

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 1

Key messages

Read questions carefully, underline key words to understand the focus and the context of questions.

Pay attention to the marks allocated to each question to decide which one requires longer answer; reserve more time for questions needing extended answers.

Avoid long and unnecessary background or introduction.

Do not waste time on discussing implication or aftermath of an event in **(a)** parts of question where focus should solely be on description of events.

General comments

Candidates' answers were high-quality and demonstrated a good depth of knowledge, the right chronological order with authentic and relevant quotes along with detailed information about historical events, personalities, names, dates and in some cases, original extracts of conversation. Many responses presented extended answers with in-depth knowledge and information. There were a number of brief responses to **(a)** parts of questions. Candidates can use the space provided in the answer booklet as a guide to the expected length of an answer.

It was pleasing to see many candidates showing an understanding of the questions' demands, offering thoughtful consideration and presenting their own judgement supported by strong reasoning and evidence, in **(b)** parts of questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Candidates had to choose any two passages and describe their themes. A large majority merely paraphrased, repeating the translation or telling the story of Jesus in passage (iii). Some did try to bring out the underlying ideas but were very brief, not offering any further explanation even when they highlighted a theme. Better answers, however, talked about God as Creator hence deserving of worship, Sustainer and Provider in passage (i), His power to destroy what He created, human accountability to Him and God as dispenser of justice in passage (ii) and God's protection, assistance and blessings bestowed on His special selected people in passage (iii). Those scoring high marks not only highlighted several themes but also offered an explanation of each theme and quoted verses to support their point.
- (b)** This question was answered well by many who talked about how these themes create a sense of gratitude in humans, making them responsible towards nature and God-given resources. Some also discussed how the message (ii) creates a sense of responsibility, accountability and fear, stopping one from doing wrong, at the same time creating a sense of justice that none of our good deeds will go to waste while passage (iii) creates a strong belief in God's support and strengthens Muslims' belief in Prophets.

Responses that made simplistic statements about what Muslims should or should not do or repeated the themes, were restricted to lower levels.

Question 2

- (a) Almost all the candidates answering this question talked about how the Qur'an is the basis of legal thinking in Islam and how it is supported by Hadith. Candidates also gave examples of prayer, followed by an explanation of what ijma' and qiyas is and how jurists resort to these sources in case not enough information is found in the Qur'an and Hadith. Excellent responses discussed other dimensions of the relationship between the four primary sources supported by strong examples, such as rules regarding marriage to grandmother and granddaughter are prohibited through ijma', based on Qur'anic legislation or that of intoxicants and nail varnish that are declared unlawful by qiyas, based on Hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh).

On the contrary, those who did not do well described what all four sources were, their salient features and quoted general examples of their use during the Prophet's time.

- (b) Some of the responses were very thoughtful; they stated how qiyas is particularly not accepted by Shi'a Muslims, giving too much use of personal judgement, promoting chances of disagreements and division in Umma on different issues, as some of the reasons. Many, however, did not present very impressive arguments and seemed to assume that qiyas works independent of the Qur'an and Hadith hence not reliable as a source; others came up with flawed reasoning that present day religious leaders do not possess enough knowledge to carry out qiyas.

Question 3

- (a) This question asked the candidates to narrate events from the life of the Prophet (pbuh) showing generosity and forgiveness. Good answers knew the difference between the two qualities and chose events which clearly showed the Prophet's generosity and forgiveness. Excellent answers selected several events for each quality and went into considerable detail while narrating the events selected. Conversely, those who did not get higher marks relied on very few events, missed details or started talking about qualities other than generosity and forgiveness. In some cases, events described by the candidate did not really demonstrate the qualities mentioned in the question.

- (b) Most of the candidates found this question challenging. The majority of candidates wrote about how generosity can be practised but most of these were very general, only a small minority were able to give specific and precise examples as well as suggest that generosity can be exercised in today's world too.

Some better responses talked about how people have become more selfish and their needs and desires have increased to such an extent that they hardly find any time or resources to help others. Others argued that the Prophet (pbuh) was the perfect human; it is not possible for ordinary people to be able to imitate his character fully.

