

URDU LANGUAGE

Paper 8686/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The overall standard, quality and linguistic demand of this paper was similar to previous years and appropriate for the level of this examination. The theme of the passages was compulsory voting, its pros and cons, and candidates seemed to engage well with this topic.

The Urdu text passage in **Section 1** was about the 'Benefits and positive aspects of compulsory voting'. The text passage in the **Section 2** was about 'Drawbacks and negative aspects of compulsory voting.' Most candidates understood the passages well and answered the questions accurately.

Candidates needed to read the questions very carefully and respond precisely in good Urdu.

In **Question 5** the specific requirement was to compare various points of views on compulsory voting. Good candidates found ample material in the two passages and expressed astute opinions. Some candidates struggled with the task, as they could not stick to the specific information required in their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In response to writing sentences with the given words, the words 'raije' (رائج) and 'shamooliat' (شمولیت) proved challenging for a number of candidates. Some candidates were confused with the word 'Masaail' (مسائل) and tried to use its different forms in their sentences, others did not know the meaning of some of the words and ended up lifting their sentences from the passage, thereby losing the mark.

Question 2

The phrases 'mazboot hoti hey' (مضبوط ہوتی ہے), 'paisa zaya ho' (پیسہ ضائع ہو) and 'barh gia hey' (بڑھ گیا ہے) proved challenging for a number of candidates. Some candidates even ended up using these phrases in their own sentences, which is a clear rubric violation and cannot score marks.

Section 1

Question 3

Question a, was straightforward and the majority of the candidates were able to offer two points out of three for 2 marks.

Question b, was proved to be somewhat challenging for some candidates who offered improvised answers not based on the text.

Questions c & d were a straightforward and most candidates answered them accurately.

Question e and f, was well answered even though some candidates mixed their answer to these questions with the answers for **Question d** or other questions.

Section 2

Question 4

Questions a and **b** were very well answered by the majority of the candidates.

Question c required three points for a complete answer. Some candidates struggled with giving the first point precisely.

Question d, was answered successfully by the majority of the candidates who ended up writing all four possible answers for three marks. A few candidates wrote their own opinions rather than information given in the text.

Question e, required two straightforward points to be extracted from the text. Still some candidates went on to writing their own versions.

Question f, posed no problems for most candidates. However, a number of candidates got stumped by the third point and did not express it precisely.

Question 5a and b

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

This task required candidates to write a comparison of the benefits and drawbacks of compulsory voting. A few candidates did not cover both aspects adequately leaving their responses rather incomplete.

There was sufficient material available to write ten points from both passages to cover both the 'for' and the 'against' arguments.

As for **Question 5b**, the majority of the candidates found it easy to answer. A variety of opinions were voiced in response to this question. Many candidates felt that compulsory voting should be implemented in their country, while others candidates argued against compulsory voting being introduced.

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Essay

Key messages

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

- plan their essay to produce well-structured and, where appropriate, persuasive arguments
- ensure the focus of the composition is 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 in answer to a specific question on one of the five topics published in the syllabus. Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of very good scripts. The problem for most candidates is not writing accurate Urdu but responding to the stimulus question/statement in an organised and well-structured way.

There were five questions or statements, in response to which candidates were expected to write between 250 and 400 words. The topics this year were:

"Insani t'aluqat" "Human relationships"

- 1 *"Jaded teknologi ne insani t'aluqat men inqylab peyda kar diya hai."*
"Modern technology has revolutionised human relationships."

"Shahri awr dehi zyndagi" "Urban and rural life"

- 2 *"Dawr e hazyr men shahr men rahna mushkyl hota ja raha hai."*
"In the present day living in a city is becoming difficult."

"Farygh awqat ki sargarmiyon" "Free time activities"

- 3 *"kya jysmani awr zahni sargarmiyon men tawazun zaruri hai?"*
'Is it necessary to have a balance between physical and mental activities?'

