

URDU

Paper 8686/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The majority of candidates performed well in most parts of the paper and candidates responded well to the topic of the two passages.

There were many candidates who used their time and skill appropriately and gained excellent marks, yet quite a few candidates lagged behind due to poor organisation and use of time. Some candidates spent too much time on the reading comprehension questions (in particular **Section 1, Question 3**) providing unnecessarily lengthy answers, and didn't leave themselves enough time for the writing task (**Question 5**).

The other factor affecting candidates' marks was use of language. There were many incidents of poor spelling and grammar as well as examples of candidates simply copying answers from the texts thereby not demonstrating their own language capabilities. Some words containing similar sounding letters were spelt incorrectly, e.g. words with *zaud*, *zey* and *zaal*. The word *bilkul* was spelt wrongly by most candidates.

A number of candidates wrote their own ideas in response to the comprehension questions rather than finding their answers from the passages. Such responses do not gain marks because they do not understand the texts.

Detailed comments on responses to specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This question was handled well by most candidates. In a few cases marks were lost for the use of different words/forms, for example, *sharait* for *sharat*. Similarly ambiguous sentences and incorrect use of words did not score marks.

Question 2

This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. In a few cases candidates did not recognise the task in which they have to match the given phrase exactly with a phrase found in the body of the text. They either made a phrase up which had an equivalent meaning or chose an incorrect phrase from the text. Neither of these responses gained a mark.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates gained full marks for this question.
- (b) There were mixed responses to this question from candidates as some gave their own positive points of view instead of the negative effects of complete freedom of speech mentioned in the text. As a result, many candidates lost marks.
- (e) This part was handled well by most candidates who gained two or three marks.
- (d) On the whole candidates did justice to this part of question as they were invited to give their own opinion on the situation. Nearly all of them gained full marks.
- (e) This question sought candidates' opinions about the possibility of complete freedom of speech and on the whole it was extremely well answered.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates.
- (b) Nearly all candidates gained two out of three marks. Only a few candidates mentioned the point about people becoming more educated.
- (c) The word power, *taaqaat*, was frequently misinterpreted here. The majority government was mistaken for the majority of people against the government. This resulted in contradictory statements from candidates. Again there were a number of candidates who simply wrote their own opinions about people being powerful and therefore lost marks.
- (d) The majority of candidates gave excellent responses. A few lifted their answer from the text completely and therefore language marks were affected.
- (e) This question seeks information about candidates' own points of view. Most wrote about how freedom of speech can be secured and/or protected in their country. Many candidates came up with good, relevant ideas and gained three to four marks while some merely wrote a general opinion and lost marks.

Question 5

There are two parts to this question which are marked separately. A few candidates considered this as one task and included both questions in one piece of writing. Where there was clear indication of a response to both parts, marks were awarded separately; where this was not evident, candidates lost marks.

- (a) This part was done extremely well by most candidates. Some candidates provided only simple comparison notes on the two texts, whereas others presented a more developed piece of writing containing similarities, contrast and review and so gained good marks. A number of candidates spent a lot of time on part (a) and missed part (b) altogether.
- (b) In this part candidates were asked to describe their own experience regarding freedom of expression. On the whole this part was answered poorly. Some just wrote their own point of view and general ideas and were credited in a minimal way. Candidates who wrote about their own relevant experiences tended to gain full marks.

URDU

Paper 8686/03

Essay

GENERAL:

This paper is designed to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one 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 accurate 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 topics this year were:

1 '**nasli fasla**' 'Generation gap'

'nawjavanon awr buzurgon ke kheyalat kabhi ek dusre se ham ahang nahin ho sakte'
'The ideas of young and old can never be in harmony.'

2 '**zarai – e – iblagh**' 'Media'

'dur –e – jadid men radio matruk hota jar aha hai'
'In the modern age radio is becoming obsolete.'

3 '**ta'leem**' 'Education'

'ta'leem syrf darsghahon tak mahdud nahin honi cahiye'
'Education should not be limited to the classroom.'

4 '**taraqi pazir dunya**' 'The developing world'

'aap ke mulk men taraqi men sab se bari rukavat'
'The biggest obstacle to progress in your country.'

5 '**saqafat**' 'Culture'

'mashriqi saqafat par maghribi saqafat ka asar'
'The effect of western culture on eastern culture.'

The wide range of topics allowed most candidates the opportunity to choose one and demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. Of course, at Advanced Level, not only is a high standard of written Urdu expected but it is equally important that candidates 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 are awarded for quality of language and 16 for content, structure and organisation.

Two topics attracted far more candidates than the rest. The most popular were topics 1 and 4:

1 '**nawjavanon awr buzurgon ke kheyalat kabhi ek dusre se ham ahang nahin ho sakte'**

'The ideas of young and old can never be in harmony.'

and

4 ***'aap ke mulk men taraqi men sab se bari rukavat'***
'The biggest obstacle to progress in your country.'

The first topic on the generation gap is always popular and is a subject which is highly pertinent to the lives of the candidates, which is one reason why there were so many very good compositions on this topic. It is easier to produce a good essay if the content is heartfelt. Some essays were passionately written but lacked structure, such as an introduction and conclusion and also lacked balance, seeming to blame all the problems on the older generation. On the other hand, there were some outstanding essays on this topic, the best of which, in addition to being a well structured and balanced in the viewpoints of young and old, were also a joy to read.

The second most popular title, on the developing world, was generally well answered because candidates had some very interesting things to say and strong opinions to express and had clearly thought about the subject in order to produce compositions of the calibre of this year. Once again, it is the fact that candidates have strong feelings on a subject that inject that extra quality into their work.

While many opinions were expressed on the biggest obstacle to progress, it seemed that the majority of candidates put the blame fairly and squarely at the feet of politicians. The biggest failings were letting the passion take over, driving the pen without structure or pause for breath. Some candidates interestingly blamed the people themselves for not taking responsibility for their actions, while some, perhaps predictably, blamed either India or the West. Most striking was the maturity of understanding of the political, social and economic conditions of many candidates.

Most 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:

5 ***'mashriqi saqafat par maghribi saqafat ka asar'***
'The effect of western culture on eastern culture.'

This was reasonably well attempted by the majority of candidates, the quality of most essays being at least good, with a very few very good ones here and there. It is abundantly clear that the current military and political events which have recently occurred in Pakistan in particular have affected candidates strongly as the overwhelming attitude is one of blaming the west for all the countries ills. This clearly a highly sensitive issue and the passion perhaps prevented them from considering that not all of the west's influence has been negative. At this level compositions should contain a degree of balance and consideration if candidates are to achieve the highest grades.

The fourth most popular topic was on education:

3 ***'ta'leem syrf darsgahon tak mahdud nahin honi cahiye'***
'Education should not be limited to the classroom.'

The question raises the issue of education outside the formal confines of school and college and points to education in its broadest sense, from the parental home to the workplace and to life in general. While a good many candidates wrote well on these points some treated 'darsgah' in its restricted sense as a religious school or 'Madrasah' and in doing so limited the scope of their discussion.

A small number of candidates chose to write essays on the general topic heading of 'Education' rather than on the specific essay title. This is classified as a rubric error and consequently is marked to a maximum of 10 marks for content and there is a deduction on the language grid equivalent to one mark band down.

It is necessary to note that this also happened in a few instances in the 'Media' topic, where candidates wrote general essays on the media and not on the title:

2 ***'dur -e - jadid men radio matruk hota jar aha hai'***

'In the modern age radio is becoming obsolete.'

This was the title least attempted by candidates and of those who did tended to write rather simplistic essays which concurred with the title because of the rise of newer media. A few candidates wrote very good essays, however, which were more balanced and which gave radio its due in providing a public service to villages and far-flung regions and recognised the advent of private music stations which are popular among young people.

The best essays in any topic area were those which produced a structured and considered response to the title, with an introduction, several cogent points relating to the title and a concluding paragraph. Linguistically there were few significant errors, with candidates displaying a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences containing dependent clauses, use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom, metaphor and where appropriate relevant quotations.

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. It is the second part of the assessment criteria, on content, planning and organisation, where candidates tend to lose marks.

Candidates should conform to the rubric, which requires them to write concisely on any particular topic. Candidates who write too much are penalised for content and planning because they are unlikely to have reached a concluding paragraph before exceeded the word limit. That being said, very many candidates wrote well-planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.