

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

International GCSE Urdu (4UR0)
Paper 01

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General Introduction

The standard, quality and overall linguistic demand of this paper was similar to previous years and appropriate to the level of this International examination. The topics chosen were interesting and informative for most candidates. Both English and Urdu text passages in the paper were very accessible and easy to understand. However, candidates needed to grasp precisely the focus of what was being asked in the composition questions. This provided a niche for differentiation between the performances of candidates.

Question 1

This question consists of five sentences for translation from English to Urdu. In 1a, the word 'excited' received a variety of translations, such as 'impatient', 'uncomfortable', 'worried' or 'surprised', however they were not accepted as they did not convey the correct message for 'excited'. In 1b, some candidates did not convey the translation of the word 'argument' correctly; instead, they translated it as 'fight', 'quarrel', which did not receive any marks. For 1c, most candidates answered correctly; however, a few answered incorrectly. In 1d, the word 'matter' was easy to understand but some candidates could not write it correctly in Urdu. In the case of 1e, it seemed as though many candidates did not read and grasp the message correctly before translating it, hence made serious mistakes when translating.

Question 2a

Question 2a consists of an English text for translation into Urdu and held 15 marks. The title of this passage was 'Magic Breakfast'. Most candidates translated it very well. However, some key words in the English text caused difficulty e.g. 'healthy and 'nutritious', 'primary school', 'poor areas', 'left-over's', 'lentils', 'scrap of chicken', 'if at all', 'tired and irritable', 'restless and unable to concentrate'.

Question 2b

Question 2b consists of a short English passage for translation into Urdu and contained 10 marks. The title of this passage was 'Solar electricity'. Generally, it was translated very well by the majority of the candidates, however, the key words and phrases which caused a bit of difficulty for some were: 'encouraged', 'install', 'solar energy system', 'sell back', 'dependent on the size of your roof and your location', 'earn', 'tax free'.

Question 3a

Question 3a consists of an Urdu text for translation into English and contained 15 marks. The title of this passage was 'British weather'. Most candidates translated it very well. However, some key words in the Urdu text caused difficulty for some candidates: 'Previous year', '-18 degrees', 'southern European country Greece', 'western Scotland', 'southern areas of England', 'covered with snow', 'Kent'. Ironically, a good number of

candidates could not see the difference between '-18 degree and 18 degrees' in temperature. Similar mistakes were seen in the transliterating of 'Unaan' instead of writing 'Greece' and also incorrect translations for western and southern directions.

Question 3b

Question 3b consists of a short Urdu passage for translation into English and contained 10 marks. The title of this passage was 'Gardening'. Although it was translated very well by the majority of the candidates, some of the key words which caused difficulty for certain candidates were: 'spring season', 'flower bed', 'favourite vegetables and flowers' (not fruits) and 'pleasant thing'.

Question 4a

Question 4a's topic for essay writing was on 'Do we really mean and do what we say?' to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. This topic brought some good pieces of Urdu composition. The majority of the candidates who attempted it did very well in conveying their thoughts and arguments in a balanced way.

Question 4b

The topic 4b for writing an essay was on 'How do I see the future of my generation?' to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. The majority candidates attempted it very well. Their coverage mainly included the high-tech facilities available to most youngsters these days and the fact that their lesser outdoor activities have resulted in them getting obese and lazy in their lifestyle.

Question 4c

The topic 4c for writing an essay was on 'How did my country react to the cricket semi final?' to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. Some candidates attempted it very well. However a number of candidates misunderstood the focus of the topic and continued writing tangential and unnecessary details which consumed up the 250 words limit.

Question 4d

The topic 4d for writing an informal letter was on 'Your friend has invited you to his only sister's wedding. You feel rather uncomfortable with the lavishness and the level of expense being incurred and do not feel like attending. Write a letter apologising for not being able to attend giving your sincere reasons' to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. Many candidates attempted it very well keeping the specific focus in mind. However, a number of candidates did not realise the focus of the topic and continued writing details which were not required for the topic eg their own 'financial difficulties', 'illness in the family', 'on-going exams' etc. Only a handful of candidates read and understood the main focus of the stimulus and answered accordingly, thereby gaining very high marks or almost full marks. The aim of the question was to talk about the 'lavishness of the expense during friend's only sister's wedding'.

Paper Summary

The overall performance by the candidates was good. However, there are few areas for improvement. In English to Urdu translations weakness in writing good quality Urdu was evident. There were issues in writing directions, use of appropriate tenses and plurals, and a general lack of good quality vocabulary including spelling errors in generally known words and phrases. Teachers are advised to look at these areas when preparing their candidates for the exam. Many candidates continued to write numbers incorrectly in Urdu. Candidates should note that numbers written in English style are acceptable.

The quality of performance in Urdu to English translations has improved. However, some candidates skipped certain words and phrases or wrote them as transliteration in their translation. This should be avoided.

Centres should also ensure that candidates understand how important it is to respond to the rubric. They must focus their response on what has been asked in the question specifically for gaining high marks, rather than writing their own version.

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