

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 11

Key messages

Successful **part (a)** answers are based on a good understanding of what the question is asking; they show a comprehensive amount of knowledge about the particular focus of the question and they sometimes include quotations from the Qur'an to support the answer.

Good **part (b)** answers also focus completely on the question while providing the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant information.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of **part (b)** questions, answering them with valid lines of argument, coherent reasoning and often supported by some good practical examples. Candidates could improve their knowledge for the **part (a)** questions to give more detail in their answers and more precise accounts of the incidents that form part of the main event under discussion. This lack of knowledge led to limited development in **Questions 2–5**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Successful responses for Sura (i) talked about how observing the natural phenomenon can lead humans to their real Originator who is deserving of their worship as He is the Creator. For Sura (ii), candidates kept their focus on God's qualities of Greatness, Compassion, Mercy and again the fact that He owns and controls everything. For the last Sura, creation of the universe as well as provisions of food and sustenance were highlighted.

There were also some less successful responses which were quite general and confusing in some cases, with little understanding of the actual themes, just narration of the common themes around *tawhid*. There were many simplistic responses that paraphrased the themes present in the passages without elaboration.

- (b) Thoughtful responses talked about observing the nature to recognise the true Creator, looking after the environment, and using the resources sensibly as well as showing gratefulness through acts of worship. Weaker responses were restricted to some generalised suggestions such as Muslims should only believe in one God or that they should only worship Him.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were asked to describe different ways in which the Prophet (pbuh) received revelations. Good responses were able to highlight the different forms in which Angel Jibril appeared before the Prophet (pbuh) as well as other forms of revelations including dreams, direct revelation into the Prophet's heart and conversation with God. These responses were developed with supported points made with relevant Hadiths showing bodily sensations experienced by the Prophet (pbuh) during the process of revelations.

Weaker responses restricted their comments to details of first revelations only, emphasising more on less relevant parts of it. These responses would have benefited from greater knowledge of the topic.

- (b) There were some very insightful responses that gave some excellent reasons for the gradual revelation of the Qur'an. For instance, that verses were revealed in response to the questions posed or the situations faced at different times, that new rules and prohibitions had to be introduced gradually, or that it was to facilitate the process of memorization, or that God did not want to burden the Prophet (pbuh).

Some candidates went a step further and gave specific examples such as the gradual prohibition of alcohol. Some narrated various incidents where Qur'anic verses were revealed just to address a specific issue.

Candidates should try to write arguments that make sense, when asked for reasons these should link to the question, and development should come through the use of relevant examples.

Question 3

- (a) Successful responses to **Question 3** had a comprehensive account of the different incidents that took place during the Prophet's journey from Makka to his welcome in Madina, particularly the experiences in the Cave Thawr. Strong responses went into considerable detail, describing events that happened between Cave Thawr and the Prophet's arrival in Madina.

Weaker responses were highlighted by their lack of detail with many having just an outline of the events. Such responses proceeded from one incident to another without providing a thorough description. A close reading of the question is also necessary because some candidates described events that occurred after the arrival of the Prophet (pbuh) in Madina.

- (b) Some responses were thoughtful as they discussed how friends could keep secrets and not malign their peers or help them in hard as well as good times and not be envious. These were good examples chosen to elaborate the points made. More simplistic responses hinted at the duties of Muslims towards each other; a stronger point needs to be made. It was clear that some responses had irrelevant information in them because they included accounts of how the Prophet's friends showed loyalty to him. The key message is read the question carefully and understand what it is asking.

Question 4

- (a) Thorough accounts of both the battles were characteristic of the best responses while those with fragmentary details were more basic. Some candidates confused these battles with some other ones while some mixed the facts of a few battles.
- (b) Better responses clearly indicated the battle they thought to be more important and then proceeded to give reasons for their choice. Most of the candidates considered Khaybar as the most important one, citing the end of the Jewish threat and resulting financial stability and prosperity of Muslims as the main reasons.

