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URDU

Paper 9676/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates should:

- **Question 1**: write sentences that clearly demonstrate the meaning of the each word given.
- **Question 2**: write one word synonyms of the words given.
- **Questions 3** and **4**: read the questions carefully and formulate the answers, where possible, without copying large chunks of the text.
- **Question 5(a)**: select and write down five points from each text in response to the stimulus and respect the word limit.
- In **5(b)**: candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text).
- **Language**: when preparing for the exam, candidates should revise basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

This paper is designed to test candidates' understanding of written Urdu, their ability to write accurate responses to text-based questions and their ability to write accurate and concise Urdu in response to given stimuli. The number of marks allocated for each question shows how many separate ideas need to be included in the answer in order to gain full marks.

There were two passages of about three hundred and fifty words each on a related theme. The general theme this session was 'tax and *zakat*'.

There was a large variation in performance, ranging from those who found difficulties in writing to the very good. It is therefore not possible to draw any general conclusions.

In **Questions 3** and **4** there was a tendency to write unnecessarily lengthy answers copied directly from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The purpose of this exercise was to enable candidates to demonstrate their ability to explain the meaning of words. Just using the word in a sentence does not necessarily show the meaning.
An example for each word may illustrate the point.

(a) shakl
"*main ne us ki shakl dekhi" is not clear'* (we could have seen his knee) is unclear but
"*maan ko dekhkar bacce ki shakl par khushi saf nazar ayi"* is clear.

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(b) hansi
'uska chahra dekhte hi mujhe hansi ayi' (I could have cried) is not clear, but
'Us ka mizaq sunkar Halim ko itni hansi ayi keh us ke peyt men dard hone laga ' is clear.

(c) sarkarii
'Ahmad ka bap sarkari mulazim tha.' is not clear, but
' sarkari mulazimon ki tanxahen awam ki taxon se di jati hain' is clear.

(d) dhuan dhar
Most candidates copied more or less directly from the given text, which was not acceptable.
'Vakil ki dhuan dhar taqrir ki vajah se mujrim ko jurmana ada karna para'
is very close to the original text, but
'Shahid afridi ki dhuan dhar balla bazi shayaqin ko bahut acha laga.' is a good sentence

(e) sahyl e samandar
"Hafte ke din ham sahyle samandar gaye" (We could have gone anywhere.)
This does not illustrate the meaning, whereas another candidate who wrote:
" ham heft eke din sahyl e samandar men teyrne gaye "
clearly does show the meaning clearly.

Question 2

A lot of candidates found this question quite challenging because they did not appear to know the meaning of '*muteradyf*" 'synonym' – consequently, they answered by writing the '*mutazad*' or ' 'antonym"

Among the correct responses were

(a) *dawlat mand*

(b) *anjam*

(c) *aadmi*

(d) *nazdik*

(e) *ibtida*

Question 3

Questions 3 and 4 consist of a series of questions designed to test candidates' careful reading and comprehension of the passages.

It was clear from some candidates' responses that their Urdu was not good enough to make understanding the text reasonably straightforward. The quality of candidates' responses depended on their ability to follow the rubric. Candidates are expected to write concise answers, and as far as possible, in their own words.

There are still too many answers which are simply lifted from the text with minimal alteration. Some candidates write too much, in some instances more than 6 lines of text and over 100 words. All these questions can be answered simply and relatively concisely.

Candidates need to be trained not to just write out a large section of text. If they do this, they are not fully demonstrating comprehension.

(a) This was, by and large, well done by the majority of candidates

(b) The key here was 'unusual taxes' with the two examples 'beards' and 'hats'. Many scored 3 marks here.

(c) Very straightforward – 'rich people could afford to pay the beard tax.'

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(d) This was not so well answered usually because the candidates wrote out the whole pa almost verbatim. Getting full three marks required giving the reason why, which had to be Those who wrote something like 'to get revenge' got full marks.

(e) The main point here was – He went to make salt NOT just to avoid paying tax but 'to protest against the British'

(f) Those who answered usually did well.

Question 4

The general points given for Question 3 apply equally to question 4.

This passage was about 'zakat'. The key point of course is that they are very different concepts.

(a) Candidates needed to write three things with which 'zakat' could not be compared. Those who wrote charity, disaster relief, tythe or income tax were rewarded.

(b) The first part of the question was well answered - 'it is not income tax'. The reason was not that it could be avoided by clever accountancy" but because it is a religious duty.

