



GCSE **Bengali**

8638/LF Paper 1 Listening Foundation Tier

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper has differentiated well between the students for which it was set. The mean mark on the paper was approximately 18.5 out of 40, higher than the previous year's mean mark. It was pleasant to see that some students understood a significant part of the questions they had heard and could respond well to the questions but many students could not comprehend some simple key vocabulary from the utterances. In Section B students had to understand questions written in Bengali, and some found this challenging although the most able students scored highly. In some cases, basic items of vocabulary were not well known by students; intensifying or emphasising expressions also proved challenging for some. Only a few students wrote their answers in the wrong language.

Teachers need to remind students to utilise the 5 minutes of reading time in the listening paper by:

- reading all the questions carefully, particularly those in Section B
- checking questions with emboldened words where these might have asked for a particular point of view or the most relevant option to choose
- looking at any examples given, as these point out the level of detail required
- underlining keywords which have been highlighted in the rubrics/questions
- identifying the questions which have two or more parts to answer from the same utterance
- sign-posting Section B as it requires answers in Bengali
- being careful about listening to the question numbers in Section B as these are announced in Bengali.

Section A

Questions 1-3

Questions 1 and 2 were non-verbal multiple-choice questions. Questions 1 and 2 were accessible at the beginning of the paper where a reference to a mode of transport and to a particular time of the day was outlined. Over 70% of the students for question 1 and over 90% of the students for question 2 answered it correctly. Students found question 2 comparatively easier where a specific time was to be identified. In this specification, comprehension questions cannot test single lexical items, even at the lowest grades, and this means that questions of this type must contain distractors; it was comforting to see that students coped well with these distractors and were able to choose the correct answer.

Question 3 described a sports event on different days of the week and enjoyment related to this. This question type is an open-ended format. Students found this question comparatively difficult. Centres should ensure that students are familiar with common, everyday vocabulary and those on the vocabulary list. Identifying a particular day of the week (শনিবার- Saturday) should have been familiar to most of the students but only around half of the students identified this correctly.

On the second part of this question, approximately 40% of students got this right. The targeted word for the second part was 'বন্ধু' (friends), but many students could not comprehend this.

Questions 4

The context of question 4 was tourism and this was a non-verbal multiple-choice type of question. Students found question 4.1 challenging where the targeted assessment word was ‘দ্বীপ’ (island). They performed quite well on the remaining parts of the question and many secured marks for both questions 4.2 and 4.3.

Questions 5-7

Questions 5-7 were based on free time activities and the targeted words were time spent on watching TV ‘ত্রিশ’ (thirty), ‘নিজের’ (own) and ‘বাইরে’ (outside). Students found question 7 more accessible and question 6 the most difficult of the three.

Questions 8

This question was an open-ended type. Over 80% of students gained marks on question 8.1 and students handled it well but surprisingly many students could not comprehend the second part which was about an artist’s feelings, and only around 10% scored on question 8.2

Questions 9-12

These four questions were again open-ended. The topic was studying a language. For question 9, students were expected to identify the situation of Bengali language study in UK universities. The data shows varied success in different parts of this question i.e., approximately 20% on 9.1 and 80% on 9.2.

Questions 10 to 12 were about women’s T20 cricket. Question 10 was designed to identify the year (2026) of the upcoming women’s T20 World Cup. It was surprising to find that the majority of the students could not get this right. The other two questions were handled well.

Questions 13-15

These questions posed differentiated outcomes for the students. These questions were multiple-choice type. The students were expected to identify the given age of a teenager, and just under 70% secured a mark on question 13 correctly. Around 50% scored a mark on question 14, and approximately 75% on question 15. Most students were comfortable with the topic of ‘friends and relationships’ as well as familiar with the vocabulary used in these questions. Students were found to be more successful on non-verbal multiple-choice question types like these.

Questions 16-17

These were overlap questions which talked about apps developed in Bangladesh and targeted higher levels of demand. The expectation was to be able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the mentioned apps. It was evidenced that a significant number of students knew some of the key vocabulary such as ‘প্রধান’ (main) and ‘সংবাদপত্র’ (newspaper), ‘বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি’ (science and technology), ‘সব সময়’ (always), ‘পরামর্শ’ (advice), ‘দেশের বাইরে থেকে’ (outside of the country) and ‘ব্যবহারের সুযোগ’ (opportunity to use) tested in questions 16 and 17.

Question 18

This question captured a charity event signposting the weather and charity activities. This question was a multiple-choice type. Students coped well with this long passage. It was evident from their annotation that many had been well prepared and used their 5 minutes reading time. They recognised from the numbering (18.1, 18.2, 18.3) that all three questions were to be answered in one go. Overall, students showed good comprehension of this topic area.

Question 19

This question was aimed at the higher grades in the foundation tier and was an overlap question. The topic covered in this question was different genres of movies and their popularity. Almost 27% got the option correct in question 19.2. Students did not perform well on question 19.1. It might be because many students did not quite catch up with the word ‘adventure’ instead they considered ‘রোমাঞ্চকর’ to sound similar to ‘romance’ and chose this option. This then had an impact on question 19.3 with under 10% of students responding to the question correctly.

Question 20

Question 20 was about school club activities. In this question, students were expected to identify different timeframes. It was a two-marked question and did pose difficulty as expected. Approximately, 19% of the students managed to identify the timeframes and the relevant activities. This question discriminated well between those who understood fully what was being said and those whose understanding was only partial. Many students struggled to understand the word ‘ময়লা ফেলার পাত্র’ (dustbin). Students would benefit from more practice with the vocabulary listed in the specification and familiarity with events described in different tenses.

Section B**Questions 21**

This question was a straightforward introduction to Section B, about a tourist spot in Sylhet. It was a table-selecting type of question. Approximately, a quarter of students got all four options correct, and almost 50% got three options correct. Although the vocabulary used here was relatively simple, the questions in the target language are an additional challenge.

Questions 22-23

These were overlapping non-verbal questions and it was pleasing to see that many students attempted both questions. These were expected to be challenging questions and did indeed prove to be so.

Advice for students

- Finally, students must make sure that they make their final answer clear to the examiners, by writing legibly and using the spaces provided.
- If students change their minds about an answer, the final choice must be signalled to the marker and placed as near as possible to the appropriate space.
- Students should give precise answers avoiding lots of details.
- Attempt all questions.
- It is expected to learn the vocabulary from the provided vocabulary list in the specification and this would help to prepare better for the exam.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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