

2024 VCE Sinhala written external assessment report

Section 1: Listening and responding

Part A – Responding in English

Most students responded confidently in this section. They demonstrated a good understanding of the literal meaning of the texts and were able to answer questions correctly. Some responses included points (distractors) from the text that were not relevant to the answer, but most students were able to find evidence and analyse information to formulate answers correctly. Most students were able to translate from Sinhala to English and used correct vocabulary in their responses. However, some students had difficulty choosing the most accurate or precise English words to answer the questions, and instead used simpler terms that were close in meaning to the expected answer but not exactly correct. For example, instead of using the term ‘hand-eye coordination’, they used ‘connection between hand and eyes’, or instead of using ‘awareness’, they used ‘know’.

Text 1

Question 1

- Horseshoe game
 - good hand-eye coordination
 - correctly positioning the body to maintain balance.
- Blindfold pot-breaking game
 - the contestants need to have good awareness of the distance between them and the pot prior to being blindfolded
 - ability to stay calm amid confusing information provided by spectators.

The majority of responses addressed this question successfully.

Text 2

Question 2

Let's Follow that Path

- showed how children can adjust their lives by adopting the valuable qualities of elders
- the traditional theme was portrayed/shown in an advanced manner
- talented actors and real-life experiences were used.

We'll do the Right Thing

- shows how the adverse environmental effects created by elders can be corrected
- this contemporary theme is very popular in Sri Lanka
- is an animated film with stunning visuals / is highly entertaining due to advanced technology being used.

The majority of responses scored high marks for this question, and some responses scored full marks. Some students mixed up the films and wrote the correct answer in the wrong column, and some split one answer into two points (that is, listed talented actors and real-life experiences as two points).

Text 3

Question 3a.

- He led the NASA team analysing the biological and chemical properties of dust and soil samples collected during the moon landing.
- He proposed a new theory on the origin of life on Earth (from a combination of non-living things).
- He was able to prove that from research done in a NASA laboratory.

The majority of responses did not contain all three points required for full marks. Some responses mentioned that Professor Cyril Ponnampereuma was nominated for / received a Nobel Prize. This was incorrect as responses needed to specifically highlight his contributions to science rather than his achievements.

Question 3b.

- He worked as the science advisor to a past Sri Lankan president.
- He worked as the director of two prestigious institutes in Sri Lanka.

Many responses scored full marks for this question.

Part B – Responding in Sinhala

It was evident that most students were able to understand the texts and write their responses in Sinhala clearly and appropriately. However, some responses lacked a clear connection to the information in the texts or did not adequately address the question.

Text 4

Question 4

- ඊදිමයකට අනුව එකම වචනය කීප වරක් කියවෙන කවි, සින්දු දරුවන් ලවා ගායනා කරවීමෙන් දරුවන් ඒවා මතක තබා ගෙන අලුත් වචන පහසුවෙන් ඉගෙන ගන්නවා.
- කවි, සින්දු ශබ්දනගා ගායනා කිරීමෙන් දරුවන්ගේ වචන උච්චාරණය වැඩි දියුණු වෙනවා.
- කතන්තර කීමට දරුවන් යොමු කරවීමෙන් ඔවුන්ගේ වචනමාලාව සහ ව්‍යාකරණ දැනුම වැඩි දියුණු වෙනවා..
- ඒ වගේම අදහස් පැහැදිලිව ප්‍රකාශ කරන්න ඉගෙන ගැනීම හිසා ඔවුන්ගේ භාෂා චතුරත්වය ඉහළ යනවා..
 - By singing rhymes and songs with repetitive and rhyming words, students learn new words by memorising them.
 - By singing poems and songs aloud, pronunciation is improved.

- In storytelling, by presenting events in a sequence, students' vocabulary and grammar is improved.
- By learning how to express ideas clearly, their fluency is improved.

Many responses included all points and scored full marks for this question. Full marks were allocated only if a response included all four strategies proposed and how they improve speaking skills.

Text 5

Question 5

- ඵදින උදූසනම දේව ප්‍රතිමා පෙරහැරකින් රැගෙන ගොස් විශේෂ ආසනයක් මත තබා දෙවියන්ට ආරාධනා කළා.
- ඉන් පසුව දෙවිවරුන්ට විශේෂ ආහාර වේලක් පූජා කළා.
- ඉන් අනතුරුව දෙවියන්ගේ ආහරණ නැහැවීම ප්‍රධාන නර්තන ශිල්පියා විසින් සිදු කළා.
- ඉන්පසුව විවිධ දෙවිවරුන්ට බත් පූජා කළා.
- දෙවිවරුන්ගේ නාමයන් වෙනුවත් කවි ගායනා කිරීමෙන් උදූසන වාර්තා අවසාන කළා.
 - First the gods were invited by people carrying statues of gods in a procession and placing them on a special stand.
 - Then a special meal was offered to the gods.
 - After that, the gods' ornaments were bathed by the chief dancer.
 - Then rice was offered to different gods.
 - Conclusion of the morning rituals was done by chanting verses in the names of the gods.

