

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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

- read the passages and the questions carefully;
- write concise responses, answering the comprehension and summary questions in their own words as far as possible;
- stay within the prescribed word limits.

General comments

The theme of the passages was the pros and cons of homework which most candidates seemed to engage with very well. The passage in **Section 1** was about the drawbacks and negative aspects homework and included the views of both students and educational experts who do not attach much importance to homework. The passage in **Section 2** was about the benefits and positive aspects of homework. This included the views of students and parents who are in favour of homework although they stress that it should be tailored to the needs of the each student and consist of something more interesting than classwork.

Most candidates understood the passages very well and answered all the questions reasonably accurately. However, some candidates needed to take greater care in reading and understanding the rubric in order to be certain they knew what they were required to do. In **Questions 3** and **4** some candidates needed to respond precisely and appropriately using information from the passages and not their own opinions.

In **Question 5**, candidates were required to compare the various points of view on homework which were presented in the two passages. Many candidates answered correctly and precisely. Other responses did not focus on the opinions in the passage and included statements or facts instead.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were required to write sentences in their own words to show the meaning of the word provided in the question. Some candidates were not able to use the word *maahireen* (ماہرین) correctly and some confused *kaaraamed* (کآرآمد) with the Urdu word *Aamed* (آمد).

Question 2

The majority of candidates answered most of the questions correctly and gave appropriate synonyms for the words on the question paper. However, some candidates supplied antonyms of the given words while others used the words to create their own sentences. Candidates are advised to read the rubric carefully before they start writing their answers.

Some candidates wrote one or more alternative words in their answer. This does not show understanding and if one of the answers provided is incorrect then the mark cannot be awarded.

Question 3

- (a) This was straightforward and did not cause any major difficulty for the majority of the candidates. In weaker responses candidates did not use the information given in the passage and instead gave their own opinion which could not score any marks.
- (b) Many candidates did not answer the question fully and as in **Question 3(a)** some candidates wrote their own point of view instead of conveying the information given in the passage. Only a few candidates wrote all the four points required to score four marks.
- (c) This was a straightforward question and most candidates gave both points accurately for two marks.
- (d) Most candidates understood the question and gave the three points required. Some candidates gave their own opinion.
- (e) This question was not understood well by many candidates and the majority secured two marks out of three.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) This was straightforward and most candidates answered it well writing two points for the two marks. However, some candidates did not appear to fully understand the question and did not answer appropriately.
- (b) This question was very well answered by the majority of the candidates. Most candidates adequately covered all three points required by the mark scheme.
- (c) Most candidates also answered this question very well although some responses did not cover all three points correctly.
- (d) This was a relatively straightforward question but some responses were not complete enough to score full marks. A few candidates wrote their own opinions rather than drawing on the information given in the passage.
- (e) Candidates generally answered this well although some ignored the information given in the passage and wrote their own views and therefore could not score marks.
- (f) Most candidates understood this question well and wrote all the three points required for three marks. Some candidates gave answers here which related to **Question 3(e)** and therefore marks could not be awarded.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates responded to this summary question with confidence. Candidates were asked to summarise the points of view given in the passages in favour and against homework. Some candidates did not write points of view as required by the question, but instead included statements of fact which could not score any marks for Content. Candidates are advised to read the question carefully before starting their answer to ensure they address the specific requirements of the question.
- (b) Candidates are expected to write their opinions and give reasons for those opinions in order to be eligible for the full range of marks available. The majority of candidates addressed this question very well. Most candidates were in favour of homework. However, they emphasised the importance of homework being interesting so that students do not get bored.

Quality of Language

A large majority of candidates demonstrated good use of the language.

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Paper 9686/03
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use Urdu which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

Linguistically, there were some very good answers in which there was an extensive range of vocabulary, expressions, structures and idioms. With regard to content, the better responses clearly demonstrated candidates' understanding of the task and their ability to write a well-organised, relevant and well-structured essay. In other cases, arguments were poorly structured and naïve, often unfocused or irrelevant. Some essays were based on the general topic area rather than the question which had been set. Candidates need to read the questions carefully and answer the question which is asked, not merely write a general essay on the topic area. A short plan outlining the arguments to be used with points for and against the question will help candidates to create a more logical and balanced answer. Almost all candidates observed the rubric concerning the number of words to be used.

Examples of good use of the language included complex sentence structures involving subordinate clauses. For example:

اس کے علاوہ یہ بھی عموماً دیکھنے کو ملا ہے کہ فیشن کے غلام بننے کی وجہ یہ بھی ہے کہ انہوں نے دین سے دوری اختیار کر لی ہے جو کہ مغربی ثقافت کی طرف لے جا رہا ہے۔

and

انٹرنیٹ نے لوگوں کی زندگی آسان کر دی ہے کیونکہ کسی بھی وقت لوگ انٹرنیٹ کے ذریعے خبریں یا معلومات سے آگاہی حاصل کر سکتے ہیں تو ہر بندہ اخبار سے زیادہ انٹرنیٹ کو پسند کرتے ہیں۔

Common errors included:

- Basic spelling errors in simple words, notably those which cause ambiguity, such as *sat* instead of *sath*.
- Errors in agreement in simple verb forms such as *hote hai* instead of *hote hain*.
- Missing *alif madd* on *aap*, *aaj* and *agar*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was one of the more popular questions. While the majority of essays took a position vehemently agreeing with the proposition and condemned their peers who were wasting their time on such trivial matters, the best essays were those which managed to achieve a balance between the positive and negative aspects of fashion.

