

# Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE

## GCE O Level Urdu (7648)

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## URDU 7648, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

The standard and the demand of this paper were broadly similar to the previous years. In questions 1 and 2, the two unconnected passages given for translation were within the range of the candidates' experiences and the level of the examination. Outstanding pieces of accurate translations are on the increase from many centres. Candidates were clearly well prepared showing an improvement of translations from Urdu to English.

Translation passage in question 1(a) appears to have been more accessible and straightforward for candidates, while question 2 (a) responses suggest candidates found it more demanding. This provided a good overall balance in the paper and allowed for differentiation. The majority of the candidates produced good and proper translations. Urdu has shown an improvement comparing to previous sessions, however, candidates continued to lose marks due to spelling mistakes.

A tendency of using phonetic Urdu writing was evident, indicating that the candidate understood the text, translating it well to Urdu but was not able to write it properly.

Proper and error free translations without missing out any key word are essential to convey the message of the text and score high marks. Best pieces of translations are those where proper translations are done as complete sentences keeping within the context of the passage.

### QUESTION ONE: Translation from Urdu to English

- (a) This passage was about '*Sense of duty*'. The general message of the text was adequately conveyed by most candidates, and very well translated. There were only a few candidates who struggled to produce a good and proper piece of translation. Some candidates missed the straightforward words and used alternative translations instead; e.g. '*Sahabi*' as companion rather than companion of the prophet Muhammad (SAW); '*Ranjeeda*', as crying or jealous rather than sad, '*Ziart-e-Ka'bah*' as circling the Ka'bah rather than visiting the Ka'bah.
- (b) This was a short passage about '*Basic education for Adults*'. This passage proved a little more demanding for some candidates than the previous one. Only a few words and phrases were wrongly translated e.g. '*Fateh Jang*' was translated as war conquered rather than as the name of a place in Pakistan, '*Tera Laakh*' was written as it was rather than 1.3 million. In only a few cases Urdu numbers were written in the opposite order, which made them totally meaningless. Candidates are advised not to write Urdu

numbers, writing numbers in English would be sufficient. In other cases, glossing over of certain keywords was also noticeable.

### **QUESTION 2: Translation from English to Urdu**

- