

A/L GENERAL ENGLISH · PRACTICE PAPER SERIES

MODEL PAPER 01

Employment and Skills

PAPER I · 60 MARKS · 1 HOUR

PAPER II · 140 MARKS · 3 HOURS

FINAL SCORE = (I + II) ÷ 2

FREE TO USE · NOT FOR SALE

*Practice paper. Format copied from the 2020/2024/2025 papers. Content is original.
Biographical passages stick to well-known facts but are simplified for exam use — answer
from the passage as printed.*

Progress Today. **Greatness** Tomorrow.

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PAPER I

General Certificate of Education (Adv. Level) Examination — General English I One hour · Total 60 marks

Instructions

- Answer all questions on this paper itself.
- Marks will be deducted for incorrect punctuation (omission of full stops, capital letters, etc.) and for mistakes in basic grammar.
- The supervisor will provide you with sheets for rough work.

PART A GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

35 MARKS

1 QUESTION 01

05 MARKS

Fill in the blanks in the following text, using the prepositions given in the box. Use each preposition only once. There is one preposition extra.

at for in of on with

A worried man went to see a doctor and complained (1) a strange problem.

"Doctor, every single night I dream that I am playing cricket (2) my old school team," he said.

The doctor looked (3) him thoughtfully and asked, "And what exactly is wrong (4) that? Most men would enjoy such a dream."

"That is the trouble, sir," the man replied. "The match never ends. I wake up (5) the morning far more tired than I was when I went to bed."

2 QUESTION 02

10 MARKS

Fill in each blank with the correct form of the verb given within brackets.

Merrill J. Fernando (1) (bear) in a small village in Sri Lanka in 1930. As a young man he (2) (send) to London in the 1950s to train in the tea trade, and he became one of the first Ceylonese to learn the business at that level. While he (3) (work) there, he noticed that Ceylon tea (4) (ship) abroad in bulk and blended with cheaper leaves before (5) (reach) the consumer. He decided that this had to change.

For more than thirty years he (6) (struggle) against the large companies that controlled the market. Finally, in 1988, he (7) (launch) Dilmah, a brand named after his two sons, Dilhan and Malik. It (8) (be) the first tea brand owned by the grower rather than by the buyer.

Today Dilmah (9) (sell) in more than a hundred countries, and a share of its profits goes to a charitable foundation. His story reminds us that one determined individual (10) (change) an entire industry.



3

QUESTION 03

10 MARKS

Underline the most appropriate word from those given within brackets to fill in the blanks in the following text.

An old king once placed a huge stone in the middle of (1) (a / an / the) main road that led to his palace. Then he hid behind a bush and waited to see what would happen.

(2) (Although / Because / If) several wealthy merchants passed that way, none of them tried to move

(3) (it / its / it's). One of them even blamed the king (4) (so / but / for) not keeping the roads clear.

Later, a poor farmer came along, carrying a heavy load of vegetables (5) (in / on / at) his shoulders. He put his load down and began to push the stone with all (6) (him / his / himself) strength. It took him a long time, (7) (nor / or / but) at last he managed to roll it to the side of the road.

(8) (As soon as / Until / Unless) the stone had been moved, the farmer noticed a small purse lying where it had been. Inside were gold coins and a note from the king. (9) (This / These / Those) note said that the gold belonged to whoever removed the stone.

(10) (Every / Many / Much) obstacle we meet is, in fact, an opportunity in disguise.

4

QUESTION 04

05 MARKS

Underline the most appropriate word from those given within brackets.

Many graduates find it difficult to (secure / catch / hold / grip) a suitable job.

Training programmes help young people (rise / raise / enhance / lift) their employability.

The company (offered / gifted / donated / presented) him an attractive salary.

We must (obtain / maintain / retain / contain) a good relationship with our colleagues.

Skilled workers are in great (demand / request / order / wish) in many countries.

5

QUESTION 05

05 MARKS

Underline the correct word-ending, selecting from those given within brackets.

Sri Lanka's garment industry is one of the country's most success (1) (ful / fully / fulness) export sectors. It provides employ (2) (ee / ment / er) for hundreds of thousands of people, most of them women. Over the years the industry has earned an international reputa (3) (tion / tive / ting) for ethical manufacturing. Government train (4) (ee / ing / er) programmes have helped young workers to improve their skills, and productivity has risen dramat (5) (ic / ical / ically) over the past decade.

