

URDU LANGUAGE

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper:

- Candidates should take care to make sure they understand the full demands of the question before attempting to answer
- In **Question 2** candidates are required to write the equivalent of 5 given phrases from the passage. The exact equivalent must be written; any deviation from this will not be accepted.
- In the comprehension questions (**Questions 3 and 4**), candidates must compose their answer in the light of the passage given, refraining from giving their own opinion. Any opinions not in light of the passage can not be rewarded.

General Comments

The standard, quality and overall linguistic demand of this paper was similar to previous years and appropriate to the level of this examination. The topic chosen seemed to be interesting and informative for most candidates. Both text passages in **Section 1** and **2** were very accessible. In order to do well, candidates needed to grasp precisely what was being asked in the comprehension questions. It was the understanding of the demands of the question which provided discrimination between good and average performances.

The Urdu text passage in **Section 1** was an example of the role of working women in the present age. Most candidates understood the passage very well and answered the given questions fairly accurately.

The text in the **Section 2** was about the attitudes different countries might have towards women who choose to stay home and raise their children. In **Question 5** the specific requirement was to make a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages experienced by children whose mothers stay home and do not go out to work. Good candidates had plenty to say. Average candidates sometimes failed to respond to the specific question asked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In **Question 1**, the words *mehroom*, *sazgar* and *mawaqae* proved difficult for a number of candidates to convey their meanings in complete sentences.

Question 2

In **Question 2** the phrases *sochney ka andaz*, *asar karney waley andaz sey* and *shuruoe dino men* were not properly understood by many candidates. In completing this task, some candidates attempted to use these phrases in their own sentences, which was not what was asked for in the rubric. Candidates should be reminded that the synonyms they use must be exactly those given in the passage.

Question 3

A was straightforward and did not cause any difficulty for the majority of the candidates, as they were easily able to write two points for two marks.

B was also well answered by the majority of the candidates. It required at least one point for the method of child rearing and another for the reason why. Some candidates did not cover the second point and could therefore not be fully rewarded.

C was answered accurately by most candidates.

D was answered fairly accurately by most candidates. Some candidates missed out giving an answer for why it is essential for mothers to stay at home, which meant they could not be awarded full marks.

E was well answered and most candidates tackled it well with three points required out of the text.

F was generally tackled successfully. To score full marks, candidates needed to provide both answers for what the government should do, and why.

Question 4

To answer **A** successfully, it was necessary to understand the nature of women's role in modern society. At least two points were required for full marks.

B was well answered by the majority of the candidates. Most candidates adequately covered all five points for a complete response.

C was, again, well answered. At least three points were required for a complete answer.

D was proved more demanding. In order to answer successfully, at least two points were required: nursery education provided by trained professionals and where children learn from each other. A few candidates gave their own opinion rather than information given in the text. Such answers could not be rewarded.

E was missed by a number of candidates. It required consideration before tackling it and three straight points to be extracted from the text.

Questions 5a and b

The majority of candidates responded to **Question 5a** with confidence.

Candidates were asked to write a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages for children whose mothers stay home and do not go out to work. A few candidates did not cover both aspects fully leaving their responses rather thirsty. Such responses could not be rewarded the highest marks.

In the case of **Question 5b**, the majority of candidates found it very accessible. A variety of different writing styles appeared in response to this question. Most candidates felt that mothers of young children should be allowed to work if they felt it was essential for their upbringing. Other candidates argued with justifications that a total ban should be placed on mothers from working until their children are old enough.

URDU LANGUAGE

Paper 9686/03

Essay

Key messages

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

- plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- write a composition on the essay title, not the general topic heading
- stay within the prescribed word limits

General comments

This paper is designed to test 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 challenge for most candidates is not writing accurate Urdu but responding to the stimulus topics in an organised and well-structured way.

The best essays in any topic area were those which produced a structured and considered response to 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, and containing dependent clauses, use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom, metaphor and where appropriate relevant quotations.

While the overall performance was good, many essays would have been much improved by stricter observance of the rubrics relating to the prescribed word limits. The rubric requires candidates to be able to write concisely on their particular topic. Failure to contain the essay within the prescribed word-limit reduces marks for content. We set a range of between 250 and 400 words for the composition and the Examiners' guidelines state that we should read up to about 10% above this figure and ignore anything over 500 words. This means that candidates who write too much cannot be awarded high marks 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

The wide range of topics allowed candidates the opportunity to choose one that interested them and through which they could demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. At this Advanced Level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but it is equally important that candidates organise and structure their work, present an argument where appropriate and do so in an engaging and persuasive way.

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

Comments on specific questions

One question attracted far more responses, approximately two-thirds of the candidature, than the rest. This was **Question 4**:

t;alim ka maqsad syrf acchi tankhah ka hasul hai
'The purpose of education is merely to get a good salary.'

