

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

This paper was accessible to most of the candidates who were correctly entered for this level. The majority of candidates did well in most parts of the paper and in particular candidates seemed to enjoy and take an interest in the 'wild life' topic.

This year the majority of candidates used their time and skill appropriately when handling the questions. There were only a few cases where responses were unnecessarily prolonged. There were some cases where spelling errors and poor use of grammatical structures affected the language marks. Some noticeable misspelt words were those containing similar sounding letters, such as *zey/zuaad* and *seen/suaad/sey*. There were a few candidates who did not relate the question to the given passages and wrote their own ideas instead for some of the answers. This affected the accreditation of marks as they were not showing that they understood the content of the texts.

Response to individual questions

Question 1

This question was handled well by most candidates. In quite a few cases, candidates used a substitute word/form and lost a mark. Similarly there were some ambiguous sentences and/or the wrong use of a word, neither of which scored any marks. In a few cases candidates lifted the whole related sentence from the text instead of composing their own sentence which resulted in them losing a mark.

Question 2

In some cases candidates appeared not to understand the task in which they were required to match the given phrase exactly within the content of the passage. They either made up their own equivalent phrase or picked up/mismatched the wrong one. As a result marks were lost.

Question 3

Part (a) related to the condition of zoos in olden times and part (b) related to the behaviour and attitude of spectators. Most candidates' responses were appropriate in both these parts.

(c) This part was handled well by the majority of candidates, most of whom gained full marks.

(d) Most candidates understood the question about the Panda in regard to the zoo's performance and gained two or three marks.

(e) This part of the question seeks information about the candidate's own point of view with regard to the protection of wild animals. Nearly all of the candidates did well in this question with most achieving full marks.

Question 4

(a) This part of the question was done well by the majority of candidates.

(b) A thorough understanding of the text is required to answer this question appropriately to gain full marks. Some candidates merely copied a few relevant bits and so lost marks, whereas those who comprehended the text in depth achieved two or three marks.

- (c) Most candidates provided a good comparison and gave relevant examples from the text, getting full marks. Some relied on their own logical views as examples and as such lost marks.
- (d) Again, some candidates came up with their own reasons for animals' psychological problems rather than with reference to the text and failed to score full marks.
- (e) There were mixed responses for this part of the question which seeks information on the issues related to the Panda. Only a few candidates were able to achieve full marks. A few candidates got mixed up with the information given in **Question 3 (d)** and lost marks.

Question 5

Nearly all candidates did well in both parts of this question; most doing particularly well in part (b) where they were asked to provide their own opinion about zoos. There were a few cases where candidates misunderstood the rubric instructions that states there is a total of 140 words for both parts of the question. The two parts of the question are marked separately for content. A few candidates considered this as one task and included both part's contents in one piece of writing. Where there was clear indication of both responses, candidates did not lose marks, however to avoid losing marks it is important to ensure that both parts are clearly covered.

URDU

Paper 9686/03

Essay

GENERAL:

This component tests candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one of a range of five topics. Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. The problem for most candidates is not writing accurate Urdu but responding to the stimulus topics in an organised and well-structured way.

There were five given topics, on which candidates were expected to write between 250 and 400 words.

The topics this year were:

'naujavan' 'Youth'

1 **'nawjavanon apne mulk ke behter mustaqbil ke zamyn heyn'**

'Young people are the guarantors of their country's future.'

'seyr-o siyahat' 'Tourism'

2 **'ap ke mulk men gheyr mulki siyahon ki tadad keyse barhai ja sakti hey?'**

'How can the number of foreign tourists to your country be increased?'

'aludagi' 'Pollution'

3 **'aludagi ki rok tham ke liye zaruri yqdamat'**

'The steps needed to control pollution.'

'sainsi awr tybbi inkishafat' 'Scientific and medical discoveries'

4 **'sainsi taraqi men mazhab ka hath'**

'The role of religion in scientific progress.'

'ghyza awr mashrubat' 'Food and drink'

5 **'ap ke mulk men fast food ke asrat'**

'The effects of fast food on your country.'

The wide range of topics allowed candidates the opportunity to choose one and demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. Of course, at this Advanced Level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but it is equally important that candidates are 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 far more candidates than the rest. The most popular two were:

1 'nawjavanon apne mulk ke behter mustaqbil ke zamyn heyn'

'Young people are the guarantors of their country's future.'

and

3 'aludagi ki rok tham ke liye zaruri yqdamat'

'The steps needed to control pollution.'

