

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

Candidates are advised to read the passages and the questions carefully before writing their answers. Candidates will not be awarded marks for content if they copy whole sentences/phrases from the text when answering **Question 3** and **Question 4**. Candidates should stay within the prescribed word limit in **Question 5** and avoid lengthy introductions and conclusions.

General comments

In **Question 1** candidates were asked to use the given words in sentences in their own words. Any sentences copied directly from the text were not awarded marks.

In **Questions 3** and **4** it is important to respond appropriately and precisely to what is asked. Most candidates appeared to have understood the passages very well and answered most of the questions accurately. Careful reading of both the questions and the passages was evident in the best answers. In the weakest responses, candidates answered by copying information directly from the passages. This suggested that they had not understood the questions or the passages and therefore had copied out what they thought might be the correct answer. No marks were awarded for indiscriminate copying from the text as candidates were not demonstrating that they had fully understood what they had read.

In **Question 5**, the specific requirement was to compare the various issues related to the availability of clean water and the ways to address its supply as presented in the two texts. Many candidates focused on the question correctly and precisely, while others could not access all of the available marks because they wrote general statements or facts in their response.

Comment on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

In response to this question, many candidates found it difficult to convey the meanings of **سطح** and **موزوں** in complete sentences in Urdu. A few appeared to be confused by the word **نگین**.

Question 2

Most candidates answered the question correctly and gave appropriate antonyms. In some cases words were not spelled correctly. Many struggled with the word **جدید**. A good majority wrote **تاریک** as its opposite.

Some candidates did not appear to have read the rubric and used the words in their own sentences, which was the requirement for **Question 1**.

Question 3

- (a) Only a few candidates correctly answered this question, perhaps due to a lack of understanding of the key words in the question.
- (b) Many candidates were able to answer the question fully but there were some who did not write both points. Many candidates missed the key words *سمندر کا پانی / نمک والا پانی*.
- (c) Most candidates gave all three points accurately for three marks. However, some gave only two pieces of information.
- (d) Most candidates understood the question and gave at least two out of the three required pieces of information. A number of them did not include the point *اختلافات سے بچاؤ / جنگ کے خطرات میں کمی*.
- (e) The majority of candidates understood this question well and answered it in full, although some achieved only three marks.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) This was a fairly straightforward question, although many candidates did not score the mark for *بہت سا پانی مختلف چیزیں بنانے میں استعمال ہوتا ہے۔*
- Only a few candidates correctly answered this, again due to lack of understanding of the focus words in the question.
- (b) Most candidates answered all four points very well and scored full marks.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) A number of candidates struggled to answer this question and ended up writing information which was irrelevant. The key phrases required as correct answers were: *ہزاروں بچے روزانہ مرتے ہیں۔* and *دس لاکھ پانی روزانہ پر گزارا کرنا پڑتا ہے۔*
- A few candidates wrote their own opinions instead of focusing on the information in the passage. Marks could not be awarded for such answers.
- (e) This was another straightforward question to answer. However, as in **Question 4(d)** some candidates ignored the information given in the passage and wrote their own opinions, which could not score any marks.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates responded to this part of the question with confidence. They needed to write ten points about issues related to clean water and the ways to address them. Some candidates did not write about issues as asked in the question but instead wrote general, factual statements and therefore could not be awarded marks. Others simply explained the passages and did not address the specific requirements of the question. Some candidates simply reproduced the texts without referring to the question.
- Some candidates with proficient writing ability did not achieve as many marks as they could have because they wrote beyond the requirements of the question or wasted words in lengthy introductions, neither of which could score any marks. Candidates are advised to get straight to the point and complete both **part (a)** and **part (b)** within the specified word limit. Only a very small number of candidates managed to achieve 9 or 10 marks in **part (a)**. Centres should ensure that candidates understand how to respond to this question correctly.
- (b) In this part of the question candidates are required to give their own opinions – at least two different views are required to be able to access the higher bands of the mark scheme. Candidates are

encouraged to give information from their own experiences and not to simply reproduce the opinions they have read in the passages.

Most candidates gave interesting, personal responses with a range of ideas. The majority were in favour of saving water at home and school.

Quality of Language

The language used across the paper generally ranged from sound to good or very good.

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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 limit.

General comments

There was a choice of five essay titles, from which candidates were expected to choose one and write between 250 and 400 words. While the overall performance was good, with most candidates displaying very good writing skills, many essays could have been much improved by stricter observance of the prescribed word limit.

In the best essays candidates developed their chosen question in accurate Urdu within the maximum word limit, and responded in an interesting, thoughtful, organised and well-structured way.

The quality of the language used by candidates was generally very good. It is the Content part of the assessment criteria where some candidates tended not to perform as well. Part of the problem lay in their difficulty to write within the word limit, which requires candidates to be able to write concisely. This means that candidates who write too much often cannot access the full range of available marks because they are unlikely to reach a concluding paragraph within the limit given or the essays become repetitive and are not well structured.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was one of the most popular essay titles. There were some very good compositions which contained thoughtful discussions about the importance of having a balanced diet and the effect of this on one's health.

Most candidates were able to provide a simple explanation of what healthy food is and the growing trend to eat fast food without understanding the health risks and what the food contains. The best responses included: scientific explanations with examples of what healthy food is and the benefits of consuming this over unhealthy food; health problems that can occur if healthy food is not consumed; the advantages of eating healthy food and how food inspectors should make regular checks of hotels and restaurants so that healthy food is provided to the public.