PART A · 35 MARKS

**PART B READING AND WRITING****25 MARKS****6****QUESTION 06****05 MARKS**

Underline the option that best expresses the meaning of each of the sentences given below in bold print.

(1) Nimali, whose father works abroad, was appointed head prefect this year.

- (a) Nimali works abroad.
- (b) Nimali was appointed head prefect.
- (c) Nimali's father was appointed head prefect.
- (d) Both Nimali and her father work abroad.

(2) Had Ruwan applied before the deadline, he would have been called for the interview.

- (a) Ruwan applied before the deadline and was called for the interview.
- (b) Ruwan applied before the deadline but was not called for the interview.
- (c) Ruwan did not apply before the deadline, so he was not called for the interview.
- (d) Ruwan was called for the interview although he applied late.

(3) Despite having excellent qualifications, Sanduni was not selected for the post.

- (a) Sanduni was selected because she had excellent qualifications.
- (b) Sanduni was not selected because she lacked qualifications.
- (c) Sanduni had excellent qualifications, but she was not selected.
- (d) Sanduni had no qualifications and therefore was not selected.

(4) This job is not as demanding as my previous one.

- (a) Both jobs are equally demanding.
- (b) My previous job was more demanding than this one.
- (c) This job is more demanding than my previous one.
- (d) Neither of the two jobs is demanding.

(5) It was only after speaking to the manager that Kasun understood the terms of the contract.

- (a) Kasun understood the contract before speaking to the manager.
- (b) Kasun understood the contract only after he spoke to the manager.
- (c) Kasun spoke to the manager but still did not understand the contract.
- (d) Kasun never spoke to the manager about the contract.

7**QUESTION 07****10 MARKS**

Read the following four news items and answer the questions (I) and (II).

New vocational training centre opened in Monaragala

A modern vocational training centre was declared open at Monaragala on Wednesday, 15th April. The centre, built at a cost of Rs. 240 million, will offer courses in welding, motor mechanics, information technology and hospitality. The Minister of Education said at the opening that the centre would enrol 600 students in its first intake, and that priority would be given to applicants from rural areas of the district. Twelve instructors have already been recruited.

Sri Lankan student wins international robotics award

Thenuka Gamage, a seventeen-year-old student from a government school in Gampaha, won the gold medal at an international robotics competition held in Singapore last Friday, 17th April. Competing against 340 students from 28 countries, Thenuka presented a low-cost robotic arm designed to assist farmers in harvesting. His science teacher, who accompanied him, said the project had been developed over eighteen

months using recycled materials.

Rail services delayed on the Coast Line

Train services on the Coast Line were delayed by up to two hours on Sunday, 19th April, after a goods train broke down near Aluthgama. The Railway Department said engineers were sent to the site immediately and that services returned to normal by the evening. Passengers were advised to check departure times before travelling. No injuries were reported.

Sri Lanka among top destinations for skilled workers

A survey published on Monday, 20th April by an international recruitment agency has placed Sri Lanka among the ten most attractive South Asian sources of skilled labour. The survey assessed 40 countries on four criteria: English proficiency, technical training, adaptability and cost. Sri Lanka scored particularly well on English proficiency, but the report warned that the continued departure of qualified professionals could weaken the country's own workforce.

(I) Underline the most appropriate response in each of the questions from (1) to (5).

- (1) How many students will the new training centre enrol in its first intake?
(a) Twelve (b) Three hundred and forty (c) Six hundred (d) Not given
- (2) Which of the following incidents happened on Sunday?
(a) The opening of the vocational training centre
(b) The robotics competition in Singapore
(c) The delay of train services on the Coast Line
(d) The publication of the recruitment survey
- (3) Who or what does the pronoun "his" refer to in the news item about the robotics award?
(a) The science teacher (b) Thenuka Gamage (c) A farmer (d) The competition organiser
- (4) Which of the following was not given in the news item about the training centre?
(a) the cost of the building
(b) the number of instructors recruited
(c) the duration of the courses offered
(d) the subjects that will be taught
- (5) The underlined phrase "the continued departure of qualified professionals" in the fourth news item most nearly means
(a) the arrival of trained workers from abroad.
(b) the ongoing loss of trained workers to other countries.
(c) the retirement of experienced workers.
(d) the dismissal of unqualified workers.

(II) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above news items? In boxes (6) to (10), write True, False or Not Given.