Question 5

- (a) Many responses included facts about Khadija. For instance, her earlier marriages, business, interaction with the Prophet (pbuh) before marriage, proposal, and children from her marriage to the Prophet (pbuh). The best responses showed development through the inclusion of precise details about names of her first husbands and their children, or through an account of Khadija's involvement in the first revelation when she calmed the Prophet (pbuh) and supported him, or through detail about how she stood by him throughout his mission and extended social, moral, and financial help.
- (b) Many responses stated how the age of a woman should not be considered a hindrance in a happy marriage as Khadija is said to be older than the Prophet (pbuh). They also discussed how spouses can be supportive of each other and most importantly believe in their partners when they try to accomplish something significant. Other responses pointed to the fact that women can bear the financial responsibility equally.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 12

Key messages

Successful **part (a)** answers are based on a good understanding of what the question is asking; they show a comprehensive amount of knowledge about the particular focus of the question and they sometimes include quotations from the Qur'an to support the answer.

Good **part (b)** answers also focus completely on the question while providing the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant information.

General comments

One strength of candidates' responses was their ability to use their own opinion when answering **part (b)** questions. For instance, candidates could give examples of lessons learned from the Battle of Uhud or they could say why Muslims should show patience. Candidates could improve their knowledge for the **part (a)** questions to give more detail in their answers and more precise accounts of the incidents that form part of the main event under discussion. This lack of knowledge led to limited development in **Questions 2–5**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Excellent responses talked about the themes in a very mature way, without relying on paraphrasing. For Sura **(i)** these talked about God's immense powers of creativity as well as destruction, His absolute control and His justice and compassion. For Suras **(ii)** and **(iii)** responses included detail about God's assistance and support for His Prophets, His granting of special knowledge and wisdom as well as miracles to His chosen people.

Some candidates spent too much time comparing the passage under discussion with other similar passages. While it is a good idea to quote a passage which expounds similar themes, as a reference, comparing different passages is not what is required in this question. The candidates must narrate the themes/underlying ideas present (not merely paraphrase the translation), elaborate on them, and support with a quote where relevant.

- (b) The most insightful answers talked about the changes in a Muslim's thoughts and actions that are brought about by the themes of Qur'anic passages discussed in **part (a)**. Creation of a sense of accountability, a more cautious attitude towards the Earth's natural resources, hope and belief in God's assistance as well as miraculous events, awareness of Satan's malicious nature and consequences of haughty behaviour were some of the ideas that were explored in such responses. Many candidates either simply stated what Muslims should or should not do or suggested that Muslims should believe in and be fearful of God and follow what the Prophets taught.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates knew the basic facts surrounding the compilation and preservation of the Qur'an. Responses included the reasons for the compilation of the Qur'an, Umar's suggestion and initial process, the problems arising in Uthman's era and the standardisation that followed.

More successful candidates divided their response into several paragraphs, each going into considerable detail about one stage, providing specific names of the personalities involved and

quoting their exact words where possible, referenced from reliable sources. Another distinctive quality of such answers was giving precise details of the process of compilation and different stages of it that was carried out by the committees formed in both the eras.

Less successful responses were characterised by a lack of knowledge, inaccuracies, and imprecise and limited details.

- (b) Many candidates engaged in a thoughtful discussion about why they felt having the Qur'an written in a book form was significant. Some of the reasons discussed included, that it ensured the preservation of the Qur'an, that this form makes it easier to memorise and ponder, it made the Qur'an more accessible and that the availability of the Qur'an in the form of soft copies is only possible due to the written form.

Weaker responses lacked elaboration of the points made or discussed the general importance of the Qur'an as a source of law.