Weaker responses to this title did not include enough detail and candidates wrote a general essay on food and drink with very little link to the actual question asked. At this advanced level, a more mature response is expected than to write simply about food and drink. This is of course relevant to the question but candidates need to address the specific title. Many candidates write essays on the general topic areas as part of their exam preparation but they should bear in mind that the essay they write in the examination must be wholly relevant to the title on the question paper in order to access the full range of marks for content. It is not sufficient to write out the prepared essay and maybe insert one paragraph which is relevant to the question.

Question 2

Few candidates attempted this question but those who did performed satisfactorily.

There was a tendency for some candidates to address the question from a very narrow point of view and they merely described the lack of equal opportunities. The question required candidates to explain what can be done within their country to ensure every single person who fulfils the requirements of a job is given a fair chance regardless of their social status, family background and networking links.

Question 3

This question was answered by a large number of candidates. The title lent itself to a balanced discussion on the measures that are in place within countries to promote healthy competition and involvement in sporting events. Many candidates mentioned that physical education was a key component of the school curriculum and extra merits and scholarships could be provided for pupils who excel in this area. There were a number of good responses in which candidates expressed their own point of view, structured their arguments in a coherent essay that was easy to follow and reached a conclusion successfully.

The best responses were able to provide a balanced argument on what was being done and what more could be done to encourage more people to take sport seriously. Some candidates mentioned the lack of facilities such as pitches, stadiums etc. They also suggested that a reason why sports were sometimes discouraged was because parents believed sports were a waste of time and more time should be spent on studies and more academic subjects such as mathematics and science.

There were some excellent essays which related the title to a relevant phenomenon such as the growing use of internet technology and suggested that a reason why people were uninterested in sport was because they were too busy with electronic devices, games and social media.

Question 4

While this title was not as popular as others on the paper, it was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it.

Some candidates wrote too much about the importance of social upbringing and did not spend enough time explaining the responsibilities of government and parents. There were also very few examples to support the arguments. The best essays were those where candidates explained the laws in place to prevent people from committing crimes and other ways in which bad behaviour could be deterred. They included ways in which parents could ensure they brought up children who would become responsible citizens of the future and what the government could put in place through schools and judicial systems to encourage this.

Question 5

This was a popular question. A majority of the candidates who attempted this question gave details about the reasons why protecting the environment is not a priority for both the government and the citizens of an underdeveloped country. Examples of the reasons candidates gave for this included a lack of understanding; economic problems; lack of resources and financial issues.

The best responses provided a balanced argument mentioning both the government's role and the citizens' responsibility in reducing these factors. Some essays took a one-sided stance and outlined only the government's contribution. Some candidates also mentioned that governments allow global companies to build factories in these economically underdeveloped countries for cheap labour, and that although this benefits the country because it creates job opportunities for the public, it has a detrimental effect on the environment.

Language

Linguistically, many essays were almost error-free, and included a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences, a variety of clause structures, dependent clauses, judicious use of the passive voice, appropriate use of more sophisticated idioms, metaphors and, where appropriate, relevant quotations.

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Paper 9686/04
Texts

Key messages

Candidates are required to answer only **three questions**, each one on a different text.

Candidates must ensure they have read and understood the question before starting their answer and when writing their essays should continually refer back to the main focus of the question.

If answering **Questions 1(a), 2(a) or 3(a)** it is important to provide detailed answers to **both** parts of the question.

General comments

On the whole candidates performed well. Some candidates would have benefited from closer reading of their chosen questions before they started writing their essays in order to ensure that they had understood the specific focus and answered appropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates gave a good explanation of the ghazal. Many had no difficulties in explaining the couplets and commenting on Hasrat's romantic poetry.
- (b) There were some good answers to this question where candidates discussed 'Ghalib' as a poet of the present time. Others simply expanded on his life story and therefore could not access the upper bands of the mark scheme.

Question 2

- (a) This was a fairly popular question in this section. Many candidates who attempted it gave a good explanation of the extract of the poem. In their answers to **part (ii)** many candidates did not understand the concept of 'numainda nazam'. Some either repeated the explanation of the poem or wrote the whole life story of the poet which is not what the question was asking candidates to do.
- (b) This question was attempted by many candidates and there were some good essays. Some candidates had a limited view and knowledge of Iqbal's message based on the three poems they had studied. Some candidates simply explained all of his poems which was not required.

Question 3

- (a) Few candidates attempted this question and those who did simply explained the extract from the poem without expanding on the style of Josh.
- (b) There were a few answers to this question. Those who attempted it, expanded quite well on 'Akhtar Ul Iman' as a modern poet.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates chose this question and described the society of Luckhnao in good detail, but only a few candidates referred to the writing style of the author and were therefore able to access the full range of marks available.
- (b) This question was answered by many candidates and they described Umrao's sufferings and discussed whether, despite being a courtesan, she deserves sympathy or not. Some candidates took a one-sided view and wrote that they did not think she deserved sympathy and blamed her for her own misfortune.

Question 5

- (a) Some of those who answered this question wrote the whole story of 'Nazara Darmiyan Hay' and didn't expand on Khurshid Alam's greed and selfishness as was asked in the question. The best answers showed good understanding of the question and discussed it well, either agreeing with the statement given in the question or arguing against it.
- (b) Many candidates who answered this question tended to narrate the whole story and struggled to discuss their own view on the partition. In the best essays candidates demonstrated that they understood the focus of the question and discussed the author's intention in detail.

Question 6

- (a) This question was quite popular and candidates wrote a lot about the character and devious moves of Dilaram. Very few candidates, however, discussed the quote in the question.
- (b) Many candidates chose to answer this question and wrote in detail about the character of their choice. Popular choices were Dilaram, Akbar and Anarkali.