

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Introduction:

This paper is designed to test candidates' understanding of written Urdu and their ability to write accurate responses to text-based questions and their ability to write accurate and concise Urdu in response to given stimuli.

There are two passages of about three hundred and fifty words each on a related theme. The theme this session is crafts, more specifically postage stamp design and pottery.

The written performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. The problem for most candidates is not writing Urdu but answering the questions in accordance with the given rubrics.

Question 1

This question required candidates to write their own sentences illustrating clearly the meanings of words taken from the first text. This was mostly well done, with many candidates scoring at least three out of five marks. Candidates lost marks if they copied a sentence directly from the text, such as '*dak ke ticket mulk ke khamosh safir hote hain*' which is almost identical to the sentence in the text, or if they wrote a sentence like '*shenakhti card ke zariye hamari shenakht hai*' which does not illustrate the meaning of the word '*shenakht*'.

On the other hand a sentence like '*Marconi radio ka khalyq tha.*' does illustrate the meaning clearly.

Question 2

This task required candidates to find the antonyms to given words. Unfortunately this was not very well done. Many candidates wrote synonyms such as '*mwtaradyf alfaz*' rather than antonyms, such as '*mwtazad alfaz*'. The word that caused most difficulty was '*beyn ul aqwami*', '*international*'.

Question 3

The five questions in this section were based on Passage A. It was clear from the candidates' responses that, for most of them, their Urdu was good enough to make understanding the text reasonably straightforward. The quality of their responses depended on their following 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 of more than six lines of response, and in some cases well over one hundred words. This type of response does not receive good marks. All these questions can be answered simply and concisely in, at most, two sentences.

- (i) 'Suggest a suitable title for the passage and give a reason.'

This was well done by most candidates.

- (ii) 'Why did the world's first stamp achieve a unique status, and what was the outcome?'

Put simply, in English, the reply was:

The name of Britain was not printed on it. (1 mark)

From then on no British stamp has got Britain's name on it. (1 mark)

Some candidates wrote out the whole four lines of the text from '*dunya ke yyh pahle dak ticket.....*' to the end of the paragraph. Although the correct answer is included in these lines, there is so much irrelevant material that the candidate has not demonstrated that they understand what is

being asked. At this level candidates are expected to select irrelevant in order to achieve the full marks available.

- (iii) This question was well done by most candidates.
- (iv) The answer can be written concisely as:
'The stamp was declared one of the most beautiful (1 mark) and great honour (1 mark).'
- (v) This question was well done.
- (vi) A surprising number of candidates copied large chunks of the text mentioned in the passage. The point of this question was to get the candidates' own opinion. A good response was:

'Pakistani Dak Ticket dunya bhar ka safar kerte hain awr unheyn dekhne se dusre mumalik ke logon ko Pakistan ki khubsurati, tahzib awr tammadun, saqafat, vaghera ka pata celta hai.'

Five marks were available in this question for the overall linguistic standard. Most candidates scored four and a few got full marks. If candidates scored zero on a question in terms of content they also lost a mark from the overall language mark. While a high proportion of candidates could write excellent Urdu, if they relied too heavily on sentences copied from the text, thereby not using much of their own language, they could not receive good marks for their use of language.

Question 4

As in **Question 3** candidates had to write responses to five questions based on Passage B. This passage was about the development of pottery as a craft and export industry. Most candidates displayed at least an adequate comprehension of the text but, once again, some let themselves down by not following the rubrics.

A good example here is in (i) which asked 'What is the connection between a folk tale and pottery in Gujarat?' *'Gujarat men zaruf sazi ka ek lok kahani se kya ta'luq hai? Koi si tin baten lykhiye.'* A concise response was *'Gujarat sohni mahniwal ka shahr kahlata hai (1mk). Sohni ke bap dade zaruf saz the (1mk). Mahniwal ne yyhi pesha apnaya (1mk).'*

Unfortunately, many candidates wrote out the second paragraph of the passage almost word for word. Such a response cannot score full marks because the candidate is not using their own words.

