

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Urdu (4UR0) Paper 01

Written Paper

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Introduction

The topics used in the paper were relevant, interesting, informative and easily accessible for the majority of the candidates. Most of the candidates attempted the paper very well. Generally, the exam was very successful and appropriate for the set ability of the age group.

The overall performance of the candidates was good. The Urdu to English translation question was well answered, while English to Urdu translations have also shown some improvement this year as compared to previous years. It seems that Urdu script writing is now being tackled at schools. Candidates with good Urdu writing skills still appear to lack in their English composition skills and vice versa.

Question 1:

In question 1, where the candidates were required to translate 5 sentences in Urdu, most of the candidates managed it well to do accurate and precise translation into Urdu. The sentences were interesting and frequently used in everyday life. Candidates with good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary performed very well and achieved full marks.

In question 1(a) a number of candidates translated the phrase 'thank you again' as 'shopping again'. In case of 1(b) the phrase 'not born but trained' caused little difficulty for some candidates. In case of 1(c) 'Swat valley' and 'really exciting' brought a variety of translations which were not appropriate. The majority of candidates tackled well question 1(d). In case of 1(e) some candidates did stumble on the phrase 'eagerly looking'. In addition, one or two candidates did not write their answers in Urdu.

Question 2:

In question 2, instead of two different passages for translation as in previous years only one passage was given this year containing a total of 25 marks. It was interesting, informative and translated very well by many candidates but only those who tackled it very well achieved good marks. The phrases like 'cosmopolitan city'; 'authentic dishes'; 'Japanese tourists'; 'Russians'; and 'high ceilings and doorways' caused some difficulty to less able candidates. Still many translations were of very good standard.

Question 3:

In question 3, only one piece of translation was required this year for a total of 25 marks instead of two translation pieces given in the previous years.

The passage 3 was about seasonal change. Examiners really enjoyed reading the answers, as there were many variations in vocabulary used. Most candidates were able to grasp the question and translated the basic idea comfortably.

In Question 3, many candidates were mainly translating the passage, including their own interpretations which were not relevant قدرتی (natural); 'بسنت کاتہوار اور میلہ مویشیاں' (Basant festival and Horse & Cattle Show); 'زرد اور پیلے رنگ' (orange and yellow); 'نہر' (canal).

Question 4:

In case of Question 4, there seemed to be a fairly equal distribution of the candidates attempting one of the three offered tasks for essay writing. Question 4(a) was about 'participating in a school activity' and was attempted by many candidates. Question 4(b) was about 'why education is essential for poor children' which was also attempted by a good number of candidates. Question 4(c) was about 'the role of media,' and it was attempted by fewer candidates. Similar to previous years only a few candidates chose to write on one of the essay topics as compared to those who went for writing a letter. Those who tackled it have shown good vocabulary and some awareness of idioms.

The ability to plan and present a balanced essay on one of the three questions, with an introduction, reasoning and a conclusion whilst demonstrating good use of Urdu language was evident from the majority of essays.

In case of letter writing, most candidates had more or less similar content due to the nature of the situation described in the task, i.e. describing their reasons for not being able to go to France. However, many candidates managed to show their good creative writing skills to justify gaining high marks. The majority of students used the usual format of letter writing. The quality of language and accuracy however, varied a lot and candidates scored marks accordingly.

Paper Summary

The overall performance of the candidates was good. This qualification is not Urdu as a Second Language. Therefore, there are certain expectations at this level of examination. Keeping that in mind, there are some areas for improvement for candidates to achieve higher marks.

In English to Urdu translations, there were some issues with quality of the Urdu language was evident. There were serious issues in writing names of cities, dates and times, directions, colours, use of appropriate tenses and plurals, and a general lack of variety in vocabulary. There were many spelling errors in writing commonly known words and phrases.

Teachers should carefully look at these things when preparing their students for this examination to help them score higher marks. Some candidates continued to have difficulty in writing numbers in Urdu. Candidates are reminded that the numbers written in English digits are perfectly acceptable in this examination.

The quality of performance in Urdu to English translations was better. However, some candidates continued to skip certain words and phrases or transliterated them during translation. As examiners read all responses carefully, such things were found easily. This practice must be avoided at this level of examination.

Teachers from all centres must ensure that their students understand the importance of responding to the rubric. They must focus their response precisely and accurately on what is specifically being asked in the question to gain high marks, rather than writing their own interpretation.

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