

# Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE Urdu (1901)

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# GCSE Urdu 1901

## Examiners' Report

The tasks and the topics in the papers chosen were in accordance with the syllabus. As usual the questions were targeted at each of the possible grades to differentiate candidates across the ability range. The standard achieved by the candidates this year was slightly better than last year.

### 1901 1F LISTENING PAPER - FOUNDATION TIER

This paper tests listening skill appropriate to grades C- G The paper required minimal writing of the target language and candidates had to answer one question by writing 4 to 5 words in Urdu. These answers were marked for communication of the required points from the listening text only, irrespective of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

#### Q 1 - 7

The icons used this year were very clear and posed no problems to the candidates. The majority of the candidates managed to answer these questions without any difficulty. A few did not understand the Urdu words for "butter" and instead ticked the icon for "cheese". It is pleasing to note that Q 7 (telling time) was answered correctly by the majority of candidates, indicating that the teachers are taking notice of the comments made in the Examiner's Report about the teaching of figures and numbers.

#### Q 8 and 9

The questions were about Nadia's activities on a Sunday and the weather forecast in Lahore. Candidates were asked to tick on 3 items for each question. Some candidates got confused between sewing and ironing in Q7. Few candidates could not follow the rubric and put a tick on more than 3 items. Generally these questions were answered correctly by a large number of candidates.

#### Q 10

The question (targeted at C grade) was about Seema's house and candidates were required to fill in information about the house number, rooms and what is at the front of the house. This was the only question in the Foundation Tier where they were supposed to write in Urdu. 2 of the 3 answers were numbers and could have been written in English but some candidates struggled to write the house number "510" and "8" rooms in Urdu numbers or in Urdu words and lost marks.

Although they don't get penalised for spelling, it was disappointing to note that a large number of candidates could not write the word "park" in Urdu. On the other hand, there were some candidates who wrote the Urdu word "bagh" for "park" indicating their good command on Urdu spelling and vocabulary.

#### Q11

This question was targeted at D grade. Although no writing was involved in this question, but a large number of candidates could not get the correct sequencing and either got it partially right or totally wrong and lost marks. It goes without saying that candidates are not being prepared thoroughly to tackle these types of questions.

#### Q12

Also targeted at C grade, this question was about "Eid festival". Quite a large number of candidates answered this question correctly. A few, who could not read the instructions, got it partially or totally wrong.

Q13

Similar layout as Q12, this question was about "exercise". The response was similar to Q12.

Q14

This question was about birthday presents. Words like "sweater, cinema and restaurant" sound almost the same in Urdu and majority of the candidates scored full marks in this question.

Q15-17

These questions were about who is going where? The candidates were required to put a tick against the correct icon. The majority of the candidates managed these questions very well.

Q18-20

Similar layout to the above questions, the topic was job and profession. Generally the candidates scored full marks.

Q21-23

Again, a tick question against the right icon, the topic was personal identification. Some of these questions have been asked in the past papers and candidates did well in almost all questions. There were some Urdu vocabulary problems in identifying a slim and tall girl, and a few candidates misunderstood "dubli patli" as fat and short and ticked on the wrong sketch.

Q 24

This question required the candidates to listen to the information in Urdu about "My favourite Subject" and complete the grid in English about students' favourite subject and their opinion about it. The subjects mentioned were English (example), History, Science Maths and Urdu.

The majority of the candidates had no problems in identifying the right subject. However, some failed to complete the opinion grid correctly as they could not understand the words "olden days and interesting" in Urdu (both words in Urdu have been used and asked in the past papers). A few candidates lost marks because of poor English vocabulary. Some interesting but totally irrelevant opinions about the Science subject were "close to heart, growing subject, talks about body, talks about nature, good to learn about you and body and practical work".

The teachers must target those candidates who either fail to understand the importance of extracting the right information from the listening text or they don't try to listen and pick the key words and write anything which they think is relevant. By and large the performance of candidates for this question was much better than the previous year.