	Statement	
(6)	The vocational training centre will admit only students from rural areas.	
(7)	Thenuka Gamage built his robotic arm entirely from imported components.	
(8)	The delay on the Coast Line was caused by a goods train that broke down.	
(9)	Train passengers were provided with buses during the delay.	
(10)	The recruitment survey assessed a total of forty countries.	



QUESTION 08

10 MARKS

Write a paragraph beginning with the given sentence. Use about 75–100 words. Do not exceed the word limit. Do not write more than one paragraph.

Young people should develop several skills before entering the world of work.

Write your answer below.

PART B · 25 MARKS



PAPER II

General Certificate of Education (Adv. Level) Examination — General English II Three hours · Additional Reading Time — 10 minutes · Total 140 marks

PART A READING SKILLS

50 MARKS

1 QUESTION 01

10 MARKS

Read the following text in which some words are given in bold print. Then, underline the meaning that is most appropriate to the context for the words given in bold print from (1) to (10).

Nick Vujicic is an Australian speaker and writer whose life story is a (1) **remarkable** example of what determination can achieve. He was born in Melbourne in 1982 without arms and legs, a condition that doctors could not explain to his parents at the time. As a child he was (2) **confronted** by difficulties that most people never have to imagine, from learning to feed himself to coping with the stares of strangers.

During his school years he often felt deep (3) **despair**, and he has spoken openly about how lonely those years were. What changed his outlook was the realisation that his difficulties did not have to (4) **define** who he was. He became (5) **determined** to live independently, and gradually learned to write, to swim and even to surf.

Rather than allowing physical (6) **obstacles** to limit him, Nick began speaking to school groups about self-worth. Word spread, and he (7) **established** an organisation to carry the message further. Today he addresses (8) **vast** audiences around the world.

His talks (9) **convey** a simple idea: that failure is not falling down but refusing to get up. For millions of listeners, his life is proof that the human spirit can (10) **triumph** over circumstances that appear impossible.

No.	Options
(1) remarkable	ordinary · extraordinary · doubtful · temporary
(2) confronted	avoided · welcomed · faced · created
(3) despair	hopelessness · anger · confusion · boredom
(4) define	describe · decide · limit · improve
(5) determined	willing · resolved · permitted · expected
(6) obstacles	barriers · achievements · comforts · opinions
(7) established	joined · founded · visited · funded
(8) vast	wealthy · noisy · enormous · distant
(9) convey	conceal · communicate · question · translate
(10) triumph	struggle · succeed · disappear · complain

2 QUESTION 02

10 MARKS

Read the following text and answer questions (I) and (II).

① Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala made history in May 2016 when she became the first Sri Lankan ever to stand on the summit of Mount Everest, the highest point on earth. She reached the top on 21st May, planting the national flag at 8,849 metres after a climb that had taken almost two months from base camp.

② She was not a professional mountaineer. Born and educated in Colombo, she went on to study gender studies at postgraduate level in the United Kingdom, and for many years she has worked as an activist on women's rights and on preventing violence against women. Climbing began as a personal interest rather than a career, and she trained for Everest alongside a full-time job.

③ The expedition was a two-person Sri Lankan team. Her climbing partner, Johann Peries, was forced to turn back a few hundred metres below the summit when the team's oxygen supply became a concern. He later described the decision as the hardest of his life. Jayanthi continued and completed the ascent.

④ Preparing for the climb was as much a financial challenge as a physical one. The team spent several years raising funds, and the cost of permits, equipment and guides ran into tens of millions of rupees. They trained in Nepal and in the Sri Lankan hill country, and both climbers had earlier attempted other Himalayan peaks.

⑤ Since the climb, Jayanthi has used her achievement as a platform for the causes she cares about. She speaks frequently to schoolchildren, arguing that the barriers young Sri Lankan women face are more often social than physical. Her message is that ambition is not a privilege reserved for a few, and that preparation matters more than natural talent.

(I) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above text? Write True or False in the boxes (1) to (8).

	Statement	
(1)	Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala was the first Sri Lankan to reach the summit of Mount Everest.	
(2)	She worked as a professional mountaineer before attempting Everest.	
(3)	She studied gender studies in Sri Lanka.	
(4)	Johann Peries reached the summit together with Jayanthi.	
(5)	Concern about the oxygen supply was the reason her partner turned back.	
(6)	The team raised funds for the expedition over several years.	
(7)	Both climbers had attempted other Himalayan peaks before Everest.	
(8)	She believes that natural talent matters more than preparation.	

