2024 VCE Bengali written external assessment report

General comments

The overall performance of students in the 2024 Bengali written examination was good. The mean mark scored was 58 out of 75. The ability to identify correct answers in multiple-choice questions and in short‑answer questions was observed across all students.

For the questions that required extended responses in Bengali (Questions 9­–12), many students’ responses lacked proper vocabulary and sentence structure. High-scoring responses used appropriate text types, addressed the audience properly and used suitable vocabulary and correct grammar.

While correct Bengali spelling was not a crucial consideration for short-answer questions, in some cases, students wrote words with such spellings that assessors could not determine what the student wanted to write; in these circumstances the student did not score high marks.

Specific information

Section 1: Listening and responding

Part A

Question 1a.

* Ha-du-du
* Baibalaa

This question required specific answers of two names. Almost everyone scored full marks.

Question 1b.

* national sport of Bangladesh
* part of the Asian Games

Students needed to identify two points of ‘national and international recognition’ of the sport; about two thirds of students identified both, while the remainder identified one or none. Note that the popularity of the sport in itself is not a point of recognition.

Question 2

Reading books (all of the following):

* can reduce stress
* can help in learning a new language
* provides knowledge
* helps develop vocabulary
* improves the reader’s imagination (fiction)
* sharpens logical thinking skills (scientific books).

This question was reasonably well answered. Students needed to include six points to score full marks. The points were spread throughout the conversation, not in a particular paragraph or dialogue. About two thirds of the students scored five or six marks, and the remainder scored three or four.

Question 3

This was a multiple-choice question. The five correct answers were options 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8. Most students answered this question very well, with 80 per cent scoring full marks.

Part B

Question 4

* the Koroch tree
* the sound of boats
* the call of birds
* the songs of fisherman

This question asked students to identify the things that Ripon liked and appreciated, as indicated directly in the text. About half the students identified all four, while the rest identified two or three.

Question 5a.

* a reduction of blood pressure
* an increased ability to prevent disease
* an ability to delay the process of aging by maintaining youth

This question asked students to name three potential benefits of positive thinking. Most students correctly named two benefits, and a few named three. Note that ‘good for health’ is a consequential statement, not a direct benefit.

Question 5b.

* participating in social activities
* mixing with people who are positive thinkers

Eighty per cent of students wrote both points correctly to score full marks on this question.

Question 6a.

* inviting elderly members of a local seniors’ club to present seminars at her school

Forty per cent of students scored full marks on this question. Most of the remainder missed one mark because they mentioned elderly citizens, but failed to include the ‘invitation to present seminars’, which was a key element of Rebecca’s initiative.

Question 6b.

* School students would benefit from listening to the experience of the speakers (sociology students example is an extension of this point).
* In the presence of school students, the elderly speakers would be pleased to think about their own grandkids.
* The speakers would enjoy going down memory lane.
* Increased networking could be achieved though morning tea.

Students were asked to identify four potential benefits of Rebecca’s initiative. About half the students correctly identified two benefits, and the rest identified three or four.

Section 2: Reading and responding

Part A

Question 7a.

* admission to an art school (and doing well there)
* creating his own style of art by blending Asian and European styles
* drawing artworks depicting the suffering of the people during the 1943 Bengal famine

This question asked students to outline the factors that contributed to Zainul Abedin’s development as a famous artist. Student performance was satisfactory.

Question 7b.

* the establishment of an art institute
* the founding of a folklore museum at Sonargaon

This question asked students to identify the main contributions of the artist. Student performance was satisfactory.

Question 8a.

* the perceived notion (although it is a myth) that girls are inherently weak in mathematics and science
* inadequate facilities and security for women at workplaces
* a lack of role models at workplaces due to engineering jobs being largely male-dominated

Students generally performed quite well on this question.

Question 8b.

Two main initiatives were:

* encouragement of the study of STEM subjects by girls, through various programs
* bringing in necessary legal and regulatory changes to make workplaces safer and more friendly for women.

This question required students to include specific initiatives in their answer. Students generally performed quite well on this question.

Part B

Question 9

This question asked students to write a formal, persuasive letter to a city mayor, to convince the mayor to continue holding new year celebrations that could be held respectfully and conscientiously, so that everyone would enjoy them for years to come.

Some essential elements in the answers that resulted in high scores included:

* an appropriate letter structure and direct address to the mayor
* a brief account of the context and situation
* an outline of how the writer wants the celebrations to be conducted, so that the festivities are a source of enjoyment for all.

Student performance was good. More than half of students scored at least 12 out of 15.

Some students wrote letters that appeared to be personal petitions to continue the current new year event, which was not the expected response.

Section 3: Writing in Bengali

Students were asked to attempt one of three questions: an imaginative short story for a Bengali magazine based on a prompt (Question 10); a review for a teacher of the student’s experience on a recent school excursion (Question 11); a blog post for a shopping centre’s website, discussing the use of reusable bags instead of single-use bags (Question 12).

Each of the questions was selected by a similar number of students.

Student performance on these questions was generally good. Based on the responses, some points may be noted for improving scores on these questions:

* The answer should be around 250 words; shorter texts will result in lower marks.
* Using properly structured paragraphs enhances the quality of the response.
* The style and vocabulary should be appropriate to the kind of text chosen (short story, review or blog post) and the text type required for it.
* Students should keep the intended audience in mind while writing the response.

Question 10

For students who selected this question, high-scoring responses included:

* a good start that was relevant to the prompt given
* smooth development of the plot
* characters described or clearly identified
* a suitable ending for the story
* good vocabulary and command of Bengali grammar.

Students who attempted this question generally did very well.

Question 11

For students who selected this question, high-scoring responses included:

* a suitable beginning addressing the teacher
* description of the visit including group, transport, date, time
* important features of the visited place
* what was seen, learned, enjoyed
* what could have been better
* good vocabulary and command of Bengali grammar.

Students who attempted this question generally did well.

Question 12

For students who selected this question, high-scoring responses included:

* introductory remarks – what the issue is
* environmental impact, impact on consumers, impact on supermarkets of single-use bags and the alternative of reusable bags
* some personal opinions, e.g. that supermarkets should not charge so much for reusable bags
* some conclusive remarks
* informal language and simple sentences suitable for a blog.

Students attempting this question did well.