## 1901 1H LISTENING PAPER - HIGHER TIER

### General

The overall performance for this paper was slightly better than last year. The paper proved to be balanced and differentiated well across the range of abilities of the candidates and reflected the appropriate levels for which it was set. As mentioned in the last Examiner's Report, some candidates are still being entered by their centres for the wrong levels and losing on grades they truly deserve.

### Q 1- 3

An overlap from the Foundation tier paper, these questions did not pose any problems in general.

### Q 4

Also an overlap from the Foundation tier, this question proved to be fairly easy for most of the candidates.

### Q 5

Also an overlap from the Foundation tier and targeted at C, this question required a fairly good level of reading ability as well, some got it partially right, while others managed to get full marks.

### Q6

This question tested the candidates' ability to understand the spoken Urdu and fill in the gaps with appropriate Urdu words. Quite a large number of candidates scored some or even full mark. Some failed to select the right word to complete the sentence, while others could not write a single word of Urdu and did not score any marks at all. It was disappointing to note that some candidates at the Higher Tier could not write the correct spelling of the words "went, likes and quickly" in Urdu.

### Q7

Candidates generally did well in this question, which was an overlap from the Foundation tier. However, the problem of trying to write the numbers in Urdu was also seen at the Higher level and some candidates lost marks when they wrote the house number as 015 in Urdu instead of 510.

### Q8

This question was also an overlap from the Foundation tier (similar layout as (Q5) and required reading ability in Urdu. By and large candidates did well and only a few of them did not score any marks.

### Q9

This question involved 5 target language sub-questions and answers about holidays of Safia. A few candidates managed to write the key word and scored some marks, while others with a good writing ability did very well. It was again disappointing to note that at this Higher tiers entry, quite a large number of candidates either spelled incorrectly or could not write the Urdu words for "Lahore, Jeddah, colour and minutes". Again some candidates struggled to write 50 in Urdu and wrote 05 or the word "pachas" in Urdu and lost valuable marks.

#### Q 10

This question tested candidates' ability for sequencing an event after listening to an extract about a picnic at school. Only a few candidates who could follow the events as they took place and also could read the sentences for rearranging, did extremely well and scored full marks. However, quite a large number of candidates could not understand the instructions and lost marks.

#### Q11

The question about five Television programs and proved a little difficult for candidates who could not follow or read the target language rubrics and text. Some candidates answered correctly but put numbers in all six boxes and lost one mark. It is imperative that candidates entered for the higher tier should be able to read and understand the target language instructions.

#### Q12

This question similar to Q10 was about Ali's parents wedding anniversary. Again some candidates had problems with 12a in writing "25 years" in Urdu. There were some very poor spellings for the words "happiness, astonished, tears, flowers, sweets and wrist watch" in Urdu. As the candidates did not get penalised for poor spelling, they managed to score marks, but the fact remains that some of these candidates will be entered for GCE Urdu and must work hard to improve their grammar and spelling.

#### Q 13

The question was about an interview with an artist and required the candidates to answer in English. Most of the candidates answered a, b, e and f correctly. The answer to (a) was "a journalist or news reporter" but some candidates could not understand the Urdu word and wrote irrelevant words like "hostess, travels round the world or a model. For (c) although the question was clear and specific, quite a large number of candidates wrote about the family members and not their interest in music. For (d) some candidates could not write "sur and taal" in English. For (e and f) some irrelevant details were given by those candidates who lifted the whole paragraph from the listening extract rather than the specific details. Teachers are requested to pay attention to these comments and prepare candidates according to the required task for this question.



# Examiners' Report

## General

This is the fifth year in which exam papers have been based upon the new GCSE syllabus. There were approximately 3,000 entries, roughly the same as last year. This year the overall impression gained is that there were few significant problems in the actual conduct of the examinations. There are always some centres where some errors occur but the experienced team of Assessors and Moderators are well equipped to deal with them and to concentrate on the job of giving a fair mark to the candidates' performances. The general impression this year was that the performance of the candidates was not appreciably different from last year.