(c) Usually answered well - 'to do good' and 'to raise spirituality'

(d) This question was usually answered well but there was too much copying out of the whole relevant paragraph

(e) This was straightforward as long as it was made clear that the money went to the church officials.

(f) Some candidates got only one mark because they gave only a partial answer that 'Tythe' is from the poor to church officials. A brief definition of 'Zakat' is required – something like ' 'Zakat' is given to the poor.

Question 5

Part **(a)** of this question requires candidates to give a summary of their understanding of the two texts, according to a specific question.

Many of the problems arose because, instead of 140 words to include both parts of the question, candidates wrote well over 300 words and therefore lost marks. Candidates must select the salient points and not write extensive essays.

(a) The candidates should have been able to extract the key points related to tax and zakat, and write them in about 100 words.

The problem for many is that they tried to get every point mentioned in the texts, whether or not they were relevant. Too many candidates used far too many words to write about all the minor details of the strange taxes on hats and beards in the past, which were only marginally relevant to the question. Candidates must be trained to identify the main points and then to write short simple sentences such as:

'Tax is raised by the government to provide vital services for the people. It is a legal duty to pay tax. Tythe was a tax on the poor which went to the priests. In the old days tax was put on many strange items such as hats and beards.

Zakat is a religious duty. It is found only in Islam. It should be given to people who need it by people who can afford it. It is nothing to do with government or priests. Muslims must consider how they give zakat, to whom and not expect reward for their good deeds.'

This paragraph of about 100 words would get ten marks.

Most candidates were able to produce at least five points regarding truth and lies but it needs to be stressed that these points **must be derived from the text** and not from the candidate's own ideas, which could not be awarded marks.

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(b) This section of the question required students to give their opinion on the question of giv to the government.

Most students did very well in this question. They were able to give their opinion either way and justify it within 40–50 words.

Quality of Language

Fifteen of the marks for this paper are awarded for quality of language. Clearly, at advanced level a high standard of linguistic accuracy is expected, and, in addition to this, a degree of fluency, use of appropriate idiom, advanced vocabulary and confident use of complex sentence structures is going to differentiate between the good and the very good performance.

The quality of language ranged from good to basic, with some candidates finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Examples of good use of the language included:

Use of appropriate structures and vocabulary which enabled them to write responses 'in their own words' and not rely on copying verbatim from the text.

The most common errors were:

The most common errors were basic grammatical errors in agreement of case and gender and the misspelling of everyday words.

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Paper 9676/03
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a structured and well-illustrated response that is clearly relevant to the specific title, rather than to the general topic area;
- use language which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General Comments

This paper is designed to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one of a range of five topics, selected as being relevant to their countries of origin. Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. For the majority of candidates the problem is not simply writing accurate Urdu but responding to the stimulus topics in an organised and well-structured way.

The wide range of topics allowed candidates the opportunity to choose one and demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. At Advanced Level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected, but it is equally important that candidates also need to be able to organise and structure their work, present an argument where appropriate and do so in an interesting way.

This component is marked out of 40: 24 are awarded for quality of language and 16 for content, structure and organisation.

Two topics attracted significantly more responses, approximately two-thirds of the candidature, than the rest.

The first was **Topic 2**:

"***jadid sahulaton ke bavujud dehi zindagi pur sakun ho sakti hai"***

"In spite of modern facilities rural life can be very peaceful"

The majority of the compositions on this topic were rather disappointing. The reason was that candidates tended to write generic essays comparing and contrasting urban and rural life, and inserted a paragraph or two in an attempt to show the Examiner that they really were addressing the set title. In many such essays much of the content consisted of describing and discussing city life as village life, even though city life was not mentioned in the title. It seems that many took the title as meaning:

"Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of rural and urban life." Unfortunately for them that was not the topic set.

We understand that many candidates practice writing essays on the general topic areas as part of their preparation for this examination, but it is not sufficient just to insert a paragraph on the specific topic. Such essays are not going to score high marks for content.

On the other hand, those that did focus on the title were able to describe and explain that despite (*"ke bavujud"*) the increasing modernisation of villages, living there did still retain its charms and benefits. These were the types of essays that rightly received higher marks.

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The next most popular title was **Topic 5**:

'Aap ke shahr men aaludagi ki rol tham ke liy sab se zaruri iqdamat kya ho sakte hain?
"What steps can be taken to reduce pollution in your city"

By and large, this title was reasonably well answered. Those who answered it well spent a paragraph or two describing the problem and the main body of the essay concentrating on solutions that were or should be introduced in their cities. Some showed great awareness of this and of practical and practicable ways to combat pollution. These were the essays that scored high marks for content.