The majority of responses scored highly for this question. Full marks were allocated only if the points above were listed in sequential order.

Text 6

Question 6

- වන්දිකා ඡායාරූප මගින් පොළව මතුපිට සිතියම් හඳුනාගෙන කැලෑවල්වල සීමාවන් හරියටම හඳුනා ගන්න පුළුවන්. එතකොට අලින්ගේ වාස භූමි වලට මිනිස්සු කරන හානිය හිනි මාර්ගයෙන් වලක්වාගන්න පුළුවන්.
- භූගෝලීය තොරතුරු දත්ත මගින් අලින් ගමන් කරන මාර්ග හඳුනා ගන්න පුළුවන්. එතකොට මිනිස් ගම්මාන, වගා භූමි අලින්ගෙන් ආරක්ෂා කරගන්න සැලසුම් හඳුන්වා පුළුවන්.
- කාලීන තොරතුරු සිතියම් යොදා ගෙන මිනිසුන් සහ අලින් ඉන්න තැන් දැනගන්න පුළුවන්, ඒකෙන් අලින් ඉන්න තැන් ගැන කල්වේලා ඇතුළු මිනිසුන්ට අනතුරු අගවන්න ක්‍රමයක් හඳුන්වාදී බලාපොරොත්තු වෙන්නේ.
 - By using satellite images to create land cover maps, forest boundaries can be identified. This helps to protect elephants' habitats from human destruction.
 - With GIS data, elephant movement routes can be revealed. This information helps to create plans to protect human settlements and crop fields from wild elephants.
 - By creating real-time information maps to identify human and elephants' movements, an early warning system to alert villagers can be developed.

Many responses scored highly for this question. To score full marks, responses needed to include all three technologies and their advantages for humans and/or elephants.

Section 2: Reading and responding

Part A – Responding in English

Text 7

Question 7

- Kenya has introduced fair-trade certification to its products.
- In Kenya, ‘farmer field schools’ also help to train farmers on how to use sustainable production methods.
- India has introduced maternity leave / equal pay for women working in tea plantations.
- Sri Lanka has adopted climate-smart agricultural practices (such as the use of organic fertiliser and drought- and flood-tolerant cultivars).
- Sri Lanka actively communicates these sustainable practices via mobile and internet alerts.

The majority of responses scored highly for this question, demonstrating students’ ability to identify the measures that each country has taken to make their tea production sustainable.

Text 8

Question 8

- Unesco has declared the Mahāvamsa an international world memory heritage document.
- It is one of the world’s longest and continuous historical records.
- It was originally written in Pāli, one of the world’s ancient languages.
- It is the first historical record written in South Asia, starting the tradition of historical reporting.
- The authenticity of the historical facts mentioned in Mahāvamsa has been proven by archaeological evidence.
- It has been translated into several Asian and European languages.

The majority of responses scored highly for this question. Some responses contained most of the important points from the text as well as additional points that were not relevant to the question. Students should ensure that their responses focus on the key points most relevant to the question, and avoid including unrelated information.

Some responses mentioned that the international community has an obligation to provide the necessary technical and financial support to protect the Mahāvamsa. However, the correct response needed to be related to the historical and literary importance of the Mahāvamsa.

Part B – Responding in Sinhala

Text 9

Question 9

Students were asked to write a blog post about attending the opening ceremony of a cookware store and the disappointing experience they had.

- Text type: blog
- Kind of writing: personal
- Audience: blog readers

Criteria for a blog:

- to inform, to reflect, to interact
- personal experience, themed on a single subject, reflection on ideas, interactive comments
- abbreviated words and sentences, simple and informal language, uses linking words to sequence.

Relevant answers may have included:

- The location was not specific enough in the advertisement, which made it hard to find the shop.
- They did not make a booking / did not find a link for the booking and missed out on the workshop.
- The advertisement did not mention the specific times of the cooking demonstrations.
- They were one of the first 100 customers to attend but did not receive a free cookbook as not enough copies were printed / they were not one of the first 100 customers.
- There was a price cap to receive the 20 per cent discount.

Most responses addressed the text type, kind of writing and audience successfully. However, some responses did not demonstrate full understanding of the criteria for a blog post. Some responses used a formal writing style.

Many responses successfully described most of the disappointing experience, as listed above.

Section 3: Writing in Sinhala

Students are reminded to read the chosen question very carefully and make note of the text type and kind of writing they are required to use and the audience they are being asked to address. The majority of responses scored highly for this section.

Text 10

Question 10

Students were asked to write an article for the school newspaper evaluating the statement 'Extracurricular activities are an essential part of students' development'.

- Text type: newspaper article
- Kind of writing: evaluative writing
- Audience: school newspaper readers

The article should have included a title, place, date and (fictional) author name, and the content, register, style and layout needed to be appropriate for a school newspaper.