## 1901 2F SPEAKING PAPER - FOUNDATION TIER

Unlike modern European languages such as French and German only a minority of Urdu candidates (nearly 500 out of some 3000, or about 15%) entered for this component at Foundation level. This is a slight increase, which follows the familiar pattern of candidature which is increasingly second or third generation of candidates whose parents have been born and brought up in the UK. This pattern is quite normal for Urdu as it reflects the ability and the familiarity of the candidature with the language examined.

This Paper is designed to test candidates in the G-C ability range and can be said to have discriminated successfully between these ends of the range. In fact, only a tiny handful of candidates failed to score enough marks to qualify for an F on this component.

As an examiner who wants to see the best results possible for the greatest number of candidates, it is highly disturbing and distressing to note that about a quarter of Foundation Level Oral candidates scored very highly in this (over 40/50 which is well above the standard for the maximum possible grade at foundation, namely a C grade,) and it would have been much better for them to enter for the Higher Tier, so that they can have a chance of reaching a higher grade. It is apparent that some centres blanket enter some candidates for Foundation in all four components of the exam, presumably on the basis of their lack of written skills. It is assumed that if they can't write well they can't get a good grade, which is extremely false way of thinking about language acquisition.

Detailed consideration of specific Rôle-plays are given below:

### Rôle-Play A:

The A Rôle-Plays are designed to test the performance of the lower end G-E of the ability range. The candidates have to perform simple transactions involving shopping. Some required candidates to buy two items from the six pictures provided as stimulus. The candidate had to greet the examiner, buy two items selected from the pictures, ask the price, and say thank you and goodbye. Others required them to buy one item and then state size, colour, etc. The Teacher-Examiner needs to ensure that candidates do all the tasks. Most of them do a difficult job very competently, but we do hear tapes where a candidate has failed to buy two items, or omits to include the necessary phrases. In such cases teacher-examiners should prompt the candidates, using such phrases as: *awr kwch chahiye?* They should not rephrase the sentences; however, as that means the candidate must get fewer marks.

While most candidates have the basic linguistic structures and vocabulary to succeed

at this level one of the main failings of weaker candidates is the use of English words, as in A1, where the candidate has to say which day they are travelling. Quite a few used the English words, such as “Tuesday” whose Urdu equivalent “*mangal*” is not at all obscure or difficult. While such English words are commonly used in Urdu in everyday spoken language, in an exam situation candidates should be expected to use the Urdu words. In a French oral exam ‘tuesday’ would certainly not be acceptable. In such cases it is entirely legitimate for the Teacher-Examiner to ask the candidate “*Urdu mein tuesday ko kya kehte heyñ?*” Although candidates cannot get the maximum marks according to the mark grid, they can get 7 or 8 marks instead of perhaps only 5 or 6 if they were not prompted. The same applies to ‘pears’ “*nashpat*” in A3.

Teacher-Examiners have, in general, conducted these Rôle-Plays well. It needs to be said, however, that candidates’ performances are dependent upon not just the words and appropriate interventions of the Teacher-Examiner but by the tone in which the Rôle-Plays (and the Conversations) are conducted. It is important for the teacher-examiner to read the instructions and guidance given in the handbook for the conduct of the examination. It is necessary to stick as closely as possible to the scenarios given so that every candidate is faced with the same level of task. That being said only a very small minority of candidates who entered the exam at Foundation Level scored less than 6 marks on the A Rôle-Plays. Often this was when candidates were speakers of other languages, like Pushtu or Bangla.

#### Rôle-Play B:

B Rôle-Plays are designed to be taken by crossover candidates and test the mid-range of achievement, E to C.

As in previous years, most of the Rôle-Plays created no major difficulties either for candidates or for Teacher-Examiners. In the B Rôle-Plays the main difficulty for Foundation and weaker Higher Tier candidates was not in interpreting the symbols, which caused little confusion, but not having sufficient Urdu to complete the transactions and the in use of English words for which there are simple everyday Urdu equivalents. There is a Core Vocabulary in the Specification for this exam and candidates should expect to be tested on their knowledge of words included in that list, although not all the words used have to be on the Key Vocabulary list.