Question 4

- (a) This question was the least popular one amongst optional questions. Few candidates attempted it, a large majority of which did not understand the demands of the question hence could hardly go beyond Level 2. The question clearly had several words and phrases such as, 'referring to the Treaty of Madina,' 'non-Muslims,' and 'when the Prophet (pbuh) first arrived,' which clearly showed that the responses needed to talk about the relationship between the Prophet (pbuh) and non-Muslims, in the initial years of migration. Some responses wrongly talked about Aws and Khazraj and the brotherhood created between 'Helpers' and 'Migrants' who were Muslims, others started mentioning hypocrites who were not classed as non-Muslims despite their hypocrisy towards Islam. Several responses covered the whole life in Madina and talked about how Jewish tribes betrayed Muslims and were punished subsequently, which was not very relevant.

Only some candidates were able to mention the Treaty of Madina and talk about Jews living in Madina but were very brief. Responses should have referred to the Treaty of Madina and kept the focus on how all Muslims and non-Muslims got together to form a community that was ready to co-operate in defending itself against any external aggression and guaranteed religious freedom to its members.

- (b) Some very thoughtful responses talked about how minorities living in a society should be given equal opportunities and religious and social freedoms, in response to this question, but most of

them made some simplistic statements about being nice to others, being kind and helping those living around you. The candidates could get higher marks by mentioning modern multi-cultural and multi religious societies that offer rights and liberties to all their citizens including religious freedom. Examples from candidates' own societies could have taken their answers to the highest levels.

Question 5

- (a) This was a popular choice amongst the candidates. Basic facts such as two groups of migrants, leaving Makkah to migrate to Abyssinia, Quraysh attempts to bring them back via their envoys, being sent to the court of King Ashamah (the Negus), the speech made by J'afar in Ashamar's court and the King's refusal to send Muslims back, were common to all the responses. Stronger responses went into considerable details, stating precise details about the number of delegates, mentioning specific names and quoting the Prophet's words about 'Uthman and Ruqayya, narrating the incident at Ka'aba that spread the false news of Makkan's conversion, forcing some migrants to come back and most importantly quoting extracts from the speech made by J'afar in the court of Negus and his response too. It was the depth and detail that took answers to the top marks in Level 4.
- (b) Better transport facilities, cumbersome diplomatic and administrative measures, economic or social causes of migration rather than religious, were some of the points which some candidates thought made today's migration different. Those who disagreed argued that circumstances have changed but even today people are oppressed due to their religious beliefs and forced to flee their land to take refuge elsewhere hence making both migrations similar, such responses also gave examples such as Syrian and Rohingya migrants. Some good reasoning was presented on both sides of the argument.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 1

Key messages

Read questions carefully, underline key words to understand the focus and the context of questions.

Pay attention to the marks allocated to each question to decide which one requires longer answer; reserve more time for questions needing extended answers.

Avoid long and unnecessary background or introduction.

Do not waste time on discussing implication or aftermath of an event in **(a)** parts of questions where focus should solely be on description of main events.

General comments

Candidates' answers were high-quality and demonstrated a good depth of knowledge, the right chronological order with authentic and relevant quotes along with detailed information about historical events, personalities, names, dates and, in some cases, original extracts of conversation.

It was pleasing to see many candidates showing an understanding of the questions' demands, offering thoughtful consideration and presenting their own judgement supported by some reasoning and evidence, in **(b)** parts of questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Some good answers were seen in response to this question, clearly indicating the set each passage belonged to, identifying themes therein followed by some development and where possible supported with a quote from the Qur'an. Passage (i) and (ii) were more popular, better candidates selected the themes of God being, 'Badi', knowledgeable and having sublime nature and then went on to explain these themes in passage (i) while in passage (ii), more successful candidates focused on God's ownership, greatness and mercy. Passage (iii) was least popular; those who did attempt it brought out the themes of God granting His blessings to His chosen people, bestowing knowledge and assisting them in times of trials and tribulations.

