

Oral component

Most students performed well in the two sections. Students were well prepared and appeared confident and relaxed. They demonstrated their knowledge and skill in using spoken Tamil. Students' responses were in most cases spontaneous and it was evident that they were aware of the changed format of the oral examination.

Section 1 – Conversation

This section involves a conversation between the student and the assessors about the student's personal world, for example school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Students were well prepared for these topics and in the 7 minutes allocated for this section, were able to maintain a natural interaction with the assessors.

Almost all students displayed the capacity to link with the assessors but a few were found wanting in repair strategies. Students were able to elaborate on their answers and had a range of information and ideas to offer and supported their opinion with reasons or examples. Sometimes the range of vocabulary was rather limited, but students were able to speak fluently and grammatically. Pronunciation was of an acceptable standard.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students were well prepared for this section. They outlined the topic in no more than one minute and indicated the texts they had studied. During the discussion the more capable students referred to at least two or three texts they had studied. The less capable students vaguely referred to texts and could not substantiate their opinions with evidence.

It is important that great care be taken with the choice of sub-topic. Topics chosen for detailed study should lend themselves to a range of aspects so that students can explore areas which interest them. It is important to select a sub-topic that is sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives, so that each student can provide an individual response expressing opinions with reference to the texts studied.

Written component

Section 1 – Listening and responding

In this section, students are expected to analyse and use information from the texts. They are required to extract information by inferring points of view and attitudes from content/choice of language and respond accurately. They are also expected to have skills in interpreting information and summarising ideas or discussing points of view raised in the texts.

While most students were able to extract general information from the texts, some were unable to grasp specific details. For example, an appropriate response for Question 1 was 'classmates' which had to be inferred from the telephone conversation. A few students gave a generalised response such as friends, school friends or neighbours. When the text sounded simple, students did not concentrate sufficiently on the information to extract.

Part A

Text 1

Question 1

a.

Classmates

b.

To get a copy of the Maths practice sheet from the teacher

c.

Yes. He offers to get the Maths practice sheet from the teacher and drop it off in Saradha's letter box.

Text 2

Question 2

a.

A certificate in child care training:

- ability to speak English fluently
- First Aid certificate
- motor car driving licence
- experience in child minding.

Text 3

Question 3

Information should include:

- cricket match postponed to 28 October
- suggest extended holidays if he wishes.

Text 4

Question 4

a.

Commitment to high quality products:

- good employer-employee relationship
- punctuality in delivering goods.
- excellent workplace conditions.

b.

- provides employment for thousands of people
- provides benefits to employees' children
- no strike or lockout – good industrial relations
- safe workplace and workplace practices
- local and international markets for high quality products.

Part B

Text 5

Question 5

a.

Patience, honesty, lack of greed.

b.

To reward her for her honesty and in appreciation of her lack of greed to grab something that belongs to others.

Text 6

Question 6

a.

- students had practised well and the performance was good – singing, veena and percussion
- students were enthusiastic and in Indian dress
- cooperation between teachers of music and percussion to develop skills of students
- Sanskrit songs were sung well
- percussion instruments were well played.

b.

Advice to teachers:

- give individual attention to some able students to develop their skills
- encourage students to sing a few lines while playing the veena.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section was well handled by most students with quite a few students receiving full scores in parts of Questions 7 and 8. Question 7a and 8a seemed to be challenging to a small number of students.

Students must be able to identify the context, purpose, audience of different texts. Not all questions require answers in complete sentences or in great detail. The space provided for each response and the marks allocated should be an indication of the length/brevity of a response. Also a task requiring students to summarise in four sentences needs to be answered in the students' own words rather than in four separate sentences picked from the text.

Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of views expressed in the text and respond by expressing their own observation of these views and conveying their opinion. Most students observed the conventions of writing a formal letter and sequenced their ideas clearly. The less able students were only able to reproduce parts of the text. It is important for students to note down arguments in point form and respond to them in a critical manner.

Text 7

Question 7

a.

- to encourage people to enrol in the gym/to advertise services provided by the gym

b.

- those who want to shed excess fat and lose weight
- those who want to improve their sport performance by getting professional help
- those who want to be physically fit and lead a healthy life.

(any two of the above)

c.

- you do not have to worry about whether you are on the right track – trainer will determine suitable program
- trainer will help you with an exercise program to suit your needs and physical fitness level
- trainer will keep you motivated and help you to achieve your goals.

d.

- those who want to have fun while exercising
- those who like to have the company of people of similar interests and goals.

Text 8

Question 8

a.

Points to be included in a cohesive paragraph:

- not as expensive as before
- can earn some money and be financially independent
- easier to work with modelling coordinators who arrange everything – photographs, make-up, dress, voice-training, etc.
- learn skills like getting along with others, gaining self confidence, manage in all kinds of situations and easier to find jobs later
- only a part-time occupation does not interfere with studies.

b.

Points to be included in a cohesive paragraph:

- parents are now more educated and broad-minded
- mobile phone, driving ability, do not have to worry about safety of daughters
- advertising regarded as clean and free of dangers, keeps girls away from undesirable activities.

c.

- gone are the days when modelling was regarded as alien to Tamil culture
- easy for girls to contact women coordinators who will arrange for photography, make-up, dress, voice training, etc. and therefore not expensive
- parents see benefits in modelling and therefore support daughters
- young women find that it does not interfere with their studies and regard it as short-term part time employment, which gives them financial independence
- girls have more opportunities in modelling as a wide range of goods are being advertised
- girls from varying social backgrounds have modelling opportunity.

d.

She admires Tamil parents and their daughters for breaking away from traditional taboos and getting the best out of modelling.

Section 3 – Writing in Tamil

This section of the examination is designed to assess students' ability to express ideas through the production of original texts in Tamil. Students had to choose one of four tasks and write 200–250 words on the selected topic. The standard of performance ranged from outstanding to poor. The level of language and vocabulary was quite good. A few students had difficulty with spelling and with correct script formation. The length of responses ranged from medium to long.

Two aspects need to be addressed by students and teachers. It is important to have a plan before beginning to write the final piece. Some students lengthen their writing by adding random ideas one after the other so that the writing lacks a natural flow. Pre-learned pieces of writing invariably fail to secure high marks. Some students simply reproduced work prepared or done previously, paying no attention to the requirements of the task.

Question 10

The task was to write an article for the travel page of a newspaper. Some students were not sure of what to write for a travel page of a newspaper. In some cases, the response seemed to be a personal recount.

Question 11

There were two parts to this question (a) why you do not wish to pursue higher studies immediately (b) what your future plans are. More successful students integrated both parts of the question in their writing and their ideas flowed smoothly. Less successful students added ideas to Part A and Part B to make up 250 words and their writing was not cohesive. This is where good planning is needed in order to demonstrate the ability to structure and sequence a response.

Question 12

This was not a popular choice and the few who chose it, had difficulty in using the conventions of the text type. The ideas were shallow and superficial.

Question 13

The conventions of the text type were not followed well by students who chose this question. They did deal with the positive and negative aspects of the play/concert.