

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The written performance of candidates was generally 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. The linguistic demand and standard of this paper was similar to previous years. The text passage in **Section 1** proved slightly more accessible and easier to respond than the passage in **Section 2** which required candidates to think carefully in terms of comprehending the subject content before attempting to answer the given questions, thus differentiating between average and good performances.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Many candidates found it difficult to convey accurate meanings for the words '*Evaz*' meaning '*instead of*' and '*Androoni*' meaning '*internal*' in their sentences. The meaning of the other three words was in general well expressed.

In **Question 2** the word '*Naaqis maali halaat*' meaning '*bad financial circumstances*' was not properly understood by many candidates.

The Urdu text passage in **Section 1** is an example of issues that affect every person in developing countries. Most candidates demonstrated that they understood the passage very well and answered the given questions in a concise way with well planned answers.

Question 3

Part 1 was straight forward and did not cause any difficulty for the majority of the candidates.

Part 2 was well answered by the majority of candidates.

Part 3 Some candidates found this question difficult; only the difficulties faced by western countries were asked about in the question.

Part 4 was straight forward and did not cause any difficulty for the majority of the candidates to answer.

Part 5 The majority of candidates answered this question well and their answers were well supported by the information available in the text.

Section 2

Candidates found the passage in **Section 2** more demanding to understand than the passage in **Section 1**. Candidates were required to give their own opinion in response to a number of the questions. The more able candidates expressed themselves fully whereas the average candidates struggled to respond to the questions appropriately.

Question 4

Almost all candidates attempted **Part 1** of this section correctly.

Part 2 proved to be a little more demanding. Some candidates were a little unsure how to respond.

Part 3 asked about the effects of bribery in developing countries. The majority of candidates answered the question well though a number of candidates did not follow the precise instruction.

In response to **Part 4** the majority of the candidates managed to give their opinion with examples.

Question 5

This was also well answered by the majority of candidates, as it was unambiguous. However, some candidates left this unattempted or simply took it as their answer to **Question 5a**. This is a very important point because many marks can be lost when questions are missed out.

The majority of the candidates responded to **Question 5a** with confidence. A comparison includes differences, similarities and personal opinion on the issue.

For **Question 5b**, the majority of candidates responded well to this question demonstrating a variety of different writing styles. Some candidates justified the practice of bribery, while the majority of candidates wanted to eradicate it once and for all. However, more candidates decided not to argue either way and remained neutral in their response.

URDU

Paper 9686/03

Essay

GENERAL

This paper is designed to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one of a range of five topics, selected as being relevant to their countries of origin. Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. The problem for most candidates is not writing Urdu but responding to the stimulus topics in an organised and well-structured way.

Candidates are expected to write between 250 and 400 words. The length candidates actually wrote will be discussed below.

The topics this year were:

"Bacche kam – khushhaal gharana" – bahs kijiye.

"Fewer children – happy household." Discuss.

Kya shahr men rehna sahyt ke liye nuqsandeh hai?

Is city life bad for your health?

"Berozgar logon ko hakumat ki taraf se vazifa nahin milna cahiye" – bahs kijiye.

"Unemployed people should not receive money from the government." Discuss.

Jadid dawr men aman qaym karna kyon dushwaar hai? Apni rai ka izhar kijiye.

Why is keeping the peace so difficult in the modern era? – Give your opinion.

Tel ke khatam hone ke ba'ad kya hoga?

What will happen when the oil runs out?

The wide range of topics allowed most candidates the opportunity to choose one and demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. Of course, at this Advanced Level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but candidates also need to be able to organise and structure their work, present an argument where appropriate and do so in an interesting way.

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

This year three topics attracted more candidates than the rest. The most popular was:

Kya shahr men rehna sahyt ke liye nuqsandeh hai?

Is city life bad for your health?

It is clear that candidates, nearly all of whom are city dwellers with rural links, feel very strongly on this issue. While there were some excellent essays, many candidates turned the topic into a comparison of urban and rural life. While it is perfectly valid to include this as part of the composition, many candidates wrote an essay as if the title was to compare city and rural life. Some candidates focused exclusively on pollution and other directly environmental issues while others explored a wider range of issues connected with city life, including the positive ones such as increased facilities for health, education, employment, etc. Such responses received higher marks for content and organisation, as they had addressed the question set, rather than one they wanted to write about, as did those who had structured their responses better by writing introductory and concluding paragraphs.