On the contrary, those who were not successful either confused the passages or merely paraphrased or tried to identify all the themes, hence kept going from one to the other theme without any development or elaboration. Another common occurrence was discussing some general themes such as 'Tauheed' and God's worship which are common to almost all the passages hence making no attempt to point out and elaborate any specific theme. Some candidates provided the complete story of the Prophet Adam in passage (iii) without highlighting underlying concepts or ideas.

- (b)** There were some strong responses which showed how the themes mentioned in part (a) have an impact on the lives of Muslims. Such answers talked about Muslims becoming more conscious of their acts, looking up to God in times of hardship, and having faith in God's help and assistance.

Conversely, those who did not do well gave the same general answers saying that Muslims need to believe in God and worship Him and not set any partners with Him. This was for every passage.

Candidates, in large numbers, started off responses with the phrase, 'This passage teaches Muslims...', and then described all the themes again; such descriptive responses could only go into Level 1 because of the basic nature of it.

Question 2

- (a) There were many detailed answers to this question which asked the candidates to describe the events of first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Some excellent answers were not only able to narrate all the events in detail but also quoted actual conversation between the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Khadija and Warqa bin Naufal from historical records. Most of the responses gave a brief background, described the encounter the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had with Gabriel in Cave Hira, quoting Sura Aalaq, followed by the summary of the Prophet's conversation with Khadija and Warqa. This achieved marks in level 3.

Giving excessive background information, narrating events of subsequent revelations or giving details of the Prophet's experience of receiving revelations, not relevant to the question asked, were some common mistakes. Other reasons for lower marks included inaccuracies and lack of details.

- (b) Most of the candidates found this question challenging. Candidates were asked to tell how the Prophet (pbuh) being 'Ummi' was significant for Muslims. Better candidates talked about how it proved that the Qur'an was revealed by God Himself and not created by the Prophet (pbuh) and that it showed Muslims that God was the Prophet's teacher Himself. Some, more thoughtful, responses discussed how it provided an opportunity for the Prophet (pbuh) to dictate revealed verses to his scribes, ensuring oral and written preservation of the Qur'an.

A large number of candidates talked about reasons for the Prophet (pbuh) not being able to read or write, without tying into the question itself. There were two contradictory claims made by candidates, some believed that it showed that being educated was not that significant in Islam while others were of the opinion that it reflected on the importance of education in Islam, however, both sides could not substantiate their claims with any strong arguments or evidence.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question and was generally answered well. Almost all the candidates attempting this question wrote about the background, preparation for umrah, arrival of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions at Makkah, refusal of Quraysh to allow access, exchange of envoys, Bait e Ridwan, treaty terms and brief reaction to the treaty hence easily reaching Level 3. Those achieving higher marks also talked about minute details of preparation, quoted actual conversation between the Prophet (pbuh) and the Quraysh envoys, the incident of disagreements over wording of treaty, the Abu Jandal affair and the disappointment in the Muslim camp over the treaty provisions. Excellent responses also quoted Qur'anic Verses regarding Bait e Ridwan and Sura Fath, prophesying a Muslim triumph.

Candidates' vague details and a lack of knowledge restricted some responses to Level 2 in this question.

- (b) There were some excellent answers demonstrating how signing the treaty enabled the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions to expand Islam to far off areas, prevent bloodshed and concentrate on stabilising the internal situation in Medina. Some candidates also argued how the terms of the treaty ultimately led to the Conquest of Makkah. It was very pleasing to see candidates demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised in the question and present their informed judgements and support them with strong evidence. For example, that of new converts occupying key locations along the trade routes to disrupt Quraysh trade caravans, taking benefits of the term in the treaty that Makkans who accepted Islam were not to be allowed in Madina. Those who did not achieve higher levels, clearly lacked understanding, indicated by some simplistic and vague statements such as the claims about the treaty proving beneficial or not beneficial without giving any solid reason for why they thought so.

