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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

FIRST LANGUAGE URDU

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3247/01
Reading and Writing

General comments

This was the first examination of the new 3247 Syllabus. In general the performance of candidates was more than satisfactory, with the majority of them producing very good performances. There were no significant problems for candidates in coping with the different technical demands of the new format of the Paper, which tests candidates' linguistic ability as well as their ability to understand and respond appropriately to the texts and the questions.

The structure of the Paper is completely different from the previous First Language Syllabus. The Paper comprised of two passages of about 350 words each, on a linked theme of 'Family'. Candidates had to read these passages and then answer two questions which required extended responses. Marks were awarded for content (10), language (10) and organisation/structure (5), giving a total of 25 marks for each question. There was equal weighting to each question giving a total for the Paper of 50 marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

انگریزوں اور پاکستانی خاندانوں میں موازنہ کیجئے۔

Compare English and Pakistani family systems

This question required a direct comparison of the two family systems discussed in the texts. Candidates were expected to: (i) make direct reference to these texts when responding and (ii) to use their own words as far as possible.

It was point (ii) that made the difference between satisfactory and good performances.

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. They were able to extract the main points of each passage and fit them together in such a way as to make appropriate comparisons and contrast. The best ones were those who wrote their own response to the question and who used their own words to do so and who did not merely copy out chunks of text from each passage and link them with the odd phrase such as 'دوسری طرف' on the other hand. Of course it was appropriate, even necessary, to quote from the texts, but a quote is a line or two, not a whole paragraph. One of the aims of the assessment criteria is to reward candidates' use of Urdu; if they are copying text from the passage, they are not using their own words and so cannot be rewarded. This question required information and ideas from the passages to be used, not almost every word. For instance, it was entirely valid to write about the attitude of young English people to their parents' death, but it was not appropriate to quote the last four lines of passage A giving every detail about sitting in a bar with their lover, saying 'poor dad' not caring about anything but how much inheritance they would get. These are not the candidates' own words and consequently cannot be rewarded with marks for language.

Question 2

This question, although based on the ideas in the texts, required a development of the ideas in the form of an essay-writing competition, asking candidates to give their opinion on:

”مشترکہ خاندانی نظام پر جدید دنیا کے اثرات“

The effects of the modern world on the joint family system

This gave candidates an ideal opportunity to demonstrate their powers of language and argument. The better candidates produced excellent well planned and constructed essays, giving the positive and negative effects of the modern world and summarising their opinions on the issue. They were able to make their points using their own words within a planned framework, unlike weaker candidates who relied too heavily on the texts themselves and tended to ramble from point to point in an unstructured way. There was too much focus by weaker candidates on using material from the passages and in making stereotypical and unqualified comments such as:

’غرب میں تمام بوڑھے لوگوں کو ’اولڈ پیپلز ہوم‘ میں رکھا جاتا ہے

In the west all the aged are put into 'Old People's Homes'

There were very few candidates whose written Urdu was not up to the task. Candidates should be encouraged to take care with the clarity and presentation of their work, as a few candidates' work was difficult to read, displaying a very messy handwriting style with crossings out and scribbled insertions. Another point was the length of some of the responses. In the rubric it is mentioned that answers should be about a side and a half of paper, depending on size of handwriting. The length of some scripts was well over double that limitation, these responses will not achieve the full marks available for structure.

Overall the majority of candidates wrote relevant and linguistically mainly accurate responses to both questions.

Paper 3247/02

Texts

General comments

This was the first session of the new 3247 Syllabus. The Paper is divided into two parts, **Part 1 - Poetry** and **Part 2 - Prose**. Candidates must answer two out of the four questions, one on each of the two set texts, which means one from **Part 1** and one from **Part 2**. Of the two questions that candidates answer, one must be a passage-based question and one an essay question. The first question in each part is the passage-based question consisting of an extract from the text which is printed in the Question Paper followed by a series of questions that relate to the extract itself and may also relate to the way in which the extract reflects the themes in the text as a whole. The second question in each part is the essay question which does not contain a printed extract from the text, and requires candidates to write an essay on a specific aspect of the poem or short story. All the questions carry equal marks.

On the whole candidates performed well and displayed a good knowledge and understanding of their chosen texts. To achieve good marks candidates are required to have good, detailed knowledge of the texts and to have an understanding of both the literal meaning of the texts as well as the issues and attitudes that they raise. The standard of handwriting, presentation and arrangement of answers was also generally very good.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Poetry

The extract for the passage-based question was taken from Iqbal's *Shikwa Jawabe Shikwa* and was the question that most candidates chose to answer in this part.

In **(a)** candidates were asked to write about the central idea of the poem. This carried 10 marks and was done very well. Candidates achieved marks for understanding both the literal meaning of the texts as well as the contexts of those meanings. **(b)** required an explanation of the last three verses. Good marks were achieved by candidates who were able to describe ways in which the writer uses language to achieve effects. On the whole this part was done very well and carried 10 marks. In **(c)** candidates were required to give detailed meanings of five given words and on the whole this part was done well and carried 5 marks.

Relatively few candidates chose the essay question, which required candidates to write on Akbar Allahabadi's poetry.

Part 2

Prose

Very few candidates chose the passage-based question on Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi's short story *Thal*.

Most candidates chose the essay question in this part which required them to write about Asif Farrukhi's short story *Khuji*. There were some excellent essays, showing a thorough and detailed knowledge of the text with the relevant features written about in an interesting and well-structured way.