There were some very good compositions on this topic which contained an even discussion of both sides of the argument and concluded with an opinion, frequently taking a balanced position and discussing that while a good salary was necessary, it was not the overriding factor in getting a job. Many candidates wrote

passionately on education being about much more than earning money. There were reasons of personal, social and national wellbeing cited and some very mature opinions were cogently expressed.

Other, weaker, responses tended to be general essays on the topic of education, containing a paragraph or two addressing the set question. Examiners are aware that many candidates write essays on the general topic areas as part of their preparation for this examination. Candidates should bear in mind that it is not sufficient to write generally, just inserting a paragraph addressing the question. Such essays cannot score high marks for content.

The second most popular title was **Question 1**:

kam ke sath sath tafrih bhi zindagi ke liye zaruri hai
'Alongside work, leisure too is necessary for life.'

By and large, this title was reasonably well answered. This title lent itself to a balanced discussion of such points as the fact that we all need to work, but we need leisure as well. There were many candidates who were able to express their opinions about the 'work-life balance' and were able to express their ideas cogently and lucidly. What distinguished the very good from the good, in terms of content, was the ability to express points of view which were at least in part original, and also to be able to structure their compositions and their arguments into a coherent essay.

The third most popular title was **Question 2**:

zara'iy e iblagh dunya ke halat ki sahih 'akasi karte hain
'The media give an accurate reflection of the state of the world.'

The best essays on this topic were very impressive. They included a very mature discussion of the media's role in society and in particular on politics and international affairs. While being reasonably well attempted by most of the candidates, there was a tendency to a general discussion of the media, with little discussion of anything directly related to the specific title.

Many of those who decided to write on this topic came down on one side of the argument and gave merely cursory attention to the opposing point of view. At this level a broader discussion of both sides of a topic is expected, perhaps including social, economic and cultural implications if candidates are to achieve the highest grades.

The fourth most popular topic was **Question 3**:

qudrati wasail ka tahafux waqt awr tavanai ka zian hai
'Conserving natural resources is a waste of time and energy.'

This topic was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it. Some candidates wrote too much on one specific example, like protecting wild animals. Candidates who did best were the ones who developed a coherent argument (from either point of view, but usually focusing on the need for conservation) on the necessity or otherwise of conserving natural resources. They included the need to preserve the world's resources for future generations.

The remaining question was **Question 5**:

purane rasm o ryvaj ki vajah se khandani taqribat ki dilcaspion men yzafa karte hain
'Family celebrations are made more interesting because of old customs and traditions.'

A few candidates attempted this topic. Most responses were satisfactory. Candidates wrote mainly about this topic with reference to wedding traditions, and introduced little else in the way of examples.

URDU

Paper 9686/04

Texts

Key messages

- Before answering the question, candidates must take due care to ensure they understand the focus of the question.
- If answering **Questions 1a, 2a or 3a** it is important to provide detailed answers to both parts of the question.

General comments

The paper was divided into two sections: poetry and prose. The overall performance was of a similar standard to previous years. Candidates made good use of the choice of questions offered. In general, candidates did well on the paper. Those who failed to understand the focus of the question were unable to score high marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The candidates who attempted this question generally gave a good explanation of the *ghazal*. In Part ii candidates needed to understand that *saadgi* is a poetic quality rather than Mir's personal quality.
- (b) Stronger candidates provided excellent responses, discussing Zawq in detail with examples of his poetry.

Question 2

- (a) This was a very popular question in the poetry section. Many candidates scored good marks on this question. Other candidates repeated the explanation of the poem in answer to part ii and so could not be rewarded marks for this.
- (b) Many attempted this question. Weaker candidates seemed to misunderstand its demands, writing a general essay on Nazir's life and poetry rather than focusing on his relationship with the community.

Question 3

- (a) Very few candidates attempted this question, those who did gave good answers.
- (b) Again, few candidates attempted this question.

Question 4

- (a) In order to answer this question successfully, it was necessary to understand *izzatdar hona* in the question. Many candidates did not seem to understand this. Some candidates were more concerned with writing a sympathetic account of Umrao's character.
- (b) Many candidates attempted this question submitting a good critical essay of *khanam*.

Question 5

- (a) The majority of those who answered this question gave details of the character Almas Begum, mainly discussing her negative aspects as she had very few positive aspects.
- (b) The candidates who attempted this question discussed the problems of poverty in the light of the short stories they had read and scored good marks for this.

Question 6

- (a) This was the most popular question. Some weaker candidates submitted a general essay on Akbar rather than critiquing his justice as the question demanded. High marks could therefore not be awarded for such responses.
- (b) This question required candidates to discuss the author's writing style. The few who attempted this question provided good answers.