Question 4

- (a) This question was, by far the most popular optional question. Most of the candidates knew basic facts about the cause of the first battle in Islam, the Battle of Badr. Good responses also included

information about numerical strength of the warring sides, deployment of troops, stages of war and the casualties and treatment of prisoners of war. The responses that achieved higher marks in Level 4 had the most accurate information, giving details of how both contingents moved towards the battle ground and occupied key locations. The prayers made by the Prophet (pbuh) and God's reply and the assistance offered, as mentioned in the Qur'an were also quoted. Precise names of participants of initial dual and those captured or killed in the war also took responses to the highest marks in Level 4.

Weaker responses had inaccuracies; some candidates penalised themselves by spending too much time on giving excessive details about the background of the war, particularly narrating the Nakhla incident in too much detail whereby losing precious time that could have been spent on the narration of actual battle events, while others gave imprecise details of the battle. Some responses confused the Battle of Badr with other battles.

- (b) Many thoughtful responses talked about several benefits of winning this battle including strengthening and renewal of belief in God in times of need, recognition of Muslims as a force to be reckoned with, establishment of Medina as a centre of Islam and spoils of war as a boost to the Muslim economy. Other responses talked about this victory being the first for Muslims. Many exaggerated the benefits of winning this battle and talked about elimination of Makkah's power or establishment of Muslim influence all over Arabia, which were not factually very accurate, resulting in such responses being judged as satisfactory and placed in Level 2.

Question 5

- (a) This question was the least popular. Those who did well demonstrated extensive knowledge about 'Uthman and 'Ali, starting from their early lives, conversions to Islam, life in Makkah, followed by details of their migration to Medina, roles played by them in social and military spheres along with their relationship with the Prophet (pbuh), quoting the Prophet's words praising both of them on several occasions. They specifically pointed out the role played by 'Ali in several wars and at the time of the Prophet's death and 'Uthman's financial contributions to early Islamic society.

On the contrary, those who did not do well either talked about 'Uthman and 'Ali's marriages to the Prophet's daughters only, or narrated events from the lives of these personalities as Caliphs, outside 'the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh), which were not relevant to this question.

- (b) Most of the candidates misinterpreted this question and either talked about good things people should do in general or gave general comments about 'Ali's life such as, that we should be brave in our life. Candidates who answered more successfully were able to say that age should not be a barrier in how one stands up and serves in the community.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/13
Paper 1

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- (b)** This question was answered well by many who talked about how these themes create a sense of gratitude in humans, making them responsible towards nature and God-given resources. Some also discussed how the message (ii) creates a sense of responsibility, accountability and fear, stopping one from doing wrong, at the same time creating a sense of justice that none of our good deeds will go to waste while passage (iii) creates a strong belief in God's support and strengthens Muslims' belief in Prophets.

Responses that made simplistic statements about what Muslims should or should not do or repeated the themes, were restricted to lower levels.

Question 2

- (a) Almost all the candidates answering this question talked about how the Qur'an is the basis of legal thinking in Islam and how it is supported by Hadith. Candidates also gave examples of prayer, followed by an explanation of what ijma' and qiyas is and how jurists resort to these sources in case not enough information is found in the Qur'an and Hadith. Excellent responses discussed other dimensions of the relationship between the four primary sources supported by strong examples, such as rules regarding marriage to grandmother and granddaughter are prohibited through ijma', based on Qur'anic legislation or that of intoxicants and nail varnish that are declared unlawful by qiyas, based on Hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh).

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Some better responses talked about how people have become more selfish and their needs and desires have increased to such an extent that they hardly find any time or resources to help others. Others argued that the Prophet (pbuh) was the perfect human; it is not possible for ordinary people to be able to imitate his character fully.

Question 4

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them made some simplistic statements about being nice to others, being kind and helping those living around you. The candidates could get higher marks by mentioning modern multi-cultural and multi religious societies that offer rights and liberties to all their citizens including religious freedom. Examples from candidates' own societies could have taken their answers to the highest levels.

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ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 2

Key messages

Answer the question that is asked.

Apply knowledge of Hadiths to modern life and give examples.

Take an appropriate amount of time on each question. Spend longer on writing answers that gain more marks.

