

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level Urdu (7648)

June 2006

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7648 URDU - CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

The examination paper, as a whole, was of comparable standard to those of previous years. In questions 1 and 2, the two unconnected Urdu passages for translation into English were within the range of candidates' knowledge. Outstanding pieces of accurate translations are on the increase from many centres.

English to Urdu translations in question 2 (a) and (b) put more demand on candidates' performance. These passages contained more challenging words than the passages in question 1. This provided a good balance in the paper through differentiating between good and adequate performance of the candidates. The majority of the candidates understood the passages very well, except a few marginally more difficult words, such as 'qualities', 'skills', 'courageous', 'honour', 'glory' and 'faith'. Also candidates continued to lose marks due to spelling mistakes. The overall standard and quality of English was good, while Urdu has shown some improvement.

In questions 1, 2 and 3 the continuing tendency to gloss over difficult words and phrases or even to miss these out altogether was still evident. Translations done as complete sentences keeping within the context and avoiding literal translation or transliteration of commonly known words and phrases are considered to be the best translations in any language.

QUESTION ONE: Translation from Urdu to English

- (a) This passage was about '*Hard work*'. The general message of the text was adequately conveyed by most candidates, and very well translated. There were only a handful of candidates who struggled to produce a good and proper piece of translation. The majority of the candidates correctly translated most key words. However, it was a little disappointing to find that a few candidates missed the obvious words and came up with odd words in their translations; once again demonstrating the impossibility of predicting what candidates will understand and write.
- (b) This was a short passage about '*Muslim youngsters*'. Majority of the candidates attempted it very well. Only a few words were wrongly

translated. Many candidates wrote 'God' with small g, which was rather bizarre to note.

QUESTION 2: Translation from English to Urdu

- (a) The first passage was about '*Growing waistlines*'. It was a slightly more demanding piece of text in comparison to Q 2(a). However, some simple words and phrases were mistranslated i.e. 'fats'. 'Dinner menus' was translated as 'evening meal or supper' rather than lunch.
- (b) The second passage was a shorter one about the 'Space race' where candidates used a variety of wild guesses to translate 'first living creature', 'space', 'astronaut' and 'orbit the Earth'. In some instances Urdu numbers were written in the opposite order, which made them totally meaningless. Candidates are advised not to write Urdu numbers unless they are 100% sure. Otherwise, writing numbers as used in English writing would be sufficient.

QUESTION 3: Grammatical Sentences

This section was very well attempted by the majority of candidates and marks gained were above average.

- (a) Candidates made a variety of guesses about the word 'going away'. Some candidates missed out key words such as 'away'.
- (b) This was usually well attempted by the majority of the candidates. The Key words were 'goodbye' and 'relatives'.
- (c) In this sentence, the main key words were 'usually' and 'came'.
- (d) Many candidates missed the key phrase 'went to bed' and some Punjabi translations were also seen for 'pillow fight'.
- (e) Most candidates performed well but many missed out the word 'charity'.

QUESTION 4: Essay

In this question, there was a choice of three topics for essays (narrative, imaginative and discursive) and a letter on a given stimulus as usual. The most popular choice among the candidates was (d) 'A letter to your grandfather'. The majority of the candidates attempted it with confidence and in a fluent writing style. The second most popular topic was (a) 'The most important decision I ever made'. It was well attempted by the majority of the candidates. The third popular choice was (b) 'The importance of helping others'. Again some good pieces of essay writing were seen here. The last choice was (c) 'What I dislike most on TV'. There were some good essays with balanced approach to their argument.

Most candidates showed the ability to write an interesting informal letter in a traditional way and to plan and present a balanced essay, with an introduction, argument and a conclusion as well as a good command of the language and expression. It is important to maintain a realistic and natural approach in such writings.

GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	76	67	59	54	40

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.
