



GCSE

Bengali

8638/LH Listening (Higher)

Report on the examination

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Introduction

The number of students enrolled in Summer 2025 GCSE Bengali Listening (Higher Tier) was 279. Most students scored consistently throughout the paper. The high-achieving students responded well to most of the questions, particularly the Bengali questions in Section B. Some students struggled with the more challenging questions. The number of students not attempting questions was fewer. Teachers can guide students by encouraging them

- to attempt all questions.
- to read all the questions carefully, particularly those in Section B.
- to underline keywords that have been highlighted in the rubrics/questions.
- to listen to the question numbers in Section B, as these are announced in Bengali.
- to signpost Section B as it requires answers in Bengali.
- to check questions with words where they might have asked for a particular perspective or the most relevant option to choose.
- to identify the questions that have two or more parts to answer from the same utterance.

Questions requiring open-ended verbal answers, such as completing sentences, identifying advantages and disadvantages, and identifying events in different tenses, were discriminated well. Most of these questions were aimed at the higher grades and required precise answers. Some also required students to draw simple conclusions and understand the material, which contained more complex and less familiar language, in line with the requirements of the subject content. In some cases, basic items of vocabulary were not well known by students; intensifying expressions also proved challenging for some. A few students wrote their answers in the wrong language in section B.

Section A

Questions 01-02

In this overlap section, students performed significantly better at the higher tier compared with the foundation tier same question. Questions 1 and 2 were a conversation between two people about the advantages and disadvantages of volunteering and targeted higher levels of demand. A handful of students knew the difficult Bengali vocabulary such as দুস্থ, স্বচ্ছায়, বিনামূল্যে and দুর্বল. Some students attempted only one part of the question and could not secure marks. Although more students from the higher tier responded to these questions correctly justifies that students were rightly entered into the higher tier.

Questions 03

Question 03 was overlapping. The topic covered in this question was a person sharing her preference for listening to music. A few students faced a challenge in answering this question, as the confusion arose due to 'most preferred' and 'preferred'. As a result, they were unable to score.

Questions 04

Question 04 was about environmental problems. In this question, students were expected to identify different timeframes. It was a two-marked question and posed difficulty. Some 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 river filling and the consequences. As a result, they could not score here. It would be beneficial for students to practice vocabulary and events described in different tenses.

Questions 05-06

Questions 5 and 6 were about a radio recording where the reporter was talking about the number 10 jersey in football. Most students found this section relatively easier and answered the questions accurately.

Question 07

Question 07 was a non-verbal table selecting type question that was about the school media apps. Most students were successful in identifying all three correct statements and secured marks here.

Questions 08-10

Questions 08 to 10 were open-ended, short-answer questions. The question was based on a nutritionist talking about superfood. Very few students gained full marks in this section, and in general, most of them did not perform well in this section. A handful of students were not familiar with the vocabulary “খনিজ (khonij)”. As a result, a variety of vocabulary appeared in this section, and most of them were incorrect, and those students were unable to score. Mostly, students found question 09 comparatively harder due to that certain unfamiliar vocabulary.

Questions 11-13

Questions 11-13 were based on listening to a podcast about listening to songs. The majority of students answered question 11 correctly, while many faced a challenge in answering Questions 12 and 13.

Questions 14-17

These questions were designed to be challenging questions, and a few students were successfully able to handle these questions. Compared to Questions 15-17, Question 14 was answered correctly by most of the students. In general, it shows that P, N, and P+N answers seemed difficult for students to pick out. In this kind of exercise, students need to listen to the whole utterance to identify the overall opinion, and that will help them identify the correct option.

Questions 18

Question 18 was designed to challenge the most able students, with answers in English, and four key points are to be found in one recorded speech. The question was based on a radio program about a new project in Bangladesh. Most students found this section challenging as they could not score high. Assuming that the answers from Question 18.1 and 18.2 ('homelessness' and 'poverty') were closely correlated, that might have led some students to answer "poverty" for 18.1 and "homeless" for 18.2, whereas the answer should be vice versa. As a result, those students were not able to secure their marks.

Questions 19

Although question 19 was another higher-demand question for the students. The question was based on a counsellor talking about parental concerns. It was a two-marked question and precisely based on the advantage and disadvantage of parents' concerns for their children. Many students were able to answer partially, and a few scored full marks.

Questions 20

This was a three-part question, a personalised matching type of question. The topic of this question was about local tourism attractions. Most of the students clearly understood the complex vocabulary, such as প্রাকৃতিক, পাহাড়ের সৌন্দর্য, and the grammatical structures used in this question. Students were able to choose the correct answers with a high degree of success.

Questions 21-23

Questions 21-23 were aimed at the lower level of demand and students were able to understand the benefit of an apprenticeship that was mentioned by different individuals. Overall, the performance of these questions was mixed.

Questions 24

There was an intended performance on question 24. The questions were about Kolkata city. Question 24.2 was comparatively challenging, and students scored mostly in 24.3 and 24.4.

Section B

Questions 25-26

In this overlap section, students performed significantly better at the higher tier. Compared to the Foundation tier, Higher tier students performed well in this section. The performance on this section was quite good. By and large, students have answered them correctly. The majority of the students answered the questions correctly.

Questions 27

The question was about various rural games. The performance on this section was satisfactory as this question was relatively testing students' having to understand complex language and then use some inference to get to the correct answer.

Questions 28

This question tested a detailed understanding of the language heard, and there were some tricky distractors too. The question was about voluntariness. Students found question 28 challenging. Comparatively fewer students managed to understand the language. A few students either did not attempt or attempted in English and could not score well in this section.

Conclusion

Evaluating this paper was both demanding and rewarding, offering valuable insights into students' response patterns. The total entry on distribution this year was 279. The mean score in the Listening Higher component in 2024 was 31.4 with a standard deviation of 9.3. This year, the mean score is 34.8 with a slightly lower standard deviation of 8.6. The increase in Mean and decrease in Standard Deviation (SD) this year indicate that the average marks have increased this year. However, several less able learners did not perform well on certain questions. Overall performance varied widely, with no single section standing out as universally easy or difficult. The paper was well-balanced to allow students to achieve marks in line with expectations. There were only a very few examples of unanswered or partially answered questions.

- 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 indicated to the marker and placed as near as possible to the appropriate space.
- Students should give precise answers, avoiding lots of details.
- It is always good to try to answer all questions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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