

Official Languages Proficiency Oral Test

Oral Test Methodology Based on the Syllabus of Language Training Courses

Conducted as per Public Administration Circular No. 18/2020

Category 1 – 200 hours

Objectives to be achieved through the Oral Test designed for Tertiary and Senior category officers enrolled in 200-hour Category 1 Language Training Courses

Goal:

To promote awareness and appreciation of the social and cultural differences between the Sinhala and Tamil speaking communities with a view to effectively implementing the Official Languages Policy.

Objectives:

- To acquire the ability to communicate in the target language in listening, speaking and reading forms in order to perform the duties.
- To acquire the ability to use language effectively to perform linguistic functions such as persuasion, praise, and rejection.
- To acquire the ability to appreciate the socio-cultural values of the speakers of the target language.
- To acquire the ability to translate languages spoken by different people (Sinhala, Tamil) into the target language (Sinhala, Tamil) and understand them.

Content

(01) Listening skills :

- ❖ Listen to and comprehend conversations related to various situations and events.
- ❖ Listen to and comprehend meetings, discussions, etc. held under one's leadership.
- ❖ Listen to and comprehend daily speeches and media programs.

- ❖ Listen to the feelings and opinions expressed by speakers and comprehend their meaning.

(02) Speech skills :

- ❖ Express ideas and feelings coherently and meaningfully.
- ❖ Engage in conversation in keeping with traditions of politeness and numerous forms of address in various social and professional situations.
- ❖ Make presentations on topics related to one's profession.
- ❖ Speak with correct grammar, proper word usage, and accurate pronunciation.

(03) Reading skills :

- ❖ Read and comprehend various documents related to daily activities.
- ❖ Read and comprehend technical and scientific documents related to one's profession.
- ❖ Submit various publications, advertisements, etc.

Examination Structure

Component	Duration	Structure of the paper	Marks	Minimum pass marks
1. Listening	1 hour	4 parts 40 questions	100	40
2. Speaking and Reading	15 minutes	4 parts	100	40

01. Listening Test

This test will be conducted in order to evaluate the applicant's listening skills in Sinhala/ Tamil language. The candidate is expected to listen to a conversation, an analysis, a discussion or a lecture that may take place in their day-to-day life or work life in their other official language, comprehend, and answer questions asked based on it. Additionally, in the course of their work, they are expected to listen to words in the other official language and answer related questions. At the examination, the candidate should listen well to a variety of such audio recordings played to them, understand them and answer the questions asked.

The subject areas and topics relevant to the examination are prepared according to the nature of the positions and duties of officers in Category 1.

Structure of the Question Paper

The question paper consists of 4 parts. These 4 parts consist of 40 questions.

❖ **Part One (10 questions)**

Listen to the words required in performing duties and answering questions based on them.

Eg: Official designations (Commissioner / Director)
Greetings
Commands
Official document names (Leave form/ Register)

(Questions can be prepared in the following ways: listening to an audio recording containing such words and writing them down; listening to words and selecting the correct answer and underlining it; listening to words given in one language and selecting the correct answer from options in the other language and underlining it; listening to words and numbering them in the order they are heard; and listening to words and marking them with a \checkmark sign if correct or a \times sign if incorrect)

❖ **Part Two (10 questions)**

Listen to dates, times, and numbers given in the relevant language and answer questions based on them.

Eg: 9.00 A.M.
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(Questions can be prepared in the following ways: listening to an audio recording containing dates, times, and numbers and writing them in words; listening and writing them in numbers; and listening and selecting the correct answer and underlining it)

❖ **Part Three (10 questions)**

Listen to simple, short sentences and check the accuracy of their translations.

Eg: The Commissioner delivered the welcome speech.

(Questions can be prepared in the following ways: listening to an audio recording containing such sentences, selecting and underlining the place where the translation is incorrect; listening, selecting the correct answer and underlining it; and listening and marking with a \checkmark sign if the translation is correct and a x sign if it is incorrect)

❖ **Part Four (10 questions)**

Asking questions based on a conversation between two or three individuals or asking questions based on a lecture/speech given by a teacher, lecturer, or Head of an institution on a particular subject area.

Eg: A conversation on organizing a programme

A speech by a Divisional Secretary

A lecture given at an event organized in celebration of World Environment Day

(Questions can be prepared in the following ways: listening to an audio recording containing a dialogue or a lecture and filling in the blanks; listening and selecting the correct answer and underlining it; marking the given statements with a \checkmark sign if they are correct and a x sign if they are incorrect; identifying and underlining the incorrect part; and arranging the given statements in the order they appear in the audio.)

Duration of the Exam and playing the Audio Recording

- The **overall duration** of the test is 1 hour.
- A total of four audio recordings, each lasting between 3 and 6 minutes, will be played for the four parts of the test. (The duration may vary depending on the nature of each part.)
- Each audio recording for a section, as well as each sentence or word, will be played twice.
- The candidates will be given 3 minutes before an audio recording is played to read the relevant part of the question paper.
- The candidates will be given 3 minutes after an audio recording is played to complete answering the questions.