As far as English words are concerned, Core Vocabulary words are often words deliberately tested, such as days of the week, times and numbers, especially 1½ and 2½, colours, etc. Several of the B Rôle-Plays contained these vocabulary items.

It may be of use to centres to discuss one or two of the B Rôle-Plays that did produce some difficulties for some candidates:

**B1** Caused very few problems.

**B2** The second utterance in this Rôle-Play caused some problems, mainly due to the fact that weaker candidates used English words for the items pictured. ‘*Topi*’, ‘*muffler*’ and ‘*ghari*’ are all common vocab items and should be known.

**B3** In this Rôle-Play candidates had to buy some chillies, state what kind they wanted and how much. Here the basic vocab items were tested, 1½ and 2½ are expected to be known.

**B4** Set in a Lost Property Office, this presented no problems except for those candidates who could not express “I have lost my case” into Urdu. The third, unpredictable task is another example where the Teacher-Examiner could help weaker candidates get a better mark. The candidate has to say what was in the case.

If the candidate doesn’t give a detailed response, or uses English words, the Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like “*Urdu mein bookaaN ko kya kehte heyñ?*” Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

**B5** Again numbers were tested. Again many candidates could not get them right.

**B6** No real problems here.

**B7** Again, no real problems here.

**B8** Again, no real problems here.

## 1901 2H SPEAKING PAPER - HIGHER TIER

At this level candidates perform one B Rôle-Play and one C Rôle-Play, and then hold a conversation on two topics as in Foundation but with questions involving greater complexity. Over three-quarters of the candidates were entered for Higher Tier and the performance was, on the whole, very good.

There is some evidence that the number of candidates achieving maximum marks has fallen slightly but that is unsurprising as the number of candidates who are second, third or even fourth generation settlers increases and sustained direct contact with the language decreases. That being said Urdu is in the fortunate position of having speakers maintaining strong family and community links and spoken contact via the internet, and watching Urdu channels on Satellite TV helps to keep the spoken language alive.

### Rôle-Play C:

These are designed to test the more able candidates aiming for Grade C and above and are taken only by candidates entered for the Higher Tier. Candidates have to negotiate unpredictable situations using appropriate and accurate language. There are two marking criteria, one for communication and one for accuracy.

The main point in these Rôle-Plays is that candidates need to get information from the stimulus which is in Urdu. Underneath are 5 bullet points in Urdu, two of which are marked with a symbol '!' which indicates to the candidate that they have to respond to an unpredictable question from the Teacher-Examiner. Those who cannot read Urdu cannot know what key points they are expected to communicate. Unfortunately there is not much that we can do about this.

Until two years ago the format for these Role-Plays was very inaccessible and created many problems for teacher-examiner and therefore created them for their candidates. I am happy to report that the revised format has made life much easier for both candidates and examiner.

It is, however, vital that Teacher-examiners take the trouble of reading the handbook, doing some preparation and reading out the introduction given there to get the Rôle-Play at least approximating to a natural dialogue. It is not helped when the Teacher-Examiner takes the part of the candidate leaving them extremely confused or when the Teacher-Examiner does not ask all the questions, or rephrases or splits them up. We all know that the examination is an artificial way of generation language in order to test the candidate, but it is necessary to make it as realistic a situation as possible.

Apart from that, a common problem was incomplete performance. It has been made clear in the guidance notes that the Teacher-Examiner must not rephrase unpredictable questions and must not give away key vocabulary in what they say to the candidates. Quite a few questions are effectively in two parts, as for example, in C5 point 4, where the candidate has to ask for information about the job. If the candidate asks only one piece of information, the teacher should prompt by saying something like "kwch awr puchna hai?" However if the teacher says "tankwah ke bare men" OR "awqat ke bare men?" It is clear that the candidate has effectively been given key words and cannot then achieve more than 5-6 marks.

One particular Rôle-Play was performed remarkably well. In C1, based on witnessing a robbery, candidates had to describe the robber, and invent various facts. This goes to show that where candidates are given the scope to use their imaginations the language use becomes more creative and less constrained by a rigid scripted role-play.