General comments

There were some very good examples of quite specific knowledge in many answers. This demonstrated good engagement with the topic. Many responses showed development even if, in some cases, it concerned only one part of an answer. Candidates clearly have the skills to do well and in most cases it was the level of knowledge that discriminated within levels.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

For **part (a)** candidates showed a good understanding of the teachings of the Hadiths. Hadith 1 and 2 were the most popular with the candidates. Very few candidates attempted to answer Hadith 4. In the answer for Hadith 2, candidates could say that to strive in the way of God or to live according to the teachings given by God and His Prophet (pbuh) could be seen as fulfilling the Pillars of Islam.

Part (b) answers need to focus on how the teachings given in **part (a)** can be put into practise by Muslims. In response to Hadith 1 candidates wrote that Muslims could practise this Hadith by staying away from what is forbidden. Development of what is forbidden helped the answers. Developed responses gave quotations from the relevant Hadiths. Hadith 3 focused on how mercy should be shown in all business transactions. To illustrate this, candidates gave examples of the Prophet (pbuh) and Companions conducting business or trade. Most candidates focused their responses on present day business or trade transactions and were duly credited.

Question 2

This Question asked the candidates to refer to the set Hadiths they had studied. These Hadiths teach Muslims about their individual conduct. The focus of the answer needed to be Hadiths specifically related to individual conduct. Some of the Hadiths candidates could have written about in their answer were 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13. Responses showed a degree of overlap between individual and community benefit, which was expected.

Despite the clear instruction in the question to refer to the set Hadiths, some candidates referred to other well-known Hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh). It is very important for candidates to read the question carefully and respond to it keeping in mind the requirement to use particular Hadiths. Strong responses said the Prophet's teachings in a particular Hadith gave Muslims a code of conduct to live by. For example, Hadith 8 states that Muslims should strive in God's way and to live life based on the code prescribed by God so he/she may be counted amongst the martyrs when death comes to them. Weaker responses quoted from a Hadith or paraphrased it without development.

Good responses from **part (b)** referred to how unity and brotherhood improved in the community when the Prophet's teachings were followed. Examples were drawn from modern life to show application of knowledge.

Question 3

Strong responses referred to all or most of Abu Bakr's achievements and gave an even account of them. Weaker responses focused on one or two with not much detail. Several candidates wrote a detailed account of the four false prophets Abu Bakr fought against and developed this by referencing the way he dealt with tribes who refused to pay *zakat*.

Strong responses included an account of his administration. They included how he established a truly democratic state; how he referred to the *Majlis e Shura*; united the *umma* and fought the *ridda* wars. The account of false prophets and the fight against tribes who refused to pay *zakat* were an important part of the answer but should not have been the sole focus.

A good response to **part (b)** included the selection of one achievement of Abu Bakr's while caliph. For example, one candidate wrote about the *Pillar of zakat* as his greatest achievement and supported their choice by saying what could have happened if he had not upheld it: the faith would have been corrupted and different tribes would have demanded exemption from other Pillars. All **Part (b)** answers are evaluative and need to be supported with reasons.

Question 4

Strong responses in **part (a)** included any three of the four given elements of the annual pilgrimage and described them in detail. For example, strong responses said that *ihram* is a state of ritual purity; that a pilgrim would cleanse him/herself before donning the *ihram*; the *ihram's* restrictions; what the *ihram* for men and women is; when does a pilgrim get out of *ihram*. The other elements would need to be described in similar detail to be considered a strong response.

Another example is when writing about *Rami* strong responses gave the dates in which it is carried out; the order in which the *jamarat* are stoned; what is recited and how many pebbles are thrown. Strong responses had good detail and developed points with it.

Very good responses in **part (b)** stated that when Muslims strove to touch the *Hajr al Aswad* they are identifying with the monotheistic faith of Ibrahim and following the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). This showed excellent knowledge.

Question 5

Strong responses in **part (a)** included detail about the opposition 'Ali faced on becoming caliph and a descriptive account of the Battle of Camel.

Several responses gave an unnecessary account of the Battle of Siffin. These responses referred to the opposition of *Mu'awiya* in the answer as this was a challenge faced by Ali, this led them to write about the second civil war of Islam. It is important to focus on the question and to direct the response to what is being asked.

