

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Introduction:

This component of the examination is intended 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 approximately three hundred and fifty words each on a related theme. The theme this session is music and musicians focusing on the careers of two well-known singers.

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

Candidates are required to write their own sentences illustrating clearly the meanings of words taken from the first passage. This was generally well done, with most candidates scoring at least three out of five marks. Marks were lost if candidates copied a sentence directly from the text, such as:

'Unhon ne adakari ko kheirbad keh kr gulukari shuru kya'

which is identical to the one in the text, or if they wrote a sentence like:

'meyn kamyabi hasyl kern eke liye bahut riyaz kerta tha'

which does not illustrate the meaning of the word 'riyaz'.

On the other hand a sentence such as:

'Meyn apne sains ke ustad se bahwt mutasir hua awr sains ki taraf mayl hone laga.'

illustrates the meaning well.

Question 2

This question required candidates to find the antonyms to the given words. Unfortunately this was not very well done. Some candidates wrote synonyms, '*mwtaradyf alfaz*', rather than antonyms, '*mwtazad alfaz*', and some wrote sentences or phrases instead.

Question 3

The five questions in this section were based on the given text in 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.

It is extremely important that candidates follow the instructions given in the rubric. Candidates are expected to write *concise answers as far as possible in their own words*. There were a number of candidates whose answers consisted of large chunks of text lifted from the passage with minimal alteration. All the questions can be answered simply and concisely using largely candidates' own words. Those who copy from the text without demonstrating their own use of language cannot gain good language marks.

- (i) 'Suggest a suitable title for the passage and give a reason.' This introductory question was generally well done.
- (ii) 'Nowadays what new style have the singers adopted?' The response should be that singing and acting are kept separate. This was mostly answered well.
- (iii) There were three points to be made here: Shahida was an actress, who then gave it up (1) and became a singer (1) achieving success/fame/was awarded the title of Melody queen (1). Again most candidates covered all three points.
- (iv) Any three of the following four points were required and this was generally well answered:
The competition was to sing ten Nur Jahan songs.
All the famous Pakistani singers took part.
Famous singers were on the Jury.
Shahida won the award of Melody Queen.
- (v) Most candidates understood the required point that western people have started liking eastern music.
- (vi) Many candidates copied large chunks of the text from the last paragraph of the passage in response to this question. Candidates needed to distinguish the one memorable show, which was 'by the Atlantic Ocean' (1) which 'went on for eight hours' (1), 'had a lot of people who did not know Urdu but stayed to the end' (1) and where a 'special atmosphere was created' (1) 'from a show where famous Indian singers praised her.'

Five marks were available in this question for overall linguistic standard. Most candidates achieved four and a few gained full marks. Some candidates who did not write much in their own words scored fewer marks than those who followed the rubric. If they scored zero marks for content on a question, marks were reduced from the overall language mark.

Question 4

As in **Question 3** candidates were required to write responses to five questions based on Passage B. This passage was about Humeira Arshad. Most candidates displayed a good comprehension of the text but, once again, some did not follow the rubric.

Question 4:1 This part was well answered. There were three clear points which most candidates selected.

Question 4:2 This was less well answered because candidates needed to also mention points relating to her artistry, such as, she was happy with married life, she understands her art very well, and even after marriage she can work and practise her art as much as she did before.

Question 4:3 The required response to this part was that at work she concentrates on work and at home she focuses on her domestic life. Most candidates tended to write rather more than was required here.

Question 4:4 This question asked 'In the light of the passage what impression do you get of Humeira Arshad's husband'. This cannot be answered by simply writing out what it says about him in the passage. At the very least some synthesis of the information was required. Just writing 'he cooperates with me', '*ahmed mere sath bahwt taawn kerte heyn*', is not putting together and manipulating material from the passage at all. The most telling phrase here is that '*un ka rivayati shoharon wala raviyya nahin hey*', 'He is not a traditional husband.' It was *not* about his being in show business himself which many candidates included.