"Jang awr aman" "War and peace"

- 4 *"Naujawan nasl ko bwzwrqon ke ghalat faislon ki wajah se jang larni parti hai."*
'The younger generation have to fight wars because of their elders' wrong decisions.'

"Aaludagi" "Pollution"

- 5 *'apne mulk ko saaf duthra rakhna har shakhs ka farz hai'*
"It is everyone's duty to keep their country clean and tidy."

The wide range of topics/questions allowed candidates the opportunity to choose one suited to their interests so they best demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. Of course at Advanced Level not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but it is equally important that candidates are able to organise and structure their work, present an argument where appropriate and do so in a logical 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

Two of the titles attracted equally far more responses, nearly three quarters of the candidature, than the rest. The first was **title 2**:

“Dawr e hazyr men shahr men rahna mushkyl hota ja raha hai.”
“In the present day living in a city is becoming difficult.”

Living in a city is the experience of many of the candidates, which is, of course, one reason why so many attempted it. There were some very good compositions on this topic: these presented a balanced discussion of both positive and negative aspects sides of city and concluded with an opinion, which did not necessarily concur with the title.

Unfortunately, quite a few of the responses to this topic merely reeled out the standard comparisons of city and country living. The title’s focus was urban living and it did not call for or require any discussion of rural life, although it could quite legitimately be mentioned, There seemed to be many scripts which relied rather too much on pre-prepared generic essays on the topic area and which did not have sufficient focus on the specific question.

The second and almost equally popular title was **title 5**:

‘Apne mulk ko saaf duthra rakhna har shakhs ka farz hai.’
“It is everyone’s duty to keep their country clean and tidy.”

As with the first title, many responses were dependent on generic essays about pollution. Some of them spent three quarters or more of their compositions describing the various forms of pollution in great detail, which left only a paragraph or so to address the title. The title did not require them to do that. What was needed was a discussion about the citizens’ response to pollution and how to keep their environments clean and tidy and free from pollution at the personal, local and even national level.

There were some candidates who did focus on the title and produced high quality essays but they were not the majority amongst those who chose this title.

The third most popular topic was **title 1**:

“Jaded teknologi ne insani t’aluqat men inqyab peyda kar diya hai.”
“Modern technology has revolutionised human relationships.”

Overall this topic produced the best set of compositions of this session. A good proportion of them made for very interesting and though provoking reading. They typically introduced the topic by describing the many changes that have revolutionised our lives, particularly in the world of communications, included a discussion of the effects both positive and negative that the changes have had upon human relationships.

This year there were two titles which not many candidates attempted. The first was **title 3**:

“Kya jysmani awr zahni sargarmiyon men tawazun zaruri hai?”
‘Is it necessary to have a balance between physical and mental activities?’

This title was not very popular, but those who did choose it produced some excellent essays and it was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it. For a few weaker candidates it became a general essay on the benefits of exercise with little or no attempt to address the specific title. The best essays did discuss the importance of and the benefits to our health and wellbeing of both physical and mental activities and then came to a considered conclusion concerning the desirability or necessity of maintaining a balance between them.

Least frequently attempted was **title 4**:

“Naujawan nasl ko bwzwrqon ke ghalat faislon ki wajah se jang larni parti hai”
“The younger generation have to fight wars because of their elders’ wrong decisions.”

Few candidates attempted this topic but of those who did, most produced high quality work. Some did not focus upon the key issue of a country's older generation (politicians) making decisions which are being paid for the younger generation (soldiers), which, as some argued, has been this way throughout most of history.

CONCLUSION

The best essays in any topic area were those that demonstrated a structured and considered response to the title, with an introduction leading to paragraphs including several cogent points relating to the title followed by a concluding paragraph.

Linguistically, the best essays were almost error free, with a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences, containing dependent clauses, use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom, metaphor and where appropriate, relevant quotations.

While the overall performance was good, with a lot of 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.