Overall those who attempted this question performed well in terms of producing relevant and interesting content (irrespective of their language skills). They did not focus on one area of fashion such as clothes but looked more broadly at lifestyle, behaviours such as smoking, drinking and dancing, peer pressure, parental attitudes, social and religious points of view, the role of the media and so on. The vast majority of essays on this topic engaged well with the essay question which had been set and could therefore access the full range of marks for Content.

Question 2

Most essays fully engaged with the question and were therefore able to access the full range of marks for Content.

The main point in this topic was to compare what the newspapers have done for many years (deliver the news and a commentary on it) with what the Internet has brought to this. Some candidates wrote that in countries like Pakistan, where the Internet is available in big cities, people prefer to use it for the latest news and therefore do not buy newspapers, whereas in small towns where the Internet is not available people still buy newspapers. Some essays lost their focus by talking about everything that people use the Internet for, such as sending emails, shopping, getting in touch with friends and relatives, which were largely unrelated to what the question actually asked.

Many of the better essays explained the fact that news coverage on the Internet is what is known as 24/7 whereas most newspapers are issued only every twenty-four hours, so that much of their content has been superseded by events. There were also some quite sophisticated responses, for example, the fact that there was so much news on the Internet which was only comment and opinion and not genuine news, and finding out which was which was not easy.

Question 3

This was the most popular question on the paper but it was not always well answered. In weaker essays there appeared to be a misunderstanding of the question. There was no mention or discussion of some of the key educational processes that are not confined to institutions. Rather too many candidates presented a general picture of acquiring education at institutions such as school, college and university, and ended each paragraph with a repeat of the essay title, but this was not enough to address the question which had been asked. As a consequence, they could not access the full range of marks for Content.

The best answers were those that did discuss the non-institutional processes such as parental involvement, religious instruction in the home, peer-to-peer learning, learning by experience and interaction with other people, the media and so on. Furthermore, many wrote about how education was not just a means of getting a degree and a good job but was important socially, morally and spiritually. The appropriate use of idioms referring to education was a good feature of many essays. These included religious injunctions on the importance of education, such as 'Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China', and others such as 'A mother's lap is a child's first school'.

Question 4

This title was attempted by only a few candidates but many of those who chose it focussed well on the question. Others wrote a more general essay on technology which was usually of little relevance to the actual question set.

The best essays made reference to the range of amazing advances made in medicine by the use of modern technologies, such as transplants, immunisations, gene therapies, and the effects these have had on the lives of the sick. Some also compared what it had been like for many patients in the past (long painful operations followed by long periods of recuperation) with what it is like now. A few candidates balanced their responses with some cautionary remarks on the ethics of some procedures.

Question 5

Many candidates devoted far too many words to enumerating and giving numerous examples of the different types of pollution in their country. This did not leave much room for writing about what the ordinary person can do. Others put forward solutions which were not within the scope of the ordinary citizen, but were the work of governments or industries, such as siting factories away from populated areas.

Better approaches briefly outlined the different types of pollution and then spent the rest of the essay focussing on the question by detailing one or two remedies for each type which individuals could realistically put in place. This included starting campaigns to persuade governments or industries.

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Paper 9686/04
Texts

Key messages

- Before answering the question, candidates must take due care to ensure they understand the focus of the question;
- If answering **Questions 1(a), 2(a) or 3(a)** it is important to provide detailed answers to both parts of the question.

General comments

The paper had two sections of poetry and prose. Candidates who paid attention to the focus of the question generally performed well. Some candidates showed good knowledge of the text but did not answer the question which was being asked. They were too dependent on narrative and memorised oddments.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates gave a good explanation of the *ghazal*. Some simply explained the couplets in their own words and others repeated their answer in **part (ii)** which meant they could not score highly.
- (b) Many candidates who answered this question wrote about Mir Dard's mystic style but could not expand on the focus of the question.

Question 2

- (a) This was quite a popular question in the poetry section. In answering **part (ii)** of the question many candidates either repeated what they had said in **part (i)** or wrote in detail about the life of the poet, which was not required.
- (b) Faiz was a popular choice for many candidates. They wrote a lot about his life and his work. Most of them wrote about Faiz as a romantic and revolutionary poet but very few talked about him as a political poet.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates attempted this question but very few understood the real meaning of the poem. **Part (ii)** of the question was not always very well answered.
- (b) Only a few candidates chose to answer this question. Some of them discussed their choice of poem in quite good detail.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates went for this option and wrote detailed essays which disagreed with the proposition.
- (b) This question was answered by quite a few candidates and they discussed thoroughly the aspect of the novel that impressed them the most.

Question 5

- (a) Most of the answers on this question contained a lengthy narration of the whole story with only a short section about the problems of the rich people at the end. To access the full range of marks, candidates are advised to pay attention to the focus of the question before answering.
- (b) Many of the candidates who chose this question wrote good detailed answers. Others simply mentioned the story behind each *sari*, and therefore could not access the full range of marks.

Question 6

- (a) Those who attempted this question wrote detailed descriptions of the character of Akbar in the drama. Very few, however, discussed his conflict with other characters in the story, as was required by the question.
- (b) Most candidates agreed with the statement in the question. They discussed the characters of Akbar and Dilaram and proved how she managed to manipulate the situation and lead Akbar to make a disastrous decision. Candidates who simply described the characters of Akbar and Dilaram could not score high marks.