Question 4:5 The final question required candidates to respond to the text rather than draw directly from it. 'What impression do you get of the lifestyle of a Pakistani singer?' In general this was adequately rather than very well done, mainly because too many candidates simply wrote out various chunks of the passage, which did not score highly. What was required was an idea of how difficult it was as a Pakistani woman to balance home and professional life, the amount of practice and dedication required to stay successful, etc.

Again five marks were available for linguistic accuracy. Most candidates scored four or more marks because a good proportion wrote in excellent Urdu. However marks were lost if most of the language used was taken directly from the text.

Question 5

This last question required candidates to write a response to one question referring to both texts and then 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, and a very few were rather poor. The majority of candidates performed at least adequately in these tasks.

- (a) The first task was to compare and contrast the lives of these two singers. Unfortunately rather too many candidates merely pulled out large chunks of the two texts and actually wrote separate paragraphs on the two singers. It was not sufficient to simply summarise each of the two passages.

With a limit of 140 words for the *two* questions, candidates need to select the most significant similarities and differences.

Similarities: both singers have achieved success and popularity through hard work and practice, both have followed older singers such as Nur Jehan as a role model.

Differences: One started as an actor the other has always been a singer. One has found international fame, one has had support from Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, one achieved the award of Melody Queen and one had the cooperation of her husband.

- (b) The second task was to state if they would like to become a singer and if so why. This was usually better attempted than **Question 5(a)**. There were some very good arguments for and against becoming a singer and this question gave candidates an opportunity to express their own opinion.

Candidates clearly understood the tasks in most cases and most were able to write an appropriate response. Many candidates however ignored the rubric to write about 140 word 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 LANGUAGE AND URDU

Paper 9686/03

Essay

GENERAL

In this component candidates are required to write a composition in Urdu of between 250 and 400 words 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.

The topics this year were:

'Lerkon ki beh rah ruwi men ma'on ka kirdar.'
'The role of mothers in ruining their sons.'

'Sahytmand rahne ka kya raz hey?'
'What is the secret of staying healthy?'

'Rozgar faraham arna hwkumat ki zimmedari honi chahiye.'
'It is the government's responsibility to provide employment.'

'Atomi hathiyar aman ka zamant ya tabahi ka sabab?'
'Are atomic weapons a guarantor of peace or the cause of destruction?'

'Jungli janwaron ka tahaffuz kyon zaruri hey?'
'Why is the conservation of wild animals important?'

It is not only the standard of written Urdu that is assessed, but it is equally important that candidates organise and structure their work well, present an argument where appropriate, and do so in an interesting way. 24 marks are awarded for quality of language and 16 for content, structure and organisation.

The two most popular topics were:

'Sahytmand rahne ka kya raz hey?'
'What is the secret of staying healthy?'

and

'Rozgar faraham arna hwkumat ki zimmedari honi chahiye.'
'It is the government's responsibility to provide employment.'

For the first topic on health, there were some excellent essays, in which candidates not only responded appropriately to the question but who also wrote in accurate and well composed Urdu. Many candidates however turned the topic into something that read more like a science textbook, with a paragraph on diet, exercise, cleanliness and other health-related topics. While it is perfectly valid to include this as part of the composition, many candidates wrote an essay with very little else, adding nothing of personal interest or anything unexpected. The essays that received higher marks got them for putting in something more than general knowledge, as did those who had structured their responses better by writing introductory and concluding paragraphs.

The second most popular title, on employment, was generally well answered because candidates had clearly thought about the subject and had something interesting to say.

It was the view of almost every candidate who chose this essay that it was the government's responsibility to provide employment. The general view was that if even educated people cannot get work then the system is

not working. There were some very good points raised about providing appropriate education or training for technical jobs, although it could be argued that in the modern market economy government interference is not always welcome, especially by the international banking community. Most wrote competently on this topic and the best essays were very well written with a developed argument of valid points.