On the other hand what was expected to be a perfectly straightforward role-play, C8 cause no end of odd responses. It seems that the word supervise was unfamiliar to many, because the responses to point 2 "*mujhe kya karna hoga?*" "what do I have to

do?” were extremely odd, to say the least. “Make the food” and “book the hall” were just two of them,

A key point that needs to be made is that, at this level, candidates are expected to give more than one word or one-phrase answers to most of the questions in order to achieve full marks. The Mark criteria clearly states that the candidate must produce extended replies in order to get high marks. The guidance notes provided were sufficiently detailed to enable the Teacher-Examiner to play his or her part successfully; the fact that many did get it right indicates that it can be done.

### Conversation

In this element of the Oral examination candidates are expected to prepare one topic instead of two. The second topic is now selected by the Teacher-Examiner from two alternatives supplied by Edexcel which are written in the Handbook following the B Rôle-Play performed by the candidate. Unfortunately some centres did not follow this instruction.

Some centres had written some very odd and non-standard topics on the L3 forms. My Holiday and My Family or My Favourite Film Star are not set topics and should not be chosen. Please refer to the Specification.

The Foundation and Higher conversations were, by and large, adequately conducted. Most difficulties arose when the types of questions did not let the candidates show their ability. It is vitally important that even the weakest candidates be given questions that test their ability to express Past, Present and Future tenses. This is vital if they are to achieve a C grade. The handbook does contain suitable questions for each topic at both levels but these are not intended to be a list of questions to be worked through from beginning to end. Questions should be tailored to suit the interests and abilities of the candidates and also teachers should pay attention to the candidates' responses and adapt their questions accordingly.

It is recommended that at Foundation Level candidates should be gently eased into their topic with very simple straightforward questions to get them going and that Higher Level candidates should be started off with a few Foundation Level questions to warm them up, rather than going straight in with difficult questions.

Please note that nearly all the questions given in the Handbook are **open-ended** questions, not those requiring yes/no answers, which tell us nothing about the candidates' linguistic ability.

**The second problem was when Teacher-Examiners failed to cover more than one topic.** In such cases, candidates cannot obtain more than half-marks: 15/30.

It has already been noted that the Teacher-Examiner's performance is as important as that of the candidate in an oral examination. A sympathetic and friendly approach is always better than rigid formality. Sometimes an improvement can be achieved simply by avoiding having the microphone too near the examiner and too far from the candidate. Taking an exam is a highly stressful business for both candidate and Teacher-Examiner and every step should be taken to make the candidate feel more relaxed.

As to candidates' performance, it is clear that there is a wide range of ability levels. That being said it is gratifying to note that, unlike in the main European languages; most candidates were entered for the higher level. Assessment of their performance indicates that in the vast majority of cases, it was right to do so.

I make no apologies for including, once again, some advice I have passed on many times to help ensure that candidates' performances are recorded correctly and clearly. Most of the complaints from my team are related to badly recorded tapes, either

inaudible or with a sometimes dangerously painful level of buzzing and hissing.

### Technical Points on Recording

1. Before starting the exam, it is vital to make sure that the tape recorder is working properly.
2. If possible, use a separate microphone rather than a built in one. The sound quality is so much better.
3. Point the microphone towards the candidate. It is more important to hear the candidate than the Teacher-Examiner.
4. After every recording wind back the tape for a few seconds and replay to ensure that the candidate's performance has been recorded and is audible.
5. If you use the pause button after recording introductions, candidate numbers, etc, or between candidates, PLEASE MAKE SURE that you switch off the pause button before conducting the next exam. If there is no candidate's voice on tape they can't receive marks and the centre will have to apply for special consideration from the Board.

The main job of the examiners is to assess and mark the candidates' performance and that is a job requiring intense concentration. When material arrives from centres with tapes that are un- or partially labelled it is extremely time-consuming and wearisome to sort out unlabelled cassettes. Labels are given in the Handbook and should be used and fully completed and on the cassette itself the centre number, tape number and Sides A and B clearly marked. Also when recording candidates, clearly state the candidate's name and number before starting each examination. While it is clearly unrealistic to expect only one candidate on each side of a tape, it is possible to use c60 cassettes that can comfortably fit two candidates on each side.