Unfortunately a considerable number of candidates' essays demonstrated lack of balance. Quite often much of their compositions described in great detail different types of pollution with only a line or two in each paragraph outlining solutions. However well written these essays may be, they cannot score high marks for content. Unfortunately these candidates scored low marks despite the more often than not high level of accuracy of their Urdu.

The third most popular topic was:

'Insani ta'luqat ko keyse bahter banaya ja sakta hai
"*How can human relations be improved."*

The majority of those candidates who chose to write in this topic produced very good compositions. The best essays on this topic were very impressive. They included a mature discussion of the problems that existed in maintaining good relationships, both within families and in the broader world. Naturally, many candidates discussed the role of modern technologies in changing, not always for the better, human relationships and how people needed to learn, or relearn, to actually communicate directly with each other. Many of them stressed the role of the elders in the family to bring up their offspring to allow open and honest discussion. This was very appropriate to the title, which should have encouraged candidates to suggest solutions and rightly earned good content marks.

While being at least reasonably well attempted by most of the candidates, weaker candidates showed a tendency to discuss the topic in general terms, with little attention paid to suggestions for improvement. .

The fourth most popular topic was on **Topic 3**:

"Aaj kal ke nawjavanon ki ziadatar sargarmian mwzar e sahyt hoti hain"
'Nowadays most young people's activities are harmful to health.

While this topic was not as popular as expected, it was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it, but well answered only by few. Quite naturally many concentrated on the reliance or over-reliance of the younger generation on technology and its potentially harmful effects. Some wrote too much on one specific and obvious example, like mobile phones and chatting. The topic required at least some discussion on those activities that many young people do take part in which are good for health, such as sport. The essays that did present a more balanced point of view were usually the ones that scored the highest marks for content.

The least frequently attempted topic was **Topic 4**:

"bein ul aqwami ikhtylafat dur karne ke liy jang kw har surat men aakhryri hal hona chahiye"
"War should in every case be the last resort for resolving international disputes.'

Few candidates attempted this topic. Those that did were good and some exceptionally good. It is a topic that lends itself to the mature candidate who has a mental and linguistic capacity to express mature and sometimes complex ideas.

Conclusion

Teachers and students will have noted that in the last few years examiners have dropped the section of question title asking candidates to "discuss" a particular title. It seems unnecessary to include that candidates should be trained to, where appropriate, discuss the essay topic in question, whether or not there is a statement in the title stating "discuss."

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The best essays in any topic area were those which demonstrated a structured and considered [illegible] the title, with an introduction several, cogent points relating to the title and a concluding paragraph.

Linguistically, they were almost error free, with a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences, contain[illegible] dependent clauses, use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom, metaphor and where appropriate relevant quotations.

While the overall performance was good, with most candidates displaying very good writing skills, many essays would have been much improved by stricter observance of the rubrics relating to the prescribed word limits.

It is the second part of the assessment criteria, on content, planning and organisation, where candidates tend to lose marks.

Part of this is in conforming to the rubric, which requires candidates to be able to write concisely on any particular topic. We set a range of between 250 to 400 words because we believe candidates should be able to write appropriate responses that conform to this range. Failure to contain the essay within the prescribed word-limit reduces marks for content because candidates are unlikely to reach a concluding paragraph. That being said, very many candidates wrote well-planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.

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Paper 9676/04

Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates should:

- take due care to ensure they understand the focus of the question;
- provide detailed answers to both parts of the question when answering questions 1(a), 2(a) or 3(a).

General comments

The paper is divided into two sections - poetry and prose. The poetry section seemed more popular. This series was of similar standard as that of previous years. The candidates made good use of the options they were given. As a whole, the students did well in the paper and scored high marks. The stronger candidates read and understood the focus of each question and answered appropriately. However, while they showed good knowledge of the text, some students could not answer the questions fully.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Most students gave a good explanation of the ghazal. However, some of them repeated their answer in part **(ii)**. Therefore, they could not score high marks.

(b) Students were asked to choose a ghazal by Atish. Those who answered this question explained their choice of ghazal and discussed it quite well.

Question 2

(a) This question was very popular. Although many candidates attempted it, some repeated the explanation of the poem in their response to part **(ii)** and didn't discuss the poem in relation to the notions of romance and social justice in Sahir's poetry.

(b) Faiz was a popular choice for many candidates. They wrote a lot about this poet's life and his work but did not fully discuss his unique style of poetry as required by the question.