The third most popular topic was:

'atomi hathiyar aman ka zamant ya tabahi ka sabab?'

'Are atomic weapons a guarantor of peace or the cause of destruction?'

This was well attempted by most candidates, the quality of the majority of essays being at least good, with a very few very good ones. This title seemed to offer the more able candidates an opportunity to give their ideas full expression. They argued that the world had seen the destructive power of the atomic bomb and that having nuclear weapons did make governments stop and think, especially given the recent example of India and Pakistan pulling back from the brink of war over Kargil because they knew each other had nuclear weapons. Others expressed the view that wars continued with millions of people being killed supporting their argument that nuclear weapons had not prevented this from happening.

On this topic some candidates focused on the ongoing world situation seen from only one impassioned perspective and did not consider or present other viewpoints which is required in the development and presentation of an argument, whether or not that is the viewpoint of the writer.

The fourth topic was about mothers ruining their sons. This was obviously a heartfelt topic for some and most writers clearly thought that mothers were responsible for spoiling their sons because they were too loving and forgiving.

The remaining topics were attempted by only a very small number of candidates.

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 limit. In the second part of the assessment criteria, on content, planning and organisation, candidates would gain marks by giving more attention to these aspects.

URDU

9686/04

Texts

The overall performance of candidates was similar to last year. There were some very good candidates at the top end of the scale. A wide range of language was used. The more able candidates wrote Urdu that was fluent, idiomatic and very impressive enabling them to portray their detailed knowledge of the text well. There was however a disappointing tail of candidates with an extremely limited knowledge of the necessary range of vocabulary severely limiting their ability to communicate their ideas and who therefore performed well below average.

In some cases, there was evidence of candidates spending too much time and effort in 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 results in a loss of marks. A significant number of candidates seem to be relying 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

The number of candidates attempting poetry questions significantly decreased this year, as the majority of the candidates attempted **Question 3** on short stories.

Question 1a) was very straightforward. It required candidates to read selected verses from a poem and then answer a question to show their understanding. Candidates who attempted this question answered this part very well.

The second part of **1a)** required candidates to discuss poetic qualities with reference to the given verses. A very small minority managed to answer this question correctly. Instead of focussing their answer on the given poem, many candidates wrote lengthy answers about the poet. Only the higher-level candidates could competently answer the question.

Question 1b) was attempted by a very small minority of candidates. Those who attempted it answered it very well, using relevant verses to support their answers.

Question 2a) required candidates to explain selected verses from a nazm. Many candidates successfully answered the first part of the question but didn't do as well on the second part which asked candidates to give their opinion on the message of the poem.

Question 2b) was answered by very few candidates, but those that did were able critically appreciate Sahir's poetry, quoting relevant verses.

Question 3a) involved a short story based question. This proved to be one of the most popular questions, with the majority of candidates answering it well. They showed good understanding of the story, discussing the character effectively. However, some candidates answered by writing a summary of the story, not focussing on the question.

Question 3b) required candidates to write a critical appreciation of a short story, with special focus on the author's style of writing. Again there were a good number of candidates who simply presented a summary.

Section 2

The majority of candidates attempted two questions from this section, **Questions 4** and **6** being the most popular choice by far. In comparison to the last series, **Question 5** was attempted by many more candidates, it was still however the least popular question. 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.

Question 4a) was the most popular question, which asked candidates to compare two characters from the novel. The majority of candidates gave excellent answers to this question. **Question 4b)** on the other hand was attempted by far fewer candidates. From those who attempted it, some gave a summary of the novel.

Question 5 (a) and b)) was the least popular question. Those who answered this question showed good understanding of the novel.

Question 6a) along with **4a)** was the most popular question. Candidates who answered this question demonstrated sound understanding and outstanding preparation.

In conclusion far too many marks were lost due to candidates not fully understanding the focus of the question, and writing pre-learnt answers. Candidates are advised to spend some time understanding the focus of the question before attempting to answer.