(II) Underline the most appropriate answer.

(9) Who or what does the pronoun "they" in bold print in paragraph ④ refer to?

- (a) The permits and equipment
- (b) The two Sri Lankan climbers
- (c) The Nepalese guides
- (d) The schoolchildren

(10) The phrase "a platform for the causes she cares about" in paragraph ⑤ most nearly means

- (a) a stage on which she performs.



- (b) a business opportunity she has created.
- (c) a means of drawing attention to issues she supports.
- (d) a position of authority she has been given.

3

QUESTION 03**05 MARKS**

Read the following poem and do the activities that follow.

The Climb

The mountain did not ask my name,
It did not care that I was small;
It only stood there, cold and grey,
A silent, unforgiving wall.

I did not conquer it that day —
I learned instead to place my feet,
To trust the rope, to watch the sky,
To know when climbing is defeat.

And when at last I reached the ridge
And saw the valley far below,
I understood the summit's worth
Was every step I had to go.

So do not envy those who stand
Upon the peaks and wave and shine;
The mountain that they truly climbed
Was much the same as yours and mine.

(A) Underline the most appropriate response.

(1) In the first stanza, the mountain is described as
(a) welcoming. (b) indifferent. (c) frightening. (d) generous.

(2) According to the second stanza, what did the speaker learn?
(a) How to defeat the mountain
(b) How to climb faster than others
(c) How to climb carefully and know when to stop
(d) How to avoid climbing altogether

(3) The poet suggests that the real value of the summit lies in
(a) the view from the top.
(b) the admiration of others.
(c) the journey taken to reach it.
(d) the height of the mountain.

(4) The attitude of the poet towards those who stand on the peaks is
(a) resentful. (b) understanding. (c) mocking. (d) indifferent.

(B) Write down a word, selecting from the poem, which means the same as "defeat completely or overcome."

4 QUESTION 04

05 MARKS

Complete the blanks of the summary meaningfully and appropriately, using one word only from the passage titled "Vocational Training."

Vocational Training

Vocational training is a form of education that prepares learners directly for a particular trade or occupation. Unlike academic study, which concentrates on theory, it emphasises practical competence: a trainee electrician spends most of the course wiring circuits rather than reading about them. Courses are usually shorter than degree programmes, and many can be completed in a year or two.

One of the greatest advantages of vocational training is its close connection with the needs of industry. Training institutes consult employers about the skills they require, so graduates emerge with abilities that the labour market actually wants. This makes the transition from classroom to workplace considerably smoother.

Vocational qualifications are also more accessible than university places. Entry requirements are generally flexible, and many programmes accept students who did not obtain the results needed for higher education. For a large number of young people, this represents a genuine second chance rather than a lesser option.

Summary

Vocational training prepares students for a specific occupation by concentrating on (1) skill rather than theory. Because training institutes consult employers, learners acquire the abilities that the labour market genuinely (2), and moving from the classroom to the workplace becomes far (3) Vocational courses are also more (4) than university programmes because entry requirements are flexible. For many young people, therefore, vocational training offers a real second (5)

5 QUESTION 05

20 MARKS

Read the following text and answer the questions from (1) to (5).

① Every year, roughly 300,000 young Sri Lankans leave school and look for work. A significant proportion of them will spend a year or more unemployed, and youth unemployment in the country remains several times higher than the overall rate. This is not because young people are unwilling to work. It is because the skills they leave school with, and the jobs the economy actually offers, do not match each other.

② Employers in manufacturing, construction and tourism consistently report that they cannot fill technical vacancies, while thousands of arts and commerce graduates compete for a small number of clerical posts. A survey of private-sector employers found that communication skills in English, digital literacy and the willingness to solve problems independently were valued more highly than the class of a degree. Very few school leavers are trained in any of the three.

③ The second problem is departure. Sri Lanka has long exported labour, and remittances from workers abroad are one of the largest sources of foreign exchange. In recent years, however, the character of that migration has changed. It is no longer mainly unskilled workers who leave; doctors, engineers, accountants, IT professionals and university lecturers are going too. Each departure removes not only a worker but also the years of subsidised education that produced that worker.

④ It would be unfair to blame those who go. Salaries abroad are often several times higher, career progression is faster, and many professionals describe a sense that their skills are more respected elsewhere. A young doctor who emigrates is usually making a rational decision about her own family's future,

not betraying her country. The question is not how to prevent people from leaving, but how to make staying an attractive alternative.