Question 3

(a) Very few candidates attempted this question, but those who did were able to substantiate their point of view with clear references to the poem.

(b) Only a few attempted to answer this question, and very few demonstrated their understanding of the focus of the question. Candidates should have referred to Josh's revolutionary point of view in their responses.

Question 4

(a) Many candidates chose this question and wrote good detailed answers. However, some simply mentioned a few male or female characters from the novel.

(b) This was a more popular choice for candidates and their discussions of the people to be blamed for Umrao's sufferings were thorough.

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Question 5

(a) This question required candidates to discuss a given statement in the light of the short story 'Nazara darmian hay'. Many candidates who answered this question wrote about the whole story but only some were able to address the focus of the question and score high marks.

(b) This question asked candidates to describe the character of Bishan Singh and discuss the importance of this character in the story. Those candidates who merely described the character could not score high marks.

Question 6

(a) Most of those candidates who attempted this question wrote detailed descriptions of the role of Rani as a mother and as a wife.

(b) In this question, the best answers picked one of the given reasons for the success of the drama and discussed it thoroughly. Others simply described all three reasons and lost valuable marks.

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Paper 9676/05

Prose

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to have:

- a good understanding of the grammar of both languages;
- a wide vocabulary in both Urdu and English;
- well-developed reading skills.

They should also ensure that they:

- translate meaningful chunks of language rather than individual words;
- edit their work carefully for spelling, tense, singular and plural number mistakes;
- do not use words from their spoken dialect or languages other than Urdu.

General comments

The main requirement of this paper is the ability to translate an English passage using accurate and concise Urdu. The level of difficulty of the passage was similar to that of previous years.

The overall performance of candidates was good, with a fair proportion of very good scripts. There was a small number of excellent pieces of translation. However, the main problem for the majority of the candidates was not the difficulty of the passage, but using the correct verb tenses, gender, singular and plural forms. Some other problems for a few candidates included writing accurate and precise Urdu translations in an organised and well-structured way.

The overall standard of the written Urdu translations indicated that the majority of the candidates understood the passage fairly well, but failed to realise that they did not need to shift from one tense to another if the timeframe for each action was the same. Almost all of the events occurring in the text were narrated using simple past tense. It was felt that many translations would have scored higher marks if the candidates had used the simple past tense consistently throughout.

The majority of scripts contained many spelling and grammatical errors, and many candidates used certain superfluous words and phrases or provided personal interpretations that were not needed.

Only a few candidates used dialect or a number of Hindi words, but on the whole there was evidence that the majority of the candidates would benefit from further work on improving their Urdu literacy skills. This would include work on improving their understanding of the tense system, improving spelling, the correct use of singular and plural forms and the correct use of gender.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The level of difficulty of the paper was similar to that of previous years and well within the required level. The passage required careful translation of certain key words and phrases and the use of the simple past tense to narrate events.

Some of the words or phrases candidates had the most difficulty with were, for example: ‘new job’: نئی ملازمت; ‘daily routine’: روزانہ کے معمولات; ‘until noon/midday’: دوپہر تک; ‘walk slowly’: آہستہ آہستہ چلتے ہوئے; ‘supermarket’ سپر مارکیٹ:; ‘my priority’: اہم بات' فوقیت; ‘exercise’: ورزش; ‘an hour’:ایک گھنٹے ; ‘after my swim’: تیراکی کے بعد ; ‘Assistant Manager’:اسسٹنٹ مینیجر ; ‘big company’: بڑی کمپنی; ‘main role’: خاص ذمہ داری ; ‘customer complaints’: گاہکوں کی شکایات; ‘trained’: تربیت دی; ‘calm’: پُر سکون; ‘kind’: نرم مزاج/شفیق ; ‘demanding’: تقاضا کرنے والے; ‘faults’: خامیاں ; ‘totally

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baseless’: بالکل ناجائز/ بے بنیاد; ‘politely’: نرمی سے ; ‘on my journey home’: گھر جاتے وقت; ‘physically’: پر
‘mentally’: ذہنی طور پر; ‘exhausted’: تھک جاتا ہوں; ‘when I get home’: گھر پہنچ کر ; ‘classical music’: موسیقی
‘mediate for half an hour’: آدھ گھنٹے کے لئے مراقبے میں جاتا ہوں; ‘refresh’: تر و تازہ;.

Other phrases that posed a challenge were ‘have long lunch’; ‘I try to be like her with our clients’; ‘reminds me of my mother’; ‘I feel physically and mentally exhausted’; ‘I listen to some classical music and mediate for half an hour’.

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