Part (b) concerned the greatest threat that Ali faced. Many responses were able to identify one out of the many threats he faced. Strong responses took one threat and developed it.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 2

Key Messages

Answer the question that is asked.

Apply knowledge of Hadiths to modern life and give examples.

Take an appropriate amount of time on each question. Spend longer on writing answers that gain more marks.

General Comments

There were some very good examples of quite specific knowledge in many answers. This demonstrated good engagement with the topic. Many responses showed development even if, in some cases, it concerned only one part of an answer. Candidates clearly have the skills to do well and in most cases it was the level of knowledge that discriminated within levels.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were some thoughtful responses for Hadith 1 and 4 in **Part (a)**. These Hadiths were dealt with very well as many responses described the teachings within them successfully. Hadith 1 teaches us that a Muslim's actions stem from their belief and many responses referred to this. Strong responses for Hadith 3 expressed that the Hadith's teachings broadened the concept of martyrdom to include all who die living righteously.

Strong answers in **Part (b)** expressed the teachings in the chosen Hadiths and demonstrated their knowledge with good examples from the present day and from the times of the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions. For example, supporting orphanages and giving emotional support to orphans or donating to charities. Strong responses developed the story of the Ansars who helped fellow believers from Makkah who had emigrated to Madina. The group had left everything behind and links were made with the present day situation of Muslims who should support fellow Muslims in Kashmir or Myanmar. This demonstrated the practical implementation of Hadith 4.

Question 2

The strongest responses in **Part (a)** recognised what both the Musnad and Musannaf collections were and knew the difference between them. Weak responses found this very challenging. These responses highlighted that many candidates did not know what these collections were and wrote irrelevant answers or anything and everything they knew about Hadiths.

Many responses confused Musnad for Musannaf and vice versa throughout their answer although they had the content correct. In such cases marks were awarded appropriately.

An allowance was made if candidates made the same mistake in **Part (b)** so they were not penalised for it twice.

Question 3

Strong responses in **Part (a)** recognised that this answer required knowledge about the election of Abu Bakr as the first caliph **and** the action he took against any two of the four false prophets. Many candidates did this.

Stronger responses wrote about the events leading up to his election in detail. All correct information about any of the four false prophets was credited with the strongest responses showing detailed knowledge of two.

Responses that wrote an account of all four false prophets penalised themselves through spending time unnecessarily.

Strong responses in **Part (b)** clearly highlighted the most serious danger faced by Abu Bakr during his caliphate and gave reasons for their choice. Weaker responses wrote about more than one serious challenge faced by Abu Bakr. Candidates should be encouraged to spend time thinking about their choice to give them more time to write an evaluative response rather than writing more than the question is asking them to.

Question 4

In **Part (a)** strong responses contained information about the conditions a Muslim fulfils before starting prayer e.g. intention, purity, sattu, qibla etc. and developed these conditions. For example, when writing about purity, wudu, ghusal, tayammum were all referred to. Even stronger responses elaborated on how and when they are done and required.

Many candidates wrote well for the first part but for importance of prayer the responses lacked detail. One example given of brotherhood being established by performing salat in a mosque is not incorrect but there are other more relevant individual benefits of performing salat. For example, it keeps Muslims humble and it is a constant reminder to Muslims about their Creator etc.

This was a popular and well answered question.

Part (b) was also well answered by candidates. Many responses were able to give examples as to why prayer is important.

Question 5

In **Part (a)** good responses recognised the need to write a descriptive account of zakat and state who is liable to pay it and who it can be paid to. All three aspects of the question were addressed. What is zakat and its importance, what is nisab and the way it is calculated and the list of people it can be paid to were all included in strong responses. Many candidates who answered this question went on to write about who zakat cannot be given to which was not needed.

Strong responses in **Part (b)** wrote about the importance of zakat in Muslim society. Weaker responses highlighted the importance of zakat to the individual. It is critical to read the question and understand it before starting the answer in order to reduce time spent on writing unnecessary information.