### Teacher-Assessment (for "A" centres)

The Oral component of the exam is the only teacher-assessed part of the GCSE apart from written coursework (4C.) It may be helpful to mention a few points regarding assessment. Assessing oral performance is not an easy job: it requires concentration and recourse to repeatedly comparing one performance against others. It is often necessary to rewind and compare conversations from different candidates so that a judgment can be made on which performance is better, or to hear parts of Rôle-plays more than once to hear how well a candidate has negotiated an unpredictable element. It is appreciated that many teachers do want to play a part in their students' assessment. If that is the case, then we suggest that they should not conduct and assess at the same time. If the Teacher-Examiner is trying to mark the oral at the same as conducting it his or her full attention can be given neither to the conduct of the oral nor to assessing it. When a number of candidates have done their exam, the Teacher-Examiner should listen to the tapes again and then start to assess the performances. Teacher-Examiners should not worry about trying to assess the candidate's performance at the same time as conducting it, but concentrate solely on conducting the Rôle-plays and conversation. It is gratifying to note that fewer centres have attempted to conduct and to mark their candidates' examinations this year. The ratio of A to B centres is now about 1:6.



## Examiners' Report

### General

Teachers are requested to point out to students the importance of reading and understanding the RUBRIC not only for this paper but all papers regardless of qualification or level of paper. A majority of candidates fail to do this and lose marks due to the misunderstanding or lack of reading the rubric.

### 1901 3F LISTENING PAPER - FOUNDATION TIER

Q1& 2 A very familiar exercise where candidates have to match pictures of objects to the respective single words. The vocabulary taken is included in the syllabus/specification and candidates should be able to read this and be able to write the correct English letter in the corresponding box.

Q3 Once again the requirement was to read single words in Urdu and tick five items of clothing out of ten jumbled words containing five miscellaneous items. A majority of candidates failed in this exercise and ticked randomly gaining the odd mark for ticking the correct item. It could be that the rubric was not read therefore leading to the misunderstanding of the question.

Q4 This question contained eight places of interest where children often go or would like to go to. The short sentences indicated what could be done at the respective place but candidates who could not read and understand the sentences put letters in the boxes randomly. The core vocabulary was repeated in all sentences e.g. "aap – (dekh) saktay hain" leaving the candidate to read only two new words in each sentence. This does not require great demands from the candidates nor should it put too much pressure on them.

Q5 (overlap) This is the first question in this paper where a short passage and longer statements are to be read compared to the single word questions. The statements are meant to be confusing as there is little difference in meaning created by adding or omitting a word or two. It is surprising to note that foundation level candidates who do not do well in the previous questions normally score better marks in this question.

Q6 (overlap) Candidates had to read short sentences in this question and tick different modes of travel to school by a group of students. They were probably able to read the key word and the corresponding name of student as almost all of them scored full marks for this question.

Q7 (overlap) The stimulus for this question was about greeting cards and candidates had to match two sentence halves based on the stimulus. The majority of foundation level candidates did not manage to score marks for this question. They should be taught to read the stimulus thoroughly and then read the sentences and join them so that they make sense.

Q8 (overlap) This question was a gap filling exercise based on a stimulus about rail travel and a mention of two cousins. Although family and members of extended are included in the syllabus, a good majority of candidates had no clue of the word commonly used for cousins 'zaad' and both foundation and higher level candidates lost marks for this part of the question as their answers were uncle's sister rather than daughter. Candidates must be familiarised with this ONE word.

Q9 The stimulus for this question was a short weather report. As the answers had to be written in English, most candidates performed well although they did not understand the Urdu word for 'twenty' and figured out it was number and gave various answers e.g. 26, 46, 23, 29 degrees.

Q10 The stimulus was based on commonly used phone cards and as the responses were in English, most candidates scored between 2 to 5 marks. Only the very weak ones guessed as what the stimulus could be and made up their answers, which were too far off the track, hence lost marks.