Question 3

- (a) Strong responses included detail about the causes of the Battle of Uhud, the military strength of the parties, the events on the battlefield, the outcome of the battle and the immediate aftermath. Stronger responses included the names of most of the people that played an important role including Abu Sufyan, Abdullah ibn Ubbay, Khalid bin Walid, Hamza, Hind and Wahshi alongside the precise details of their roles in the battle. Weaker responses knew some of the details while poor responses gave very vague descriptions, often confusing facts or giving inaccurate particulars.
- (b) 'This battle showed that the Muslims should always follow the instruction of the Prophet (pbuh)', was the most popular line of argument explored by the candidates. The best responses could relate it to the present times, for instance saying that decisions do not have to be made by leaders on their own, and consultation with others can be beneficial. Other responses came up with more persuasive arguments such as, that greed or longing for materialistic gains can lead to disgrace and defeat. Weaker responses were exemplified by simplistic statements without elaboration or exemplification.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were able to explain about patience and forgiveness; improvements needed to be made on the quality of the accuracy and the detail of the events presented as examples. The responses with a wide selection of events displaying both the qualities and with great detail, were the most successful. Weaker responses were characterised by the inclusion of events that were either described in too little detail or were mistaken.
- (b) Candidates showed good understanding of the question and offered explanations from both moral and religious points of view showing why Muslims should exercise patience in their lives. Some of the reasons that were given included patience resulting in greater rewards, obedience of God's commands and the Prophet's Sunna as well as the prevention of unpleasant consequences that can lead to remorse and regret later. These answers also demonstrated that the candidates have good evaluative skills, can understand the question's demands, and produce an answer that is relevant, precise and to the point.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates, attempting this question, were familiar with the life of Fatima. Better responses were written chronologically, recounting the events of her birth, childhood, marriage, family life and death. They also described the incidents that showed her affection for the Prophet (pbuh) and the prophet's fondness for her. Weaker responses presented few events from her life, and these were written about in limited detail.
- (b) The best responses took examples from the present day lives of Muslims and talked about some of the prevalent issues that are faced by both children and parents which can be resolved by using the Prophet's example. Some responses were quite generic, suggesting some basic ways parents and children can or should treat each other.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 21

Key messages

Successful **part (a)** answers are based on a good understanding of what the question is asking; they show a comprehensive amount of knowledge about the particular focus of the question and they sometimes include quotations from the Qur'an or Hadiths to support the answer.

Good **part (b)** answers also focus completely on the question while providing the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant information.

General comments

One strength of candidates' responses was their ability to use their own opinion when answering **part (b)** questions. For instance, candidates managed to say how the teachings in some of the Hadiths could be put into practice. Candidates could improve on their ability to explain what the messages in the Hadiths were, as many lacked detailed and sound knowledge in **part (a)** questions.

Candidates must consider what the question is asking them as many answers did not adequately address all aspects of it. This led to a lack of developed explanation in **Questions 2–5**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) There was some detailed description of the four Hadiths, highlighting some candidates' ability to describe the teachings within them. Other answers showed that more understanding of the teachings of the Hadiths was needed in order to develop answers sufficiently well to access higher levels and avoid paraphrasing the text.

It is important for candidates to understand what the big theme of each Hadith is. For instance, Hadith (ii) has as its main teaching the fact that Muslims should show compassion and care in society as a way to perform acts of charity. Few candidates could differentiate between *sadaqa* and *zakat* when addressing the topic of charity because in this Hadith charity was referring to *sadaqa* and not *zakat*. A closer reading of the Hadith would help provide a deeper understanding of what the message is in order to describe the teaching.

Hadith (iii) considers who is a martyr in Islam. Some candidates were able to say that martyrs are those Muslims who die in battles as well as those who die due to illness or any other cause whilst living righteously and practising jihad of the self. It is important to understand the key teaching of a Hadith before candidates can answer successfully because many repeated the list of people given in Hadith (iii).

- (b) Responses to **part (b)** were good. Candidates were able to show how Muslims could put certain Hadiths into action. For Hadith (i), candidates used examples well to show how Islam is a simple religion to follow. Hadith (iv) allowed candidates to give examples of modesty in everyday life. Where the key message was not understood, the candidates' answers were less accomplished but a few managed to discuss how the teaching could be put into practice even though they could not express what the teaching really was in **part (a)**.

Question 2

- (a) Some candidates were able to give a detailed account of the *isnad* and *matn*, the two components of Hadiths, required for this question. These candidates were able to explain both terms and write down the rules to check the authenticity of the Hadiths, and the more detailed the better the answer. More advanced answers wrote that it is the *matn* of a Hadith that helps to distinguish between a *Hadith e Qudsi* and *Nabawi* and gave Hadiths of each in support of their answer.

Some candidates gave an account of only one component and therefore lacked detail, while in some cases candidates did not know what *isnad* and *matn* were. In those cases, candidates should be encouraged to use the English translation and develop their answer from there.