That being said, there were some excellent compositions in which candidates not only responded appropriately to the question in the manner described above, but who also wrote in extremely good Urdu as well.

The second most popular title was:

“Bacche kam – khushhaal gharana” – bahs kijiye.
“Fewer children – happy household.” Discuss.

It was the view of almost every candidate who chose this essay that having fewer children was in the best interests of the family, the children and the nation. A small number of candidates argued against it on the grounds that Muslims were enjoined by the Holy Qur’an to produce many children. The general view was that this generation is better educated, better fed, with more advantages because their parents can devote more time, love and money bringing them up, and that this situation is beneficial to all concerned. Most candidates wrote competently on this topic and the best essays were very well written and some made very valid points.

The third most popular topic was:

“Berozgar logon ko hakumat ki taraf se vazifa nahin milna cahiye” – bahs kijiye.
“Unemployed people should not receive money from the government.” Discuss.

Those who attempted this topic were all very keen to present their point of view on this highly controversial matter. Some of them argued their cases, either for or against with great cogency and passion. The problem at this level was that their compositions lacked balance. Some candidates expressed their arguments against giving money to the unemployed with vehemence, saying the unemployed were poor because they were too lazy and giving them money for nothing would make them lazier! The best essays, however, were written by candidates who not only presented their own point of view but also attempted to discuss both sides of the argument.

The fourth most popular topic was:

Jadid dawr men aman qaym karna kyon dushwaar hai? Apni rai ka izhar kijiye.
Why is keeping the peace so difficult in the modern era? – Give your opinion.

This topic was much less well attempted by most candidates, the quality of essays being adequate or good, with very few very good ones.

Many candidates quite naturally focused on the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is clearly a highly sensitive issue and the passion perhaps at times outweighed the thoughtfulness, although it is necessary to comment on the maturity and breadth of knowledge and understanding exhibited by the candidates.

The remaining topic:

Tel ke khatam hone ke ba’ad kya hoga?
What will happen when the oil runs out?

was attempted by a very small number of candidates. There were one or two good compositions amongst them, in which interesting aspects of the impending crisis were portrayed. Of those who attempted this topic, there were some interesting opinions expressed and one or two highly original ones, including a few who would be glad because then life could return to a slower pace and people would have more time for each other. Only a very few discussed alternative forms of energy and issues of energy conservation.

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 limits. The language of most candidates was, in the majority of cases, more than adequate at this level, with many candidates obtaining 16-20 marks for language. It is the second part of the assessment criteria, on content, planning and organisation, where candidates tend to lose marks. Candidates are required to write concisely on a particular topic and those who fail to contain their essay within the prescribed word-limit of 250 – 400 words are penalised for content and planning. That being said, very many candidates wrote well-planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.

URDU LITERATURE

Paper 9686/04

Texts

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was good. There were some very good candidates at the top end of the scale and an encouraging increase in the proportion of good scripts. 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 however whose knowledge and understanding of the texts was not up to the required standard.

A wide range of language was used. At the top end of the range the Urdu was fluent and idiomatic with a range of vocabulary that allowed the candidates to express their ideas highly effectively. There was however a disappointing tail of candidates with an extremely limited knowledge of the necessary range of vocabulary who performed well below average. For some of these candidates their grasp of the language was not adequate enough to allow them to put across essential words and ideas necessary when discussing literature.

In some cases, there was evidence of candidates spending too much time and effort introducing their chosen topic, prolonging their writing task unnecessarily. A short concise introduction indicating how the specific question is to be answered is what is required.

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 to various texts. Such answers are written without taking into consideration the focus of the question and as such marks awarded will be limited.

Section 1

Question 1(a) and **2(a)**, the passage-based questions, required candidates to discuss the use of technical terms in the poetry. Only a very small minority of candidates managed to answer this question correctly. Many candidates did not focus on the question and tended to give a general explanation of the poem rather than offering a critical analysis of the poet's work. 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.

The majority of candidates chose to answer **Question 3** on the selection of short stories. Most candidates demonstrated that they had read the stories carefully. Again however it is important that candidates answer the specific question that is being asked in detail, making close reference to the text.

Section 2

The majority of candidates attempted two questions from this section, **Question 4** and **6** being the most popular choice by far. The number of candidates attempting **Question 5** on *Aangan* has been steadily increasing over the past couple of years and this year there were some delightful answers showing insight in their handling of the question. Once again, however, there was some evidence of pre-learned answers. Only those candidates who dealt with the focus of the question managed to achieve high marks.