## 1901 3H LISTENING PAPER - HIGHER TIER

The last questions of this paper are targeted at the A and A\* grades and it is expected that candidates with good reading and understanding skills will be entered for this paper.

The stimulus passages are lengthier and contain slightly more difficult vocabulary. Some centres enter all candidates for only one level, be it foundation or higher. The wrong entry does not favour the candidate as scoring full marks in foundation will only reward them with a 'C' grade and under performance in the higher paper may end up as worse than expected grade.

### Q1- 4 (OVERLAP)

Q5 The stimulus was about a school's sports day and was followed by a gag filling exercise. Candidates must be taught to use the synonyms given above the sentences as they lose marks for using words from the passage. They should also use the correct words that fit in the sentences as twice than the required number of words is given to test their ability. Some candidates use random words that give a completely wrong answer and results in loss of marks.

Q6 The stimulus was about the increasing use of 'pink taxis' followed by matching sentence halves exercise. A majority of candidates scored full marks for this question as they are becoming familiar with this exercise. However, candidates could practise past papers and improve their ability.

Q7 This stimulus was about a popular actor's family and work. The first time in the paper where candidates had to write answers in the target language but quite a few candidates lost marks for 'lifting' answers. Candidates must be taught to try and write in their own words as the last two questions are targeted at the A and A\* grade and there are certain expectations from these candidates. They should also be taught to read and understand the question before writing their answers as the answer to the last part of this question was given in the form of film names rather than the names of plays or dramas.

Q8 This was an interesting stimulus based on the experiences of students of a holiday in Pakistan. Answers were required in English and while most candidates wrote correct answers, a few could not match their answers to the respective question, hence losing marks. They must READ and UNDERSTAND the question before writing the appropriate answer in order to score marks.



# Examiners' Report

## 1901 4F WRITING PAPER - FOUNDATION TIER

### General

As there were no changes in any aspect of both papers, requirements of the papers were exactly the same, as of previous examination series. The examiners felt that no question posed candidates particular difficulties and the papers placed comparable demands on candidates to previous years. Most candidates found questions very accessible and appeared to know what was required of them.

Apart from candidates inappropriately entered for Higher Tier, the performance of candidates was much better this year. Examiners noted some outstanding performances from candidates in Paper 4H. Similarly, many candidates at Foundation Tier produced excellent scripts, gaining in excess of 40 out of 50 marks. These candidates may have been able to gain a higher grade if entered for Higher Tier. However, it was noted that a number of candidates for Foundation Tier, did not attempt the overlap question and a few left the whole paper blank.

### Paper 4F

**Q 1** The provision of 17 icons of fruit and vegetables proved to be very helpful to make a shopping list. Most candidates answered this question successfully but only a few gained full marks. Marks were lost through the inclusion of English/Punjabi words or the word given as example.

**Q 2** Candidates were required to produce 5 verbs conjugated in the first or third person singular present tense and to interpret 5 pictures as nouns. Although some candidates scored full marks for this question, many lost marks because of ambiguity in responses, especially with regard to inaccurate spellings, genders and verbs. It was therefore not uncommon for candidates to gain 4 or 5 marks for communication but only 2 or 3 marks for language.

**Q 3** In this question, candidates had to write a short note to their mother and there were four bullet points to be covered. The stimulus was clearly understood by the majority of candidates and the question was answered well by most of them. However, responses varied in quality of language and weaker candidates omitted some bullet points. As in question 2, it was usual to gain 4 or 5 marks for communication and 2 or 3 marks for knowledge and application of language.

