

# SANSKRIT

Paper 0499/01  
Language

## Key messages

The main requirement for doing well in this paper is a thorough knowledge of basic Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary as detailed in the syllabus. This includes an understanding of how sentences are put together, the significance of noun/verb endings as well as knowledge of how the rules of sandhi operate.

## General comments

The best answers demonstrated a clear knowledge of declension of nouns and conjugation of verbs as well as familiarity with the vocabulary. This resulted in accurate translations both from and into Sanskrit. Good answers in comprehension questions used few words and kept to the line number guidance provided in the questions.

In some cases, questions were misread or not understood. For example, 'translation' was sometimes read as 'transliteration', thereby losing all the marks for those answers.

Particular areas which would benefit from further attention (in addition to what has already been stated) are sandhi (**Q1(g)**) and compound words (**Q4(g)**).

## Comments on specific questions.

### **Question 1 Comprehension of passage out of sandhi**

There were many excellent answers to **parts (a) to (f)** of this question. Strong answers made good use of the glossed vocabulary and gave answers which took into account the marks for each subsection. The brief answers were usually the best.

Some answers provided a translation of the comprehension passage and wrote out the questions. As this was not necessary, it could be that some candidates left themselves short of time by doing this.

Regarding **Question 1(h)** in particular, some candidates translated most of lines 10 and 11, without addressing the two-word answer to the question, which asked about how the **people** in the kingdom were described.

**Question 1(g)** required a particular excerpt from the passage to be written out using Devanagari script and applying the rules of sandhi where appropriate. The best answers did just that. Weaker answers applied the rules inappropriately or incorrectly and some also wrote the passage out in transliteration.

### **Question 2 Translation Sanskrit into English**

**Part (a)** was a translation which required 10 missing words to complete the passage. The best responses simply provided a translation of these words. Writing out the whole passage sometimes led to confusion and inaccuracies arose as a result. Some very good responses to **part (b)** demonstrated a thorough knowledge of noun etc. endings and a good knowledge of the vocabulary. Good answers attempted part of the translation, for example, by showing knowledge of the endings even if the meaning of the word or sentence was missing. They often demonstrated partial knowledge of the vocabulary, but without accurate knowledge of the endings. Some answers were left blank and so no marks could be awarded.

The best answers to **(c)** and **(d)** demonstrated, in addition to the above, knowledge of how to take words out of sandhi.

### **Question 3 Translation English to Sanskrit**

There were some very good answers to this question, gaining high marks, and showing knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar, as well as sentence structure. The best candidates showed knowledge of plural endings and verbal endings relating to past, present and future. They included the ability to have the verb agree in number with the subject nouns and for the adjectives to agree in number, case ending, and gender, with the nouns they were describing.

### **Question 4 Comprehension of passage in sandhi**

There were responses which showed an understanding of Sanskrit in sandhi in addition to the basic grammar and vocabulary. The best answers again were brief and to the point, making good use of glossed vocabulary. For the translation **question (c)**, most marks were gained by attempts to construe the endings, to take the words out of sandhi and render the correct verbal tense. Knowledge of vocabulary was key. Excellent responses also showed knowledge of compound words – **part (g)** and were able to identify the proper names and transliterate them correctly.

# SANSKRIT

Paper 0499/02  
Literature and Epic Civilisation

## Overview

The paper worked well, and the introduction of the new style of examination seemed to suit candidates. There was clear application to the subject and this was apparent from the majority of the candidates.

In general, candidates and teachers should be reminded of the importance of accurate transliteration in all sections of the examination. The length of vowels should be clearly indicated where appropriate, and names need to be accurately rendered in English. Candidates should also note the need to answer in English, when this is stated in the questions.

## Question 1

Many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the text, but there were a number who appeared not to know the detail. Candidates must ensure that they know the names of characters accurately, and that they give adequate detail. When four marks are on offer, the answer should reflect this level of detail. Many answered **Question 1(f)** well, but some chose qualities or stated other facts about Bharata which were not supported by the text.

## Question 2

A number of candidates did not know the answers to **Questions 2(a) (i) and (ii)**. Candidates were unclear on the answer to **Question 2(b)**, the identification of types of compound. The translation element in **Question 2(c)** demonstrated the importance of checking answers thoroughly, and knowing the meaning of every word in the text. Often words were missed out – in a set text translation this is not going to lead to full marks.

## Question 3

The Epic Civilisation element of the paper was generally well answered. Some terms were confused, but, in the main, the answers were well known. Candidates do not need to give great amounts of information, but two details are required for the two mark questions. Care should be taken to avoid terms which sound similar, e.g. *pratyaya* and *pratyāhāra*. **Question 3(f)** led to some outstanding answers. However, a common theme was a failure to give a full, reasoned personal response to the question. Another cause of marks being lower than they might have been was lack of detail or development – e.g. developing one side (say, evil), but then failing to develop the other (good).

## Question 4

These questions were mostly well answered. In **Question 4(b)**, many candidates seemed not to know the meaning of *saras*. Some also did not identify the type of compound in **Question 4(c) (ii)**, having translated it correctly in the previous question. The translation of **Question 4(e)** led to similar issues to those raised about the set text above. **Question 4(g)** led to some outstanding answers from some candidates, but only a minority commented on the use of verse as a form. Many, however, gave excellent expositions of the use of these verses, showing excellent knowledge of their content and their function within the stories.