The first topic, on the young generation, is always popular and is a subject which is highly pertinent to the lives of candidates, which is one reason why there were some very good compositions on this topic. It is easier to produce a good essay if the content is heartfelt. Some essays were passionately written but not well balanced, seeming to view the young people of today as either perfect exemplars of humanity who would go out and put the world to rights if only they had the chance, or seeing them as materialistic, selfish and unable to follow the examples of the previous generations who had sacrificed so much to create Pakistan. On the other hand, there were some outstanding essays on this topic, the best of which, in addition to being well structured and balanced, were also a pleasure to read.

The second popular title, on controlling pollution, was generally not so well answered because although many candidates were clearly well informed about the subject, their compositions were severely unbalanced; in some cases three-quarters of the essay was taken up in giving great detail about the causes and effects of pollution. It was only in the closing sections that they turned their pens to describing what was necessary to reduce pollution. Although it is relevant to spend some time discussing pollution and its effects, the title of the essay was *'The steps needed to control pollution.'* Such essays could not receive high marks for content because they were not focussed enough on the specific question asked.

The third most popular topic was:

5 'ap ke mulk men fast food ke asrat'

'The effects of fast food on your country.'

The responses to this topic tended to be somewhat superficial. While being reasonably well attempted by most candidates, there was little discussion of anything beyond the direct effects on health of the trend of eating fast food. At this level a broader discussion is expected, perhaps including social, economic and cultural implications if candidates are to achieve the highest grades.

The fourth most popular topic was on tourism:

2 'ap ke mulk men gheyr mulki siyahon ki tadad keyse barhai ja sakti hey?'

'How can the number of foreign tourists to your country be increased?'

While this topic was not very popular, it was well answered by most of those who attempted it. Candidates wrote about what foreign tourists wanted and expected, then highlighted the problems of the tourist industry created by the political and security situation and produced relevant suggestions for making improvements.

4 'sainsi taraqi men mazhab ka hath'

'The role of religion in scientific progress.'

Very few candidates attempted this topic, on science and religion, and they tended to be rather simplistic in their approach.

CONCLUSION

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

Linguistically, most essays were almost error free, with a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences containing dependent clauses, use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom and 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. Failure to contain the essay within the prescribed word-limit reduces marks for content. Examiners set a range of between 250-400 words for the composition and the Examiners' guidelines state that Examiners should read up to about 10% above this figure and ignore anything over 500 words. This means that candidates who write too much are penalised for content and planning because they are unlikely to have reached a concluding paragraph. That being said, very many candidates wrote well-planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.

URDU LITERATURE

Paper 9686/04

Texts

General comments

The paper was comparable in standard to those of recent years and was well received by most candidates.

Candidates are required to answer three out of twelve questions. Although set texts are allowed into the examination room, these texts must be isolated from any additional commentaries, prepared notes or quotations. Marks are awarded for candidates who demonstrate their understanding of the texts and good marks cannot be obtained by using pre-learnt material ineffectually. Most candidates were focused in their approach to dealing with the different demands of the questions.

When answering a question, candidates are asked to indicate clearly which question and/or part question they are answering. It is at times difficult to ascertain which answers belong to which questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) This question was split into two parts. Many candidates failed to produce a detailed answer in both parts. Instead they chose to write a detailed answer in the first part and a much less detailed answer in the second part.

(b) This question was successfully answered by the few who attempted it.

Question 2

(a) This was the most popular question this year. Candidates fell into the same trap as in **Question 1**, producing far more content in the first part compared with the second.

(b) Very few candidates attempted this question. Some of those that did tended to lose the focus of the question, submitting a lengthy essay on the work of Sahir. Candidates are advised to read and understand the focus of the question before attempting to answer it.

Question 3

(a) and (b)

This was among the most popular question for candidates. There were some delightful answers which deservedly received high marks. Those who made an effort to understand the focus of the question produced excellent answers.

Question 4

(a) This question required candidates to discuss the importance of the male characters in the novel. Many candidates misinterpreted the question, providing descriptions instead of discussing the importance of the male characters. Such candidates lost marks.

(b) A very small minority attempted this question. Maybe it did not appeal to candidates' interest as other questions.

Question 5

(a) and (b)

Once again this was the least popular question in **Section 2**. Those who attempted this question were well prepared, presenting high quality answers.

Question 6

(a) As has been the case in previous years, Anarkali once again proved its popularity among candidates. Most candidates attempted this question and those who did answered it very well.

(b) Very few candidates attempted this question. Some candidates did not seem to be clear about the focus of the question.