- (ii) Was well answered. There were at least four points. Decoration, colour, varnish, washability, etc.
- (iii) This was also well answered.
- (iv) Candidates lost marks here if they did not focus on the final sentence or two of the passage.
- (v) The final question required candidates to respond to the text rather than draw directly from it. It was not very well done, mainly because rather too many candidates were guilty of simply writing out various chunks of the passage, which did not score highly. A good answer included the regional and cultural aspects of the handicrafts.

Again five marks were available for linguistic accuracy. Most candidates scored three or more marks because they wrote excellent Urdu.

Question 5

This last question required candidates to write a response to a question referring to both texts and to give their opinion on a question arising from the texts, but not directly so. The quality of these responses was variable. A few were excellent, a few very poor, and the majority of candidates performed at least adequately in these tasks.

- (a) The first task was to comment on the cultural role of stamps and many candidates merely pulled out large chunks of the two texts details of Pakistani stamps or handicrafts here. With a limit of 140 words, a general picture is what was required. Stamps are beautiful and artists are skilled and creative. They may contain pictures of important cultural monuments, like Mohenjodaro. The pottery shows the use of colour, traditional design, regional specialities, etc. Going in this direction, candidates from achieving high marks.
- (b) The second task asked candidates to give their opinion on why handicrafts are important in Pakistan. This was usually better attempted than **Question 5(a)** where candidates felt that cultural traditions should be supported, skills should not be lost, and that employment and income to poor families and rural communities as well as providing the country with foreign exchange.

Candidates clearly understood the tasks in most cases and most were able to write an appropriate response. What let many down, however, was the fact that they ignored the rubric to write about 140 words overall. Many candidates wrote well over that **on each task**, which reduced their ability to score the highest marks.

Conclusion

The overall performance was good, and in some cases, excellent, with many candidates displaying very good comprehension skills and good writing skills. However the performance of many candidates would have been much improved by stricter observance of the rubrics relating to the use of their own language and by sticking to the prescribed word limits.

URDU

Papers 9686/03 and 8686/03

Essay

GENERAL:

This paper is designed to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one of 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 topics in an organised and well-structured way. Candidates are expected to write between 250 and 400 words.

The wide range of topics allowed most candidates the opportunity to choose one and demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. At this level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but 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.

Comments on Specific Questions

- 1 'Kya dunya bhar men jumhuriyat hi munasib taerz e hakumat hai?'
'Is only democracy suitable for every country?'

Very few candidates wrote on this topic.

- 2 'Nai nasl apne mulk ke liye kya kar sakti hai?'
'What can the young generation do for their country?'

It was the view of almost every candidate who chose this essay that the younger generation are the key to any country's development. The general view was that this generation is better educated, better fed, has more advantages than any previous generation, especially as they have been brought up in a rapidly changing electronic age when the world has drawn ever closer together. Most candidates wrote competently but quite a few concentrated on listing what young people 'should do', 'karna chahiy', for their country, not 'could do', 'kar sakti hai'. This distinguishing aspect of the verb gives a significantly different emphasis to the topic title.

The best essays were very well written and some made very valid points such as the young having the energy and desire to change the world, and that if they put their mind to it they could do anything.

- 3 'Saza-e-mot zaruri hai'
'The death penalty is necessary'

Those who attempted this topic were all very keen to present their own point of view of this sometimes highly controversial matter. Some of them argued their cases, either for or against the death penalty, with great cogency and passion. The shortcoming was that frequently there was no balance to their compositions. The best essays were those which not only presented their own point of view but also attempted to discuss both sides of the argument for capital punishment.

- 4 'Dehati log shahr ka rukh kyon ker rehe hain?'
'Why are rural people heading for the city?'

This was the most popular title on rural/urban immigration with over half of the candidates opting to write about it. Many candidates clearly had some personal resonance with and experience of the subject. While there were some excellent compositions in which candidates not only responded appropriately to the

question, but who also wrote in extremely good Urdu, rather too many candidates produced unstructured rather than organised essays in response to the topic.

Many candidates used the topic as a launching pad for an essay comparing village and city life, in other words discussing the pros and cons of both lifestyles, when the topic required a discussion of the factors influencing people who were moving from villages to towns. This led down many otherwise good or very good compositions. It would have been better to focus on the negative factors that encouraged people to leave villages: no land or work, corrupt landlords, lack of facilities, etc., and the attractions of city life: education, hospitals, etc. Interestingly some candidates emphasised that in the past the differences between town and country were lessening and that people would be better off in the country.

- 5 *'Khyalari apne mulk ke safir hote hain'*
'Sportsmen are ambassadors for their country'

Very few candidates wrote on this topic.

- 6 *'Maujudat daur ki sab se mu'asar i'jad'*
'The most influential invention of the modern age'

This topic was less well attempted by most candidates, the quality of essays being adequate or good, with a very few excellent ones.

The majority of candidates stated in their first sentence that some item, very often the computer, was the best thing and then rambled on for several hundred words on the wonders of the computer, with little reflection on why this machine was so important. The best essays gave an introduction about the century being one with the most amazing and world changing inventions, then naming some of those inventions before giving their opinion as to which one was the most influential. Most candidates did in fact write about the computer.

CONCLUSION:

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. The language of most candidates was, in the vast majority of cases, more than adequate at this level, however, it is the second part of the assessment criteria, on content, planning and organisation, where candidates tend to lose marks.

URDU LITERATURE

Paper 9686/04

Texts

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was not dissimilar to last year. There were some very impressive candidates at the top end of the scale, and a small increase in the number of good scripts. A wide range of language was used. At the top end, the Urdu was fluent, idiomatic and very impressive. There was, however, a tail of candidates with an extremely limited knowledge of the necessary level of vocabulary which performed well below average.

In some cases, there was evidence of candidates spending too much time and effort on introducing their response, thereby prolonging their task unnecessarily. Candidates need to be reminded that it is in their interest to stick to the recommended length as superfluous and irrelevant material cannot be rewarded. Many candidates seem to be relying heavily on memorised material and answers. Such answers are written without taking into consideration the focus of the question. Candidates need to be reminded that they cannot be rewarded for any material that is not pertinent to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The number of candidates attempting poetry questions decreased this year, as the majority of the candidates attempted **Question 3** on short stories. **Question 2** required candidates to discuss the effectiveness of metaphors. Only a relatively small number of candidates managed to answer this question satisfactorily.

Section 2

The majority of candidates attempted two questions from this section, **Question 4** and **6** being the most popular. In comparison to last year, although it was still the least popular question, **Question 5** was attempted by many more candidates. There was evidence of pre-learned answers. Only those candidates who focused on the question managed to achieve high marks.

URDU

Paper 9686/05

Prose

General comments

This examination consists of a short translation passage from English into Urdu. The passage, which was about the ideas and concepts of God amongst people, was similar in length to those of previous years. The overall performance of candidates was similar to that of previous examinations which was generally very good.

On the whole the level of the candidates' written Urdu indicated that they understood the passage well. However their translation into Urdu was not as precise as it should have been. They used long winding Urdu sentences with too many superfluous words and phrases that were not actually required in the translation. Candidates writing skills were also limited in that many used the same way of writing in terms of dialect and style as they would if they were speaking. This was a clear indication that the majority of candidates need to development writing skills such as spelling, sentence construction and use of singular and plural forms in tenses, in order to produce a better standard of translation from English into Urdu.

Comments on specific questions

There were a number of key words and phrases that required careful translation within the context of the passage. Those that caused the most difficulty were 'inspired by' and 'to tolerate difference' both of which were translated in many ways which missed out the real meaning, and 'to put these virtues in practice' which was poorly translated by many candidates.

Similarly other words and phrases that were not well translated were 'divine'; 'holding firmly'; 'fear of others'; 'sacred scriptures', 'being only human' and 'dedication'.

The examiners are looking for a good, close Urdu translation of all the sentences within the context of the given passage to award high marks. Spelling mistakes of commonly known and simple Urdu words should be avoided as far as possible.