### Q 4 (a) and 4 (b) - overlap Questions

Candidates had a choice to answer either question 4(a) or question 4 (b). In both questions, they were required to cover five bullet points. At the Foundation Tier, this question enables candidates to score marks enough to gain C grade. The bullet points provide them opportunities to produce a range of tenses and to give opinion. Question 4(a) was by far the more popular option amongst candidates, which asked them to describe their homes compared to Question 4(b) which required them to write an article about their town/local area. However, there were also some excellent answers on the second option. The popularity of first option was, perhaps, due to candidates being more familiar with their homes and their practice of writing on the topic whereas they may not have been familiar with amenities of their town/area and hence not as well prepared. The examiners noted the same trend in Higher Tier candidates



## 1901 4H WRITING PAPER - HIGHER TIER

### Questions 1 (a) and 1(b)

*As for paper 4F, questions 4 (a) and 4(b)*

### Questions 2(a) and 2(b)

Candidates were required to answer either Question 2(a) or Question 2(b) covering five bullet points. Question 2 (a) proved to be more popular of the two alternative questions, giving candidates an opportunity to use their imagination and experience of attending wedding parties. The examiners were impressed by the wide range of outstanding answers to this question. Candidates were clearly well trained to write fluently about different aspects of a wedding party.

Although relatively a smaller number of candidates attempted question 2 (b), many produced very entertaining responses. A large number of candidates chose 'East Enders' or 'Neighbours' as their favourite TV programme, whereas many wrote about one or other family dramas, presented by various Asian TV channels. The best scripts were coherent, well linked pieces which addressed all five bullet points, developing them with opinions and reasons. Weaker candidates just narrated the storyline of the programme without clear opinion or reason.



## 1901 4C WRITING PAPER - HIGHER TIER

The overall standard of performance was quite disappointing and lower compared with previous year. Most of the work, sent for moderation, was poor in all respects. In many stances, it was clear that both teachers and candidates were not fully aware of the coursework requirements and had taken it just as an easy option. This year the most popular tasks included:

- Account of a visit, trip or holiday
- Complaint letter to hotel
- Description of your town
- Job application letter
- Work experience
- Description of your school
- Review of a film
- Interview with / biography of a famous person

Although all above tasks do allow candidates to use a variety of tenses, structures and vocabulary and also provide opportunities to demonstrate linked research, opinion and logical argument, only a few candidates were able to develop these tasks into good pieces of work that fulfilled the criteria for high marks. Most candidates lost marks because of one or more of the following reasons:

- (a) Either the stimulus was not suitable and appropriate or there was no stimulus provided.
- (b) Candidates copied whole chunks of language and information from reference material and in many cases identical or near identical work was seen across a whole centre.
- (c) Failure to observe controlled conditions.
- (d) No or little ability to:
  - manipulate the language to make it their own;
  - use a variety of tenses, structure and vocabulary;
  - express opinion as appropriate to tasks;
  - use reference material effectively as a result of linked research and
  - go beyond a minimal response.

## TOPIC AREAS

There are five main topic areas for GCSE Urdu and these topic areas with related sub-topics are listed on page 3 of the specification. In coursework option, candidates are required to submit three units of work which must each relate to a different main topic areas. Many centres ignored this basic condition and allowed their candidates to produce two or even three units of work within the same topic area. These included:

- My school, work experience and job application (all Education, training and employment)
- An account of a holiday and hotel complaint letter (both At home and abroad)
- Birthday party and smoking (both Social activities, fitness and health)

When such units of work were found in a folder, the highest of the three or two moderated marks were taken and the rest discounted completely. This year such combinations of work caused great concern.

Centres are reminded that they have no option but to comply with the basic requirements of the coursework option. They are also advised to take care of the following:

- Coursework receipt deadlines must be met.
- Record sheets must be filled correctly and signed.
- At least one third of the work (one unit) must be indicated (one unit) must be done under controlled condition and this must be indicated on record sheet.
- One copy of the stimulus material must be included in the sample.
- First and final drafts of each candidate's work must be a part of their folders.
- OPTEMS should be correctly completed.



# Statistics

## Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	41	36	31	26	21	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

## Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	48	43	38	33	23	18	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

## Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	23	19	15	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

## Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	40	34	28	23	17	14	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

## Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	37	33	29	25	21	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

### Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	49	42	34	26	20	17	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

### Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	36	32	29	26	23	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

### Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	44	38	32	27	22	19	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

### Paper 4C - Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

### Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

### Notes

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.



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