⑤ Some remedies are already being tried. Vocational training centres have expanded, several universities now require English and IT components in every degree, and a handful of technology companies have set up training academies that recruit directly from school. Career guidance, however, remains weak: most students still choose their A/L subjects with very little idea of what jobs those subjects lead to.

⑥ None of this will change quickly. But an economy that trains its young people for work that exists, and then gives them a reason to stay, is not an impossible ambition. It requires schools, universities, employers and the state to plan together rather than separately — and it requires treating youth employment as an urgent national issue rather than a statistic in an annual report.

(1) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above text? Write True, False or Not Given in the boxes from (a) to (f). (06 marks)

	Statement	
(a)	Youth unemployment in Sri Lanka is higher than the overall unemployment rate.	
(b)	According to the text, young Sri Lankans are unwilling to take up available work.	
(c)	Employers value communication skills in English more highly than the class of a degree.	
(d)	Remittances from workers abroad are among the largest sources of foreign exchange.	
(e)	The government has recently introduced a law restricting the emigration of doctors.	
(f)	The writer believes that those who migrate are betraying their country.	

(2) Answer the following. (03 marks)

(i) Underline the most appropriate option to complete the missing sentence in paragraph ②.

- (a) The first problem is a mismatch between education and the labour market.
- (b) Manufacturing and tourism are the fastest-growing sectors of the economy.
- (c) English is now taught in every government school in the country.
- (d) Arts and commerce graduates should not be admitted to universities.

(ii) Why, according to the text, does each departure of a professional cost the country twice?

- (a) Because the professional's family also leaves the country.
- (b) Because the country loses both the worker and the subsidised education that trained the worker.
- (c) Because remittances from professionals are lower than those from unskilled workers.
- (d) Because the vacant post must then be filled by a foreign worker.

(iii) Which of the following best expresses the writer's proposed solution?

- (a) Preventing qualified professionals from leaving the country
- (b) Reducing the number of university admissions
- (c) Making it worthwhile for young people to stay, and training them for jobs that exist
- (d) Increasing the salaries of government employees only

(3) If you wish to extend each paragraph further, in which paragraphs do you include the following information? Match the information with the paragraphs of the text and write the number of the paragraph in the relevant box. (03 marks)



	Information	Paragraph
(a)	A nurse explains that she earns four times as much in the Middle East as she did at home.	
(b)	A school in Kurunegala introduces a programme in which past pupils describe their careers to A/L students.	
(c)	A garment factory reports that it has been unable to recruit machine technicians for eight months.	

(4) Who or what do the following pronouns in bold print refer to? (03 marks)

- (a) them (paragraph ①) :
(b) that worker (paragraph ③) :
(c) It (paragraph ⑥) :

(5) Write one word in each blank, selecting from the passage, which means the same as the following. (05 marks)

- (a) Money sent home by people working abroad :
(b) Positions that are available and need to be filled :
(c) Based on clear reasoning rather than emotion :
(d) Movement of people from one country to another to live : (e) Paid for partly by the government :

PART A · 50 MARKS

PART B DIALOGUES

25 MARKS

6

QUESTION 06

05 MARKS

How do you respond in each of the following situations? Write only one appropriate sentence or question for each, beginning with the word/s given.

(1) You want your class teacher to write you a recommendation letter for a training programme. Request it politely.

"Teacher, could ?"

(2) A friend suggests that you should give up your studies and take a job immediately. Disagree, giving a reason.

"I"

(3) Your elder sister has been selected for a job she wanted very much. Congratulate her.

"Congratulations"

(4) You have been offered a place on a course but need a week to decide. Ask for time.

"Would ?"

(5) A younger student asks you what he should do to improve his English. Advise him.

"You should"



7

QUESTION 07

05 MARKS

Imagine that you want to find out about a computer course. Complete the following telephone conversation between you and the course coordinator. Do not use more than two sentences/questions in each blank.

Coordinator : Good afternoon. Skills Lanka Training Institute. How can I help you?

You : Good afternoon. I saw your advertisement in yesterday's paper. (1) ?

Coordinator : Yes, we still have places on the Diploma in Information Technology.

You : (2) ?

Coordinator : The course runs for one year, with classes on Saturdays and Sundays.

You : (3) ?

Coordinator : The total course fee is Rs. 90,000, and it can be paid in three instalments.