- (b) The majority of the answers stated that both parts were equally important and what could happen if either or both of the elements were ignored. This was the evaluation being looked for.

Question 3

- (a) The best answers successfully saw this question in two parts: firstly, who Musailimah was and secondly, the Battle of Yamama. For the first part, strong candidates wrote that out of all the false prophets Musailimah was the most dangerous. They wrote about the tribe he belonged to, his encounter with the Prophet (pbuh) and his letter to him asking to divide Arabia between them, his altering of the Pillars of Islam, as well as the Prophet's response to him.

In the second half of the answer, the Battle of Yamama, candidates wrote about the battle against Musailimah and the two forces Abu Bakr sent against him. Weaker responses tended to give an account of the battle between Khalid ibn Walid and Musailimah, while the earlier encounters of this battle with Ikramah and Shurahbil were ignored.

- (b) Many candidates were able to state the importance of this battle to future generations of Muslims by saying why it was important to defeat the false prophet and what could have happened if Musailimah had not been defeated. Responses also said that post-Yamama the Qur'an was compiled, that Muslims were united and became a force to be reckoned with in the region.

Question 4

- (a) Good responses stated that fasting teaches *taqwa*, that it enhances spirituality, teaches sincerity to God, enables a person to learn self control, has a positive effect on health, creates empathy in the hearts of the rich for the less fortunate, brings about economic prosperity, creates goodwill and unity and helps the individual and community to get close to God. These are all benefits that were written about, with the strongest answers developing as many of the points as they could.

Candidates needed to understand that this question focused on the benefits of fasting, not how fasting is observed. Some answers did write about how fasting is observed and were given no credit for it. It is vital that candidates read the question and base their answer on what is being asked and not what they have prepared for a particular topic.

- (b) Good responses said what *Layla-tul-Qadr* was and went on to state the benefits of worship on this night. These answers showed an understanding of its importance. Some responses showed confusion with *Mairaj* and the importance of *Mairaj* was given instead.

Question 5

- (a) Good answers gave an account of what *zakat* is and who should receive it, and who cannot be recipients of *zakat* and what its benefits are. Answers that covered all of these aspects were able to achieve high levels according to the detail given within the points that were made. Some candidates wrote about the benefits of *zakat*, but that is not all the question was asking for. It is important to read the question, understand its demands and then begin the answer.

- (b) This question specifically asked for the candidate's opinion on the most important benefit of giving *zakat*. Here they needed to select one that they thought was the most important and give reasons to support their choice. Some wrote about it being the fulfilment of a Pillar of Islam, others wrote about the purification of one's wealth or the advantages to society of *zakat*. These were good answers.

Alternatively, some chose to write a list of benefits of giving *zakat*. This list would have been better placed in **part (a)** of the answer.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 22

Key messages

Successful **part (a)** answers are based on a good understanding of what the question is asking; they show a comprehensive amount of knowledge about the particular focus of the question and they sometimes include quotations from the Qur'an or Hadiths to support the answer.

Good **part (b)** answers also focus completely on the question while providing the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant information.

General comments

One strength of candidates' responses was their ability to use their own opinion when answering **part (b)** questions. For instance, candidates managed to say how the teachings in some of the Hadiths could be put into practice. Candidates could improve on their ability to explain what the messages in the Hadiths were, as many lacked detailed and sound knowledge in **part (a)** questions.

Candidates must consider what the question is asking them as many answers did not adequately address all aspects of it. This led to a lack of developed explanation in **Questions 2–5**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) There was some detailed description of the four Hadiths, highlighting some candidates' ability to describe the teachings within them. Other answers showed that more understanding of the teachings of the Hadiths was needed in order to develop answers sufficiently well to access higher levels and avoid paraphrasing the text. It is important to note that once the key message of a Hadith is clearly understood, then expanding on the teaching within it becomes easier. Good responses were able to say that the teaching in Hadith (i) was that Muslim rulers should show kindness and justice towards those they govern, while strong responses for Hadith (iii) used the word *nasihah* and noted that this Hadith is about sincerity.
- (b) For **part (b)** answers, candidates need to reflect upon how the teachings given in **part (a)** could be put into practice. It is worth noting that to show application of the Hadiths, candidates can choose examples from their own lives, the lives of the Companions or the Prophet (pbuh). Good responses did this. For example, when writing about how Hadith (iii) could be put into action, candidates wrote about how they could practise the Hadith by showing sincerity to God by believing in His Oneness and following His *sharia*, to the Prophet (pbuh) by following his *sunna* and believing him to be the last Prophet of God, and to the Qur'an by reciting it and following its teachings. Less successful responses repeated the teachings given in **part (a)** without using examples.

