

General Comments

The standard and linguistic demands of this paper were similar to previous years. The text passage in **Section 1** was comparatively straightforward and easy to respond to. The text passage in **Section 2** was slightly more demanding in terms of comprehending the subject content before attempting to answer the given questions. This balanced the level of difficulty and provided differentiation between average and good performances. Candidates were required to think carefully before attempting the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

In the task of writing sentences for given words in **Question 1**, candidates had difficulty conveying the meaning of the words 'jahiliat' and 'mehroom'.

In **Question 2** the word 'aap kay Khaliq nay kaha' was misunderstood by candidates of average ability.

The Urdu text passage in **Section 1** was a good example of contemporary writing about 'women's status before and after the advent of Islam'. Candidates understood the passage very well and answered the following questions accurately.

In **Question 1**, many candidates did not understand the difference between before and after Islam.

Question 2 was well answered by the majority of candidates. Common responses were inheritance and knowledge. Less able candidates struggled to answer this part accurately.

Question 3 was straightforward as the information in the text was sufficient for candidates to answer this question accurately.

Question 4 proved tricky for some candidates but most managed to respond precisely from the amount of information available in the text, as there were many points to consider.

Question 5 was very well attempted and many candidates scored good marks for this question.

Section 2

Almost all candidates answered **Question 1** correctly.

Question 2 proved to be rather more demanding for many candidates.

Question 3 was also attempted well by the majority of candidates.

In answering **Question 4** candidates picked several of the eight given demands and elaborated with examples.

Question 5 was well answered by the majority of candidates, as it was unambiguous. However, many candidates left this unattempted or simply presented it as their answer to **Question 5a**. Some candidates may not have understood the rubric 'janib-darana'.

Responses to **Question 5a** were presented in many different writing styles. A comparison requires the inclusion of both differences and similarities. The candidate's opinion was also essential when answering in this section, as there is no 'right' answer.

For the majority of candidates **Question 5b** was fairly easy to respond to, however again, a range of different writing styles were demonstrated and responses differed between the case for and the case against the statement. Many candidates though decided not to argue the case either way and remained neutral in their answers.

General comments

This paper is designed to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one from a range of six topics. Overall the performance of candidates was good with a high proportion of excellent scripts. The problem for most candidates is not writing Urdu but responding to the stimulus topic in an organized and well-structured way, presenting an argument where appropriate and doing so in an interesting way. Many essays would have been much improved by stricter observance of the rubric relating to the prescribed word limit, which requires candidates to write **concisely** on any particular topic. That being said, very many candidates wrote well planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.

There were a few candidates who wrote essays in response to the general topic heading above each essay title, rather than on the specific title, for example, some candidates wrote on the topic 'Technology', rather than on the specific title 'The effect of the Internet on education?'. This means that were not able to achieve many marks for content. Candidates should be familiar with the layout of the question paper to ensure that they write on the correct topic title.

Comments on specific questions

This session's most popular title by far was on the subject of village and city life:

'Dehat ki zindagi shehr ki zindagi se bahtar hai - aap ki kya rai hai'

'Village life is better than city life - discuss'

Although it was a very popular topic of broad appeal, too many candidates merely wrote in an unstructured and unfocussed way about village and city life. Some candidates wrote only about the lifestyle they preferred and didn't mention the other at all. This lack of balance in treating the two aspects does not achieve high marks. Many candidates presented a rather simplistic view of rural life, mentioning only idealistic and romantic views of village life such as peace and quiet, lack of pollution and neighbourliness and seemed unaware of other aspects such as poverty and the hard lives lead by many people in the villages of Pakistan. At this level some analysis and comparison between village and city life is expected. There were however some excellent and well argued essays in response to this topic.

The second most popular title was:

'nawjawanon ki sahih tarbiyet keyse ki jati hai'

'How can young people be brought up properly?'

It was the view of almost every candidate who chose this essay that a child's upbringing starts on the mother's knee and is the responsibility of family, school, society and the government. Many candidates started by writing about the failings and lack of manners and discipline of today's youth, and some spent more time on that than on ways to bring them up properly. In general the essays covered the expected points, such as the effect of modern ways, TV, the Internet, etc., on young people and how it is necessary for controlled access to these things. Many candidates wrote about the role of Islam as the perfect guide for bringing up children. Most candidates wrote competently on this topic.

'mashriqi mulkon men maghribi saqafat ka asar'

'The effect of western culture on eastern countries'

In this topic the best candidates presented the issue, discussed both sides of the argument using their own country as an example, and came to their own conclusion. Mention was made of economic and social factors and many were concerned about the dangers of the West 'ruining' Eastern culture. The emotional connection that some candidates made with the topic helped produce some excellent essays.

'ta'lim par internet ke asrat'

'The effect of the Internet on education.'

This topic produced some good essays but many strayed from the specific scope of the question, namely the effect on education. The better responses discussed the availability of information for candidates, the frustrations of pursuing inappropriate material and the aspect of wasting time on the net, before concluding that overall the effect of the Internet was a positive one.

'garibon ke liye insaf ka hasool namumkin hai'

'It is impossible for the poor to get justice'

Although not many candidates attempted this topic, those who did so produced some excellent essays, some with well-expressed impassioned views on the subject. They wrote about the ideals and purpose of the law, how it should be impartial and available to all, and then painted a vivid picture of the prevailing situation in Pakistan and its *lifafa* culture where money can buy you anything, including justice.

The remaining topic was attempted by only a very few candidates:

'aap ke mwashe men khelon ko jang par tarjih deni chahiya - us par bahs kijiye'

'Sport should be preferred to war in your society'

Of those candidates who wrote on this topic a number did not fully understand the ramifications of the question. They focused mainly on the point that sportsmen were fit and healthy young men who would make ideal soldiers. Some however made the point that, as is the case between India and Pakistan, cricket diplomacy has played its part in efforts to make lasting peace between the two feuding neighbours.

URDU LITERATURE

Paper 9686/04

Texts

The overall standard of candidates was good. There were some very good candidates at the top end of the scale and an encouraging increase in the proportion of good scripts. A wide range of language was used. At the top end the Urdu was fluent, idiomatic and very expressive. There was however a tail of candidates with an extremely limited knowledge of the necessary range of vocabulary who performed well below average.

In some cases, there was evidence of candidates spending too much time and effort introducing their chosen topic, prolonging their writing task unnecessarily. Candidates need to be reminded that it is in their own interest to stick to the recommended length as irrelevant material cannot be rewarded. A significant number of candidates attempted to rely too heavily on their memorised and pre-learned answers on various texts. Such answers are written without taking into consideration the focus of the question.

Section 1

Question 3 on short stories was the most popular choice for candidates many of whom performed very well on this question. Those who attempted the poetry questions managed the explanation part without much difficulty, however only the higher level candidates could competently answer the evaluation part of the questions.

Section 2

The majority of candidates attempted two questions from this section, **Question 4** and **6** being the most popular choice by far. **Question 5** was the least popular question of the entire question paper. Once again, there was evidence of pre-learned answers. Only those candidates who dealt with the focus of the question managed to achieve high marks.