Features of evaluative writing:

- aims to reach a conclusion acceptable to an intelligent, unbiased reader through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas
- presents two or more important aspects of an issue or sides of an argument and discusses these rationally and objectively, using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives
- uses objective style; appeals to reason not emotion; creation of an impression of balance and impartiality is essential
- often includes expressions of cause, consequence, opposition and concession.

Relevant answers may have included:

- introduction of personality development and extracurricular activities
- exploration of participation in a minimum of three extracurricular activities (dramas and musical groups; dancing and singing; sports clubs; leadership cultivation camps; debating etc.)
- discussion on how these activities lead to personality development (getting rid of stage fright; ability to work in teams; ability to face challenges)
- discussion of the negative effects of overindulgence in extracurricular activities (the adverse effect on education when extracurricular activities are overemphasised; students not getting enough rest due to participating in too many extracurricular activities; excessive competition leading to decay and degeneration of moral values)
- discussion of not having enough time to spend with family and friends.

This was the most popular question. Most students were able to correctly address the text type, kind of writing and audience. Students were able to describe several extracurricular activities (drama, dance, musical performances, sports clubs, leadership camps, debating teams etc.) and how they lead to personality development. However, some students didn't evaluate the statements, but wrote only about the benefits of extracurricular activities and not the adverse effects of overdoing them.

Text 11

Question 11

Students were asked to write a script of a persuasive speech for a young environmentalists' society, persuading their audience to save the oceans from the negative activity caused by humans.

- Text type: speech script
- Kind of writing: persuasive writing
- Audience: youth environmentalists' society

The speech should have included a clear topic and a (fictional) author name, and the structure, content, register, style and layout needed to be appropriate for a persuasive speech.

Features of persuasive writing:

- manipulates the reader's emotions and opinions in order to achieve a specific purpose: that is, to achieve a desired outcome or effect that is important to and selected by the writer
- is strongly influenced by the nature of the target audience in choosing the persuasive techniques to adopt: that is, the language (vocabulary, sentence structures, style/register), structure and sequencing of the piece are framed with the particular audience and purpose in mind
- requires choice of the best word (with the precise shade of meaning and overtones of approval/disapproval, virtue/vice etc.), so range of vocabulary and dictionary technique are important
- aims in certain instances (e.g. in advertisements) to keep the target audience unaware of being manipulated and adopts an appearance of objectivity and rationality by using indirect, subtle, secretive techniques; has a confidential, intimate, collaborative style and register
- sometimes uses exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a conspiratorial relationship between the writer and the reader
- often uses the second person for direct address and appeal
- sometimes employs direct speech and questions to intensify the relationship with the audience
- may use techniques such as technical or scientific language and superlatives or quantitative statements to lend authority to the content.

Relevant answers may have included:

- explanation of a few adverse effects of human activity on oceans, such as:
 - the negative effects of overfishing, which results in the extinction of fish
 - the land erosion of the sea due to damage done to the coral reef
 - pollution of the sea water due to industrial waste being dumped into the sea
 - death of rare species such as whales due to consumption of non-biodegradable material like plastic, which gets carried to the sea
- information about what humans can do to minimise the damage, such as:
 - educating fishermen on proper methods to be used and punishing those who violate laws
 - taking steps to protect the coral reef and taking legal action against those who destroy it
 - establishing methods to safely dispose of industrial waste in the land itself to prevent it from being dumped into the sea
 - mobilising the Navy and members of environmentally friendly groups to collect and dispose of plastic items in the sea and on the beaches.

A significant number of students chose this question and included a range of relevant points and appropriate vocabulary in their response. Most responses aligned with the requirements for the text type, kind of writing and intended audience. The majority of students effectively used persuasive language in their response.

Text 12

Question 12

Students were asked to write an imaginative story for a children's magazine, using information based on an image of a bullock cart with a cart driver and passengers.

- Text type: short story
- Kind of writing: imaginative writing
- Audience: readers of a children's magazine

The story should have included a title/topic and a (fictional) author name, and the structure, content, register, style and layout needed to be appropriate for an imaginative story.

Features of imaginative writing:

- manipulates the reader's response to the piece to create the desired impression; includes visual and/or emotional appeal
- usually creates a strong sense of context (physical surroundings and atmosphere) and situation
- normally includes description (person, place, emotion, atmosphere), so careful selection of language, such as adjectives and adverbs (or their equivalents), are important
- uses techniques such as variation in sentence length, juxtaposition of different sentence lengths, and careful control of structure and sequencing to add to the overall effect by creating the desired atmosphere or conveying the required emotion
- may break normal sequencing for added impact, such as in a flashback or in a final disclosure that allows for a different interpretation of preceding passages.

A small number of students chose to answer this question. Some students incorporated information from the image (that is, the bullock cart, the cart driver, the passengers) into their story; however, others were unable to effectively link the information from the image to their story and instead wrote a more random imaginative story.