- Additionally, if time remains, it will be used before distributing the question paper for instructions, signing admission cards, writing down examination numbers, and similar tasks, as well as for giving instructions during the examination and in between each section.
- Accordingly, the expected time allocation for the four sections is as follows.

Part	Time before the start (min)	Duration of the audio recording (min)	Number of times played	Time after the recording ends (min)	Time per one part (min)
01	3	4	One word twice	3	10
02	3	4	One word/number twice	3	10
03	3	6	One sentence twice	3	12
04	3	6	Full conversation or lecture (twice) first time	3	21
		6	Full conversation or lecture second time	3	
Total duration (min)					53

- The questions for each section are presented according to the flow of the audio recording.
- The question paper is designed using one or more methods for assessing listening skills, such as filling in the blanks with one- or two-word answers, marking with a \surd sign or a \times sign, numbering, and selecting the correct answer and underlining it.

Marking Answer Sheets and Scores

- The question paper carries 100 marks overall.
- Each question carries 2.5 marks.
- Marks will be deducted from answers with inaccurate spelling.
- The candidate should give significance to grammar when answering the questions. If an answer consists of grammatical errors, it will be deemed incorrect.
- Illegible answers will be deemed as incorrect answers.

- In cases where specific response methods are provided, such as marking ✓ for correct answers, only answers given in the specified format will be accepted; responses provided in any other form will not be accepted.

Techniques to be used by the candidates at the Listening Test

- Once the papers are distributed, the audio recordings for part 01 to part 04 will be played in the correct order.
- The recording will only be played twice. The candidates should make sure to read only the questions relevant to that particular recording within the period of 3 minutes given to them before the recording is played.
- The candidates should concentrate and comprehend the instructions given on the papers and the instructions given during the examination.
- As the question paper is generally set in an order that matches the flow of the recording, the candidate should progress through the questions on the paper along with the recording. It will be easier to identify the answers accordingly.
- During the examination, candidates should exercise good discipline and attentively use their listening, observation, and mental skills.

02. Speaking and Reading Test

The objective of this test is to evaluate the skills of the candidates in expressing themselves in Sinhala / Tamil. Clear and accurate expression of ideas, correct pronunciation, and appropriate vocabulary usage are focused on. In addition, attention should be paid to punctuation, and reading should be carried out clearly and aloud within the given time.

The subject areas and topics relevant to the examination are prepared according to the nature of the positions and duties of officers in Category 1.

Structure of the Examination

The Speaking Test consists of 4 parts.

❖ **Opening (1 minute) – No marks will be awarded**

At the beginning of the test, the examiner will conduct a short casual conversation with the candidates in order to reduce their nervousness and help them focus on the test. This part will take only 1 minute and marks will not be awarded.

❖ **Part One (4 minutes) – 25 marks**

The examiner will ask questions about a range of topics that are familiar to the candidate. (10 questions)

Eg: residential area, profession, place of work, assigned duties (provide simple, short answers)

❖ **Part Two (3 minutes) – 25 marks**

The candidate will have to select a picture card. He/she will have 1 minute to examine the picture and prepare and 2 minutes to provide a description of the given picture.

❖ **Part Three (4 minutes) – 25 marks**

A conversation is conducted between the examiner and the candidate based on a given topic. (Conversation topics will be provided)

❖ **Part Four (3 minutes) – 25 marks**

The candidate is given the opportunity to read a prescribed passage aloud. He/she is given 1 minute for preparation, and 2 minutes for reading the passage aloud.

- The overall duration of the test is 15 minutes.
- The entire examination carries a total of 100 marks.

Evaluation Method and Marking Scheme

At the Speaking Test, the skills of the candidate will be evaluated based on 5 criteria:

1. Fluency and Coherence
2. Vocabulary
3. Grammar
4. Pronunciation
5. Time management

1. Fluency and Coherence

When speaking on a given topic, the candidate's fluency in presenting ideas and their coherence in organizing those ideas are assessed.

2. Vocabulary

The candidate's knowledge of vocabulary, the words used in presenting ideas, and the appropriateness of those words will be assessed. As far as possible, expression should be in the relevant language itself, without the use of English words.

3. Grammar

Emphasis is placed on speaking in accordance with the grammatical rules of the relevant language.

4. Pronunciation

The candidates will be evaluated based on accurate and clear pronunciation of words.

5. Time Management

The candidates will be evaluated on whether they are able to present ideas or read effectively within the prescribed time limit.

The following marking scheme should be followed in determining the marks of the candidates while focusing on the above 5 criteria.

Hypothetically, if 25 marks are allocated for each section at the examination, those 25 marks will be divided under the aforesaid 5 criteria in the following manner.

	Fluency and Coherence (5)	Vocabulary (5)	Grammar (5)	Pronunciation (5)	Time Management (5)
Excellent	5	5	5	5	5
Good	4	4	4	4	4
Satisfactory	3	3	3	3	3
Weak	2	2	2	2	2
Very Weak	1	1	1	1	1
Nil	0	0	0	0	0