Question 2

- (a) The most successful responses stated that Hadiths explain the Qur'an; they show Muslims how to fulfil the Pillars of Islam, and that they are the primary source of *sharia* law after the Qur'an for things like trade, inheritance, marriage and theft. Some candidates included that they are used in *ijma* and *qiyas*. Candidates developed this by saying that by following the Sunna, Muslims hope to walk the path of righteousness. Some responses stated that by following the Prophet's *Sunna*, we can learn about his interaction with his wife and children which can teach Muslims how to behave

with their families. Therefore, it is important to know how the Prophet (pbuh) conducted himself in all aspects of life.

Less successful responses had only a brief focus on how the Hadiths expand on the teachings of Islam. A few included the impact of Hadiths on *sharia* law, simply stating that it was said that God asks Muslims to follow Hadiths and *Sunna*. These are correct points, but the detail and development needed for high level answers was missing.

- (b) Good responses said why or how both belief and action are equally important in a Muslim's life. Answers were supported by examples such as the belief in God is meaningful only when a Muslim believes in His Oneness, is obedient to His commands and worships Him.

Question 3

- (a) Good responses wrote developed accounts of the election of Abu Bakr as the first caliph of Islam, but the Syrian expedition he sent under the command of Usama was less well written about. These accounts included how, when the final rites of the Prophet (pbuh) were in progress, it was brought to the attention of 'Umar that the Ansars were holding a meeting to elect a new leader. They included accounts of where this meeting was being held, who went to the meeting, what transpired there, and how Abu Bakr got elected. Some responses continued to write about the policies and wishes of the Prophet (pbuh) before his demise.

Weaker responses contained a brief summary of the election and lacked detailed knowledge. Further development could have included why Abu Bakr was the natural choice, and quotations from his speech could have been used to develop the account.

- (b) The best responses understood that they had to choose one of Abu Bakr's achievements and explain why they thought it was the most significant. For example, how Abu Bakr upheld the Pillars of Islam by fighting against the tribes that refused to pay *zakat*. Candidates would then develop this answer by explaining why it was important for him to uphold the Pillars of Islam. Too many candidates gave a list of his achievements without selecting one of them to explain. Candidates must read a question carefully, because a list of Abu Bakr's achievements was not required.

Question 4

- (a) Good responses included balanced detail about the Battle of Siffin and the events that led up to it. Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of balance between the two parts, candidates writing about the wrong battle, or candidates writing about events after the battle had been fought (the arbitration was very popular but not necessary).

Good battle detail included the date of the battle, who fought, how long it lasted, and detail about what happened.

- (b) The best responses chose one main consequence and gave reasons for their choice. For example, the outcome of the battle diminished Ali's authority and gave rise to the *kharijites* which led to the battle at Nahrawan, divided the *umma* and led to Ali's assassination. The development of reasoning can be seen in such a response. Some responses were very brief and lacked reasons for their choice, if a choice was made.

Question 5

- (a) This was a very popular question and one which most candidates attempted. Candidates wrote about the three types of purifications with many giving a fine account of how *wudu* is performed. The best answers were able to give sound details of the rules of *tayammum* and *ghusl*. Some responses trailed off from *wudu* because they had no knowledge of *tayammum* and *ghusl*.
- (b) This part of the question was very well answered, and candidates gave very good accounts of the benefit of *salat*. Some gave a list of the benefits of *salat*, but many answered the question precisely by selecting one particular benefit and giving reasons to support their answer. For example, responses stated that the specific times of prayer meant believers remember God five times a day and this keeps faith in their daily lives.