You : (4) ?

Coordinator : You need to have passed the G.C.E. (A/L) examination in any stream.

You : (5) ?

Coordinator : You can register online or come to our office before the 30th of this month.

You : Thank you very much for the information.

Coordinator : You are welcome. We hope to see you soon.

8

QUESTION 08

15 MARKS

The following is an advertisement. Imagine that you are interested in the programme. You contact the office over the phone to get more details. Write out the telephone conversation that takes place between the Programme Officer and you. You may use the information given in the advertisement. Each one should speak at least five times.

CAREER START 2026

Free three-month employability programme for school leavers

★ English for the workplace ★ Digital skills ★ Interview training

Limited to 100 participants · Certificates awarded

Contact: The Programme Officer — 011 2 456 789

Write your answer below.

PART B • 25 MARKS

PART C WRITING SKILLS

65 MARKS

9

QUESTION 09

05 MARKS

Select any five words from the list given below. Write five meaningful sentences using the selected words. You may use the verbs in any tense and nouns in singular or plural form. Do not change the form of the other words.

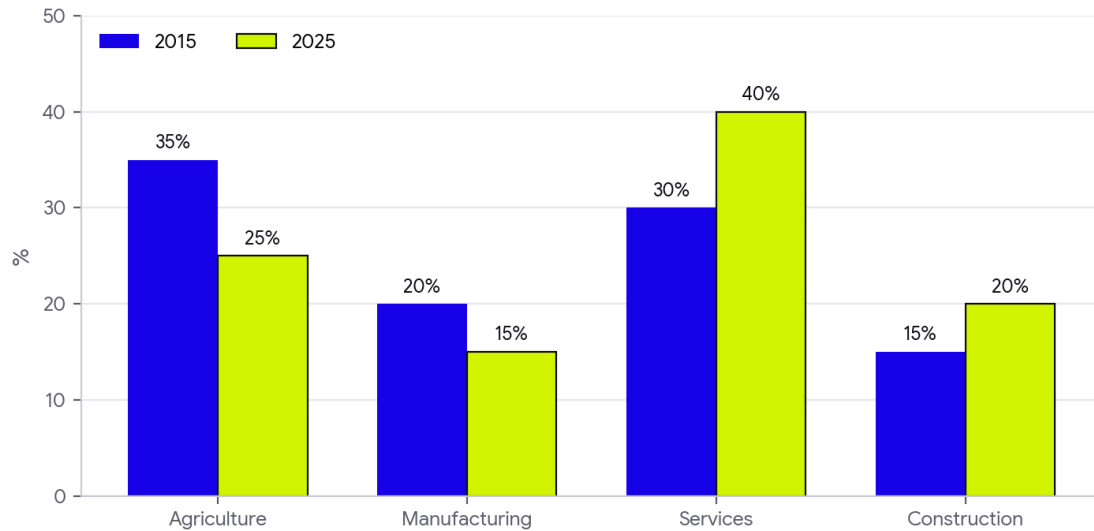
opportunity reliable qualification negotiate patiently recruit
practical income efficiently achievement

10

QUESTION 10

10 MARKS

The bar chart below shows the percentage of employed people in four sectors in Sri Lanka in 2015 and 2025. Describe the information given in the bar chart by reporting the main features and making comparisons where relevant. Use about 100 words.



Write your answer below.

11

QUESTION 11

15 MARKS

You have recently started a part-time course while studying for your A/LS. Write a letter to a friend telling him/her about it. In your letter, include the following details:

- what the course is and where you are following it
- why you decided to follow it
- what you have learnt so far
- encourage your friend to join a similar course

Use about 100–125 words.

Write your answer below.

12

QUESTION 12

15 MARKS

Imagine that you are the Secretary of the Career Guidance Society of your school. Your society has decided to hold a "Careers Day" for Advanced Level students. Write a letter to the Manager of a leading company in your area requesting sponsorship for the event. Include the following in your letter:

- a short description of the event you intend to organise
- the date, time and venue
- what kind of assistance you are requesting
- how the company will be recognised at the event

Use about 100–125 words.

Write your answer below.

13

QUESTION 13

20 MARKS

Some people believe that young Sri Lankans should seek employment abroad because salaries and opportunities are better. Others think that qualified people should remain and build their careers in their own country. Discuss both views and give your opinion. Use about 150–200 words. Do not exceed the word limit.

Write your answer below.



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