

Examiners' Report /
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Urdu (5UR04) Paper 01

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Examiner Report

Candidates are required to submit two pieces of work written under controlled conditions. All candidates are required to write at least 100 words per task for grades F-C. Those aiming for grades C-A* will have to demonstrate extended writing skills and produce a piece of writing of 200+ words. The candidates must complete each task individually, and following the preparation period (up to 6 contact hours within a maximum of 2 weeks), they have up to one hour to complete the task. Centres have a choice to either use stimulus material published by Edexcel, or devise their own. The two writing pieces have to differ in purpose, content and from the speaking assessments of Unit 2. The stimulus could just be a title, or it could include bullet points written either in English or in target language. Bullet points are usually given in order to guide the candidate through the assessment and instruct the candidates if they could or should respond to some or all of the points.

Range and suitability of topics/tasks

Candidate work must relate to one or more of the following themes:

- Media and Culture
- Sport and Leisure
- Travel and Tourism
- Business, Work and Employment
- Centre-devised options

Most centres have now successfully adhered to the requirements of the new specification and, having embraced the opportunities which it offers, have adjusted well to its demands. It was pleasing to note that most candidates performed very well coping with the demands of this unit. Many centres complied with the requirements of the specification – their candidates consequently produced appropriate and high-quality pieces of work.

Candidates, in general, had been well prepared by centres for this controlled assessment unit. The topics that were well received by candidates were 'Travel and Tourism' and 'Sport & Leisure'. It seems that candidates found 'Business, Work and Employment' very daunting since very few candidates attempted this theme. 'Media and Culture' was also attempted by few candidates, perhaps due to the lack of research and commitment.

However, some centres still seem to be unaware of the basic requirements of the new specification. There were cases where incomplete pieces of work were submitted. There was sometimes a disparity in the quality of work submitted by the same candidate. This may be due to candidates completing one task early on in the course, and completing the second towards the end. Nevertheless, candidates are allowed to undertake more than two controlled assessments in

writing over the duration of the course, and then submit the best pieces of work to Edexcel for marking.

Some candidates produced two tasks on the same topics. This, however, did not prove to be very successful. It limited the candidates' performance – some of the work was repetitive and consequently self-penalising for the candidates.

Assessment

To ensure access to the higher mark bands, candidates had to use a greater variety of more complex language. The writing response must show that candidates are able to spell, punctuate and use grammatical structures that are accurate and appropriate for the purpose. At the top end, there were some candidates who produced excellent pieces with a good analysis using a range of tenses. There were two areas identified where teachers may want to emphasise to candidates when producing pieces of written work:

1. Many candidates appeared to have trouble with gender and agreements.
2. A number of candidates had a poor concept of the post positions and the consequential declension of the nouns, pronouns and adjectives.

Teachers must realise that in order to take candidates' work to the higher band for marking, there should be some evidence of using the following:

- Present participles
- Present subjunctive
- Past participles
- Past infinitives
- Variety of tenses
- Subordination
- Past infinitives
- Present participles
- Present participles
- Present subjunctive
- Adverbial phrases
- Conjunctions
- Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

Using a title as a stimulus

Some candidates submitted work with a stimulus comprising only a title. Titles like 'My House', 'Mobile Phones', 'Eid' and 'Five Pillars of Islam' were attempted. Again, in the absence of structured tasks, the responses remained limited. Generally, the tasks submitted under such headings were just narratives and hence lacked opinion and justifications.

Issues related to centre-devised options

Teachers may use or adapt Edexcel-produced stimuli or create their own. This option is there to target activities to the needs and level of individual candidates. These centre-devised tasks do not have to relate to the themes identified in the specification. Teachers are free to produce tasks linked to other areas of candidate interest. However, these points must be kept in mind when setting centre-devised tasks:

- Tasks should be adapted to suit the ability and level of individual students.
- As the marks are determined by how well a candidate responds to the task, in the interest of the candidates, teachers are advised to provide the student with a topic with a stimulus consisting of a number of bullet points (see Edexcel-produced tasks for guidance) in order to develop a coherent and well-structured piece of writing.
- Teachers should refer to the assessment criteria and the grade descriptors while setting their own tasks thus making sure that the students have the opportunity to express opinion using a range of tenses and attempt a range of more complex structures.

The option of using centre-devised tasks appeared, in most cases, unfavourable to the candidates. Some centres produced stimuli exceeding **200 words** even though there are very clear instructions of a word limit of **70 words** for the task/stimulus.

When devising a centre-devised task, some centres also gave **10-12 bullet points** which is self-penalising for the candidate since the candidate can't fully justify their opinion due to the time limit. It is important to set a task which enables candidates to access the higher mark bands. The stimuli should be enabling the candidates to develop ideas whilst expressing their own opinion and justifying it.

While creating their own stimuli the teachers/examiners must:

- a. set out the context, purpose and requirements of the tasks clearly
- b. make sure the tasks cover all the Assessment Objectives (pp.23-25 of the Specification) and allow for a full range of outcomes

- c. ensure the students are given the opportunity to use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses
- d. ensure that there should ideally be 4/5 bullet points to give the candidate opportunity to express and justify his/her opinion(s) using a range of grammar and structures.

There were some cases where a task or stimulus was omitted entirely. This does not benefit the candidate in any way, as they are unable to write a structured piece of writing that shows evidence of responding to a set task or stimulus, even if the quality of the writing is high.

The use of the CA4 notes form

Some centres did not appreciate the importance of the CA4 form. Although a helpful tool in the preparation process, the use of the CA4 form is optional during the controlled assessment, and candidates will not be penalised if they choose not to use it. The CM4 form allows teachers and candidates to note whether a CA4 form has been used during the assessment. In general, the form helps them to produce a well planned piece of writing within a constrained timeframe. A number of candidates had either not used it or had just included it as a formality with very little or no relevant information reflected in their final task. In some extreme cases, a centre had mistaken this form for a controlled document which resulted in candidates using these forms for the final task, hence restricting the candidates' ability to express themselves fully. Another issue that came to light was that some students wrote **full sentences** on CA4 forms instead of **30 individual words**. Teachers and candidates are advised to adhere to the requirements of this form and the specification.

Administrative Issues

The following problems were identified where centres:

- submitted the work after the deadline
- did not use CA4 forms properly
- submitted the work without the authentication sheet fully signed by the candidate/teacher
- did not send the register with the work
- submitted the work that had been already marked by the centre
- did not put the right candidate number on the scripts
- sent work to a different examiner
- submitted work without any stimulus material despite the fact that the work was related to specific task duly noted on the CA4/CM4 form

For administrative purpose, centres should make sure that the below items are attached with each candidate's work:

1. **Two tasks** or **stimuli** along with **two** pieces of writing
2. CA4 - Candidate Notes Form, if used

3. CM4 – Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4 duly signed by the teacher and candidate

All the above required forms are available online in the document Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessment).

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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