

URDU LANGUAGE

Paper 8686/02
Reading and Writing

General Comments

The overall standard, quality and linguistic demand of this paper was similar to those of previous years and appropriate for this level. The theme of the passages was about the pros and cons of school uniforms. Candidates needed to read carefully, both the texts and the questions, to respond precisely and concisely.

The passage in **Section 1** was about the benefits and positive aspects of wearing school uniforms, whilst the passage in **Section 2** was about the drawbacks and negative aspects. Most candidates understood the passages very well and answered all the questions fairly accurately.

In **Question 5** the specific requirement was to compare various points of views on school uniforms. The best responses were concise and contained all the relevant points, carefully extracted from the texts and written in accurate, fluent Urdu.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

The words 'shumar' (شمار) and 'muzahira' (مظاہرہ) proved tricky for many candidates to convey their meanings in complete sentences. Some candidates were confused by the word 'muhtat' (محتاج) and tried use its different forms in their sentences. Similarly, some candidates did not know the meaning of some of these words and ended up totally lifting them from the passage and lost marks.

Question 2

The phrases 'waqfiat hoti hey' (واقفیت ہوتی ہے) 'ghair mojudgi kay sabab' (غیر موجودگی کے سبب) and 'ganwa daitay hein' (گنوا دیتے ہیں) were not properly understood by many candidates. Some candidates ended up using these phrases in their own sentences, which was not in the rubric.

Section 1

Question 3

Part (a), was straightforward and did not cause any difficulty for the majority of the candidates as they were easily able to write any two points.

Part (b), was not so well answered by some candidates. These candidates included information in their answers which were not in the text. A number of candidates misunderstood what exactly was being asked.

Part (c), was very straight forward and most candidates answered two points accurately for two marks.

Part (d) was a straightforward question to answer and most candidates tackled it well with three points required out of the passage but some candidates missed one of these points.

Part (h), was again a straightforward question and most candidates answered it accurately. However, some candidates mixed it with answers for part (d).

Part (w), was straightforward again and most candidates answered it accurately giving all three points.

Section 2

Question 4

Part (a) was straightforward and most candidates' answered it very well giving the points required for a complete response.

Part (b) was also very well answered by the majority of the candidates. Most candidates adequately covered two points out of three.

Part (c) was again easy to answer from the given passage. Two points were required for a complete answer. However, some candidates struggled to be precise.

Part (d) was attempted very well by the majority of the candidates. A few candidates wrote their own opinions rather than information given in the passage.

Part (h) required three straightforward points from the text and most candidates were able to answer satisfactorily.

Part (w) was again straightforward to answer from the information provided in the passage.

Question 5

The majority of candidates' responses to **Question 5(a)** included all the relevant information, were written in an appropriate style, and were concise, fluent and accurate.

Generally, there was sufficient material available to extract at least eight to ten points from both passages to cover both 'for' and 'against' arguments.

Question 5(b) did not pose a problem for the majority of the candidates, who were able to access the full range of marks available.

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Paper 8686/03

Essay

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- write a composition on the essay title, **not** the general topic heading
- stay within the prescribed word limits.

GENERAL:

The purpose of this paper is to test candidates' ability to write a composition in Urdu on one of a range of five topics, selected as being relevant to their countries of origin and published in the syllabus. Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. The best candidates were able to develop their chosen topic in accurate Urdu and respond to the stimulus topics in an organised and well-structured way.

There were five given topics, on which candidates were expected to write between 250 and 400 words.

The topics this year were:

Rozmerra ki zindagi (Daily Life)

1. *Jadid zara'l aamad o raft ne logon ko sust bana dia hai – bahs kijiye (Modern means of transport have made people lazy. Discuss.)*

Qanun awr nazm o zibt (Law and Order)

2. *Internet iste'mal karne walon ko qanun ka paabnd keyse banaya ja sakta hai? (How can Internet users be bound by the law?)*

Sahyt awr tandurusti (Health and fitness)

3. *Apni sahyt ka kheyal rakhna har shehri ki zymedari hai- apni rae ka tafsil se izhar kijiye (It is every citizen's responsibility to look after their health. Express your opinion in detail.)*

Rozgar awr berozgari (Employment and unemployment)

4. *Apne mulk ki taraqi ke liye kam karna har shakhs ka farz hai – bahs kijiye (It is the duty of every person to work for the progress of their country. Discuss.)*

Sainsi awr tybbi ijadat (Scientific and medical inventions)

5. *Insani jysm ke masnu'l a'za ka iste'mal fytrat ke khylaf hai- bahys kijiye (In the age of inflation it is unnecessary to spend so much on cultural institutions.)*

This component is marked out of 40, with 24 awarded for quality of language and 16 for content, structure and organisation.

The wide range of topics allowed candidates the opportunity to choose the one that would enable them to demonstrate their linguistic skills in Urdu. The best candidates were able to display a high standard of written Urdu, organise and structure their work, and present their arguments in an interesting way.

This year two topics attracted far more responses, approximately three-quarters of the candidature, than the rest. The first was:

Apni sahyt ka kheyal rakhna har shehri ki zymedari hai- apni rae ka tafsil se izhar kijiye.

It is every citizen's responsibility to look after their health – Express your opinion in detail.

Health is of course of interest to everyone and so it was naturally going to be a popular topic. There were some very good compositions which contained a thoughtful discussion over the rights and responsibilities of people to keep healthy, for not only their own benefit but also for their families, their neighbours and for the wellbeing and social and economic benefit of their country.

Unfortunately, many responses to this topic were somewhat disappointing, with too many compositions which, in effect, were general essays on the topic of health and fitness, which had a paragraph or two inserted in an attempt to show the Examiner that they really were addressing the set title.

At this advanced level, a more mature response is expected than to write about getting up early, eating a good diet and not smoking. These are, of course, part of the story, but they are not addressing the specific title. Examiners are aware that many candidates write essays on the general topic areas as part of their preparation for this examination, but they should bear in mind that it is not sufficient just to insert a paragraph on the topic. Such essays are not going to score high marks for content.

The second most popular title was

Apne mulk ki taraqi ke liye kam karna har shakhs ka farz hai – bahs kijiye

It is the duty of every person to work for the progress of their country. Discuss.

The examining team were not surprised that this topic was very popular: it certainly has a large impact on the lives of the candidates, who are soon going to be entering the jobs market, which is, of course, one reason why so many candidates attempted it.

By and large, this title was reasonably well answered. This title lent itself to a balanced discussion of such points as the fact that we all need to work, but unemployment is a major fact of life for most young people, especially in Pakistan. The best responses focused on the 'duty to help one's country' and conversely, the country's duty to its citizens to provide work, and were able to express their ideas cogently and lucidly. What distinguished the very good from the good, in terms of content, was the ability to express points of view, and also to be able to structure their compositions and their arguments into a coherent essay.

The third most popular topic was:

Jadid zara'l e aamad o raft ne logon ko sust bana dia hai – bahs kijiye

Modern means of transport have made people lazy. Discuss.

While being reasonably well attempted by most of the candidates, there was a tendency to discuss modern technology in general terms, with insufficient content directly related to the specific title, in fact so much so that it appears that a number of candidates misunderstood the term *zara'i e aamad o raft* (means of transport), because they spent a large part of their compositions talking about mobile phones, computers and television, for which the appropriate word would have been *zara'l e mwvasalaat* (means of communication).

Of those who did write on this topic, many concentrated merely on agreeing with the statement in question and gave merely cursory attention to the opposing point of view. At this level, the Examiners expect a

broader discussion of both sides of a topic, perhaps including social, economic and cultural implications in these compositions if candidates are to achieve the highest grades.

The remaining two topics attracted only a small minority of candidates. The first was:

Internet iste'mal karne walon ko qanun ka paabnd keyse banaya ja sakta hai? (How can Internet users be bound by the law?)

While this topic was not as popular as expected, it was satisfactorily answered by most of those who attempted it. Some wrote too much, detailing all the myriad uses of the Internet rather than the illegal activities it sometimes facilitates, and did not spend enough time examining ways of making effective legal restrictions. Candidates who did best were the ones who described some of the illegal activities on the net and went on to develop a coherent argument on the necessity and the practicality of cyber-laws.

The least frequently attempted topic was:

Insani jysm ke masnu'l a'za ka iste'mal fytrat ke khylaf hai- bahys kijiye

The use of artificial body parts is against nature. Discuss.

Few candidates attempted this topic, but most of those who did, performed satisfactorily. There was a tendency for some to address it from a very restricted point of view and give merely cursory attention to any other opinion. At this level, the Examiners expect a broader discussion of both sides of a topic if candidates are to achieve the highest grades.

CONCLUSION

The best essays in any topic area were those which demonstrated a structured and considered response to the title, with an introduction several cogent points relating to the title and a concluding paragraph.

Linguistically, they were almost error free, with a wide range of vocabulary, complex sentences, containing dependent clauses, judicious use of the passive voice, appropriate use of idiom, metaphor and where appropriate relevant quotations.

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. Part of the problem lies in their difficulty conforming to the rubric, which requires candidates to be able to write concisely on any particular topic. Failure to contain the essay within the prescribed word-limit reduces marks for content. This means that candidates who write too much are penalised for content because they are unlikely to reach a concluding paragraph within the limit given.

That being said, very many candidates wrote well-planned and interesting essays in excellent Urdu.