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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

URDU

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8686/01 and 9686/01
Speaking (Optional)

General comments

All candidates performed well and in general gained good marks. Ideas and opinions were particularly well presented and almost all candidates had a good grasp of the subject at hand. The topics selected by candidates were appropriate and the recordings were clear.

On the whole the conversations were well conducted. One aspect of the exam requirement however – Seeking Information and Opinions – which is worth 5 marks, was not covered by any candidate. Candidates are required to seek information and/or opinions of the teacher/Examiner on the subject at the end of the conversation and if they fail to do so the teacher/Examiner is then required to prompt them. This aspect of the exam was overlooked. The teacher/Examiner needs to be aware of the marks available for each area of the exam.

Papers 8686/02 and 9686/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was good. There were a few instances of candidates not following the rubric regarding word limits, and some candidates who lifted text directly from the passages for their answers to the comprehension questions. Candidates are to be reminded to adhere to the word limits and to answer questions in their own words.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The passage in **Section 1** was a contemporary piece of writing about a man's memories of two events before and after the creation of Pakistan (Independence). In general candidates understood the passage very well and answered all the questions fairly accurately.

In **Question 1**, many candidates had difficulty conveying the meaning of the words '*garam joshi*' and '*rooh*' in appropriate sentences.

In **Question 2**, the word '*garam joshi*' was misunderstood by many candidates.

For **Question 3 (i)**, a good variety of titles were suggested by candidates and with a few exceptions, all provided reasons for their choice.

Question 3 (ii) was well answered by the majority of candidates describing how memories after Independence were clear, whilst before Independence they were somewhat unclear, almost dreamlike.

In **Question 3 (iii)**, the word '*dhabah*' – the traditional roadside teahouse – was straightforward for most candidates as the information in the text was sufficient to answer the question accurately. Some candidates used the words 'hotel' for '*dhabah*' which was also accepted as it is a common cultural concept and an alternative term used for '*dhabah*' in Pakistan.

Question 3 (iv) proved tricky for some candidates but most were able to select appropriate information from the text and answer the question precisely, as there were many points to consider.

Most candidates were able to write well about the two points in **Question 3 (v)**, where they were asked to consider the memories before and after Independence.

Question 3 (vi) was very well attempted by many candidates, most of whom gave at least two examples. One reason that some candidates gave was the author's sentimental attachment to the 'Pak tea house', which was a very good point to make.

Section 2

The overall performance of candidates in this section was very good. The text, describing current patterns and lifestyle of people in Lahore, was generally well understood by candidates.

Almost all candidates answered **Question 4 (i)** correctly.

The proverb in **Question 4 (ii)** '*Jaisa deas wesa bheas*' (similar to 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do') proved demanding for some candidates, though most were able to portray something of the concept of doing the same as others do.

In **Question 4 (iii)**, most candidates portrayed the general attitude of the younger generation as being more in favour of fast foods rather than traditional Pakistani delicacies.

The author's preference for traditional foods was clearly portrayed by the majority of candidates answering **Question 4 (iv)**, with examples given of delicacies that the author liked to eat.

Question 4 (v) was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Question 5 (a) required a comparison between the two passages including both similarities and differences. The candidate's opinion was also an essential part of the question. Candidates answered well in a variety of different writing styles.

Most candidates answered **Question 5 (b)** well and again there was a variety of different writing styles used. Responses differed between arguments for and against the statement.

Papers 8686/03 and 9686/03

Essay

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. Most candidates were able to write well in Urdu but were weaker in their ability to organise and structure their work and to develop an argument where appropriate, illustrated in an interesting and relevant way. Many candidates did not observe the rubrics relating to the prescribed word limit. Candidates are to be reminded that they should present their argument in a thorough but concise way staying within the word limit.

The six essay titles were:

جس کی الٹی اس کی پیٹنس، دنیا کی موجودہ صورتحال کو مد نظر رکھتے ہوئے اس کا رائے پر تبصرہ کیجئے۔

'Might is Right' – Discuss in relation to the current state of the world.

بزرگوں کو جوانوں کی زندگی میں مداخلت نہیں کرنا چاہئے، اس پر رائے کا تفصیلی تبصرہ کیجئے۔

Old people should not interfere in the lives of the young. Give your opinion in detail.

خورانِ اللہ کی اہمیت

The importance of a balanced diet.

لڑکیوں کی ثانوی تعلیم لازمی ہونی چاہئے۔ آپ کا کیا خیال ہے؟ تفصیل سے لکھیے۔

'Secondary education for girls should be compulsory'. What do you think?

آج کے زمانے میں (تاریخی مقامات) کا تحفظ کیوں ضروری ہے؟

Why is protecting ancient monuments necessary?

آج کل جنگیں تو بے پناہ ہو رہی ہیں۔ آپ کا کیا خیال ہے؟ تفصیل سے لکھیے۔

Nowadays wars are not limited to soldiers. What do you think?

The first essay title was by far the most popular. Most candidates argued that the United Nations is ineffective as a global organisation in controlling the most powerful nations of the world and used the situation in Iraq as a context for their argument. Some candidates wrote excellent coherently argued essays on this current world issue. Some candidates however wrote a polemic against the powerful without giving any counter argument to the statement, or developing their argument in a more detailed way, before drawing conclusions.

The second title was the next most popular and there were some very good essays written on the topic. The best examples were ones in which candidates presented the issue discussing both sides of the argument, illustrating points from their personal experience and drawing their own conclusions. Many made reference to religious and cultural elements, social expectations of obedience to old people, old people's greater experience of life and on the other hand discussed a lack of understanding on behalf of old people of how today's world has moved on, and that perhaps old people's experience is no longer relevant. Many candidates, however, gave only a one-sided perspective on the topic, some failing to mention any opposing points of view and therefore gaining fewer marks for content.

The title about wars not being limited to soldiers any more was covered in a variety of interesting and well-informed ways and was very well attempted by most candidates who tackled it. Some of the subjects covered were: modern weapons being able to kill an enormous number of people indiscriminately, terrorism, the use of powerful new media and propaganda, economic warfare, sanctions and the Cold War.

The title about secondary education for girls, was written about almost exclusively in terms of the benefits to individuals, families and society as a whole. Only a very few candidates discussed the 'secondary' aspect of the question, and those that did so were able to gain more marks for content.

Only a few candidates wrote on the topic of ancient monuments. Those who did presented interesting and lucid arguments addressing the preservation of ancient monuments and wrote about the social and cultural importance of looking after a nation's heritage by preserving what to some are apparently worthless old ruins.

The topic about the importance of a balanced diet was only chosen by a few candidates and was not very well covered. Candidates who chose this topic tended to write in a general and unfocused way about the importance of eating good food and avoiding certain other foods. On the whole there was little evidence of knowledge of the subject appropriate for this level. Candidates could have covered areas such as the balance of carbohydrates, proteins and fats, etc.

Papers 8674/04 and 9686/04

Texts

General comments

Many candidates demonstrated that they had read the prescribed texts in depth and had considered the main issues in detail and thus produced work of a high standard. There were a number of candidates whose knowledge and understanding of the texts was not up to the required standard. For some of these candidates their grasp of the language was not adequate enough to allow them to put across essential words and ideas. A number of candidates wrote pre-learned and/or memorized pieces of work, which in most cases were irrelevant to the question being asked and unimaginative. In a similar way many candidates spent too much time on superfluous and general introductions that had been prepared before the examination and which were on the whole too vague and irrelevant and gained few marks. A short concise introduction indicating how the specific question is to be answered is what is required.

Most questions in this paper have two parts and candidates should be reminded to read the whole question carefully and understand the focus of each part of the question, before attempting to answer it. In order to gain good marks candidates need to apply what they have understood about the texts to the specific questions, showing an ability to discuss and evaluate material, illustrating their points and then drawing a relevant conclusion. Writing memorized essays that have been previously done in class, or simply narrating the story or writing pre-learnt character studies will only score low marks. Some essays were far beyond the prescribed number of words, many of which included much irrelevant written and so gained few marks.

There was a wide range of language ability. Generally candidates wrote fluently using a range of complex structures enabling them to communicate their ideas in a thorough and comprehensive way, with good appropriate vocabulary. A number of candidates however did not have a sufficiently wide range of vocabulary or a sound enough command of basic grammar to enable them to express their ideas.

A number of candidates' performances were adversely affected either because they did not allot their time equally to the three questions or because they found it difficult to decide which question to tackle, spending valuable time writing skeleton answers to possible alternatives questions, with the result that they did not have time to answer the questions in sufficient depth.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Poetry

This section produced a number of excellent answers. Of the candidates who chose to answer the **(a)** passage-based questions, those who knew the poems well produced the highest standard of work. There were a number of weaker candidates who clearly failed to understand what was required of the questions and whose knowledge of the texts was only sketchy in nature. There were also many candidates who tended to give an explanation of the poem rather giving a critical analysis of the poet's work. The first part of the question was usually well answered by those who know the poems well, but some candidates did not cover the second part of the question thoroughly enough. Many of the questions have two parts and it is important that candidates read the whole question and ensure that they answer each part adequately.

Of the candidates who chose to answer the **(b)** essay questions, many answered them well. However a significant number of candidates did not include any direct references from the prescribed texts to illustrate their points and to give evidence of their detailed knowledge of the texts.

Section 2 – Prose

Most candidates demonstrated that they had read the prescribed books in this section carefully, although many candidates did not answer the specific question that was being asked in enough detail. By far the most popular questions were those relating to 'Umrao Jaan Ada' and 'Anar Kali'.