, as the tasks required writing about diverse topics. Both questions encouraged language referring to past, present and future events, providing students with opportunities to showcase their knowledge of different tenses. However, this was not always executed successfully, especially in bullet points requiring reference to the past.

When expressing opinions, many students used a range of verbs and adjectives, which added variety and interest to their writing. Each question contained two bullet points specifically prompting opinions.

Complexity at this tier was achieved in various ways, including the use of infinitive constructions, subordinate clauses, longer sentences linked with connectives, comparatives, negatives, and adjectives. Although the subjunctive mood is likely used primarily in set phrases at this level, it still contributes to the overall complexity of the writing.

Accuracy is another critical component of Quality of Language. The most common major errors involved verbs—either incorrect person or incorrect tense.

Advice to Students

- Aim to write approximately the suggested number of words.
- Address all bullet points. Attempt to write something about each rather than omitting any. Use the question paper to tick off bullet points as you cover them.
- Identify which bullet points require different time frames and check that your verb forms are accurate.
- Be sure to include opinions where the task requires them.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure students address all four bullet points to achieve higher marks for Content: omitting or misunderstanding any limits scores.
- Encourage precise understanding of the task, especially for less familiar topics, to avoid irrelevant responses.
- Promote the use of a varied vocabulary and appropriate grammar, including correct use of past, present, and future tenses.
- Support students in expressing clear opinions where required, using a range of verbs and adjectives.
- Focus on improving accuracy in verb forms, particularly tense and person, through careful checking.
- Advise students to write approximately 90 words and to use the question paper to tick off bullet points as they respond.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students are expected to write approximately 150 words in total, covering two bullet points. Both bullet points must be addressed, although equal coverage is not required.

Overall, performance was good. Most students responded to their chosen question with relevant content for both bullet points, expressed and justified opinions, and used familiar vocabulary effectively. Many produced fluent, extended writing with logical organisation and some variety of structures.

The specification requires students to apply their linguistic knowledge to meet the exact demands of the task rather than reproduce memorised material. Misinterpretation of a bullet point or writing significantly over the suggested word count often resulted in reduced marks, with longer responses increasing the likelihood of error.

Content

Content marks are awarded for:

- Relevance and detail (including coverage of bullet points)
- Amount of information conveyed
- Clarity of communication
- Expression and justification of opinions

Most students developed ideas and gave reasons for their views. However, some responses lacked sufficient detail and development, particularly when describing experiences or outlining future plans. Brief statements without explanation limited the marks available. In some cases, inaccuracies reduced clarity and created ambiguities.

Question 2.1

This question was generally well answered, with many students expressing opinions clearly and providing justifications.

For the first bullet point, some students focused only on disadvantages and did not present a balanced view. Others misinterpreted the task, writing about going abroad for work or study rather than the stated topic: advantages and disadvantages of travelling to foreign countries. Such misinterpretations led to partial or irrelevant answers.

For the second bullet point, some wrote in general terms about what people should do, or described ambitions to study or work abroad, instead of outlining their own travel plans. A few misinterpreted 'foreign countries' to mean another district within Bangladesh or India, writing from a perspective that did not align with the task requirements.

Question 2.2

This was a less popular choice but was often well answered. Many students described the positive and negative aspects of teenage life clearly, supporting their points with reasons and examples.

However, a significant number misunderstood the word Kishore (teenage), interpreting it as early childhood or simply general school life. Off-topic responses could not access the higher mark ranges.

Range of Language

High-scoring responses showed:

- A varied range of vocabulary, including adjectives and adverbs relevant to the topic
- Confident use of complex sentences
- A range of tenses, including past, present, future and conditional
- Appropriate style and register for the task

Less successful responses tended to rely on simple sentences and limited vocabulary. Some students did not attempt more complex grammatical structures, such as subordinate clauses (যদিও, কারণ) or conditional sentences, which restricted their ability to access higher marks.

Accuracy

Most students scored at least three marks for Accuracy. Strengths included correct formation of regular verbs in the present tense and accurate use of straightforward sentence patterns.

Common errors included:

- Incorrect use of irregular verbs (e.g., হওয়া, রাখা, নেওয়া)
- Weakness in past and future tense formation
- Confusion between verbal nouns and finite verbs
- Gender and number agreement errors, especially with adjectives
- Spelling mistakes, including omission of matras and incorrect placement of dependent vowels

Frequent review of irregular verb forms, tense patterns, and gender agreement rules would help reduce these errors.

Advice to Students

- Keep close to the recommended word count; focus on quality rather than quantity.
- Read the bullet points and scenario carefully. Answer the exact question set.
- If the rubric uses “তুমি” (you) or “তোমার” (your), make the response personal and relevant.
- Ensure all content is detailed and directly relevant to the bullet points.
- Include opinions with reasons and, where possible, personal examples.
- Practise using a variety of tenses and complex sentence structures.
- Revise irregular verbs and agreement rules regularly.
- Proofread work for spelling, punctuation and grammatical accuracy before submission.

Key Recommendations

- Prioritise accuracy in verb conjugation, especially irregular verbs, and ensure correct gender and number agreement.
- Use a wider range of tenses, including future and conditional, to demonstrate flexibility and range.
- Develop responses fully by adding explanations, opinions and personal reflections.
- Practise complex sentence structures, such as subordinate clauses (যদিও, যখন) and conditional sentences (যদি আমার বেশি সময় থাকত).
- Regularly practise extended writing tasks to improve fluency, structure and accuracy.
- Proofread carefully to correct avoidable spelling and grammar errors.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 6 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

The sentences were divided into 13 key messages. Students who were able to address all these messages received full marks for content, while marks for language varied according to their ability to apply grammatical knowledge and use appropriate language structures.

Overall performance

Most students scored well on this task. A significant proportion achieved high or full marks for Conveying Key Messages, demonstrating clear understanding of the source text.

However, a small number were unable to access the top bands due to:

- Limited vocabulary, particularly for words such as close, often, used clothes, charity, university, and poverty
- Misunderstandings of certain key terms (e.g., interpreting Kindle as candle)
- Weak sentence structure, leading to partial or awkward translations

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor grammatical errors did not prevent credit for conveying messages if the meaning was still clear. These inaccuracies were taken into account in the Application of Grammatical Knowledge mark.

Common issues included:

- Incorrect word order in compound and complex sentences
- Omission or misuse of postpositions and connectives
- Slight misspellings, particularly of high-frequency function words

Such errors highlight the importance of precision and attention to detail, even when overall communication is maintained.

Advice to Students

- Practise high-frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions, as these are essential for natural, accurate translation.
- Check that all parts of the translation have been addressed; do not overlook short but important words such as to, for, so, and after.
- Review vocabulary on common topics and concepts likely to occur in translation tasks, including education, family, and social issues.
- Proofread carefully to identify small but avoidable errors in spelling, word order, and agreement.

Key Recommendations

To improve performance in this task, students should:

- Strengthen vocabulary on high-frequency topics and abstract concepts (e.g., poverty, charity, university).
- Learn the correct Bengali equivalents of culturally specific or modern terms (e.g., Kindle).
- Practise translating idiomatic expressions so that they sound natural in Bengali rather than literal.
- Review grammar rules for word order and postposition use in complex sentences.
- Regularly practise the accurate conjugation of irregular verbs and correct use of verb-noun combinations.
- Pay close attention to all parts of the sentence, including small connecting words, to ensure complete and accurate translation.
- Proofread work carefully to correct spelling, matra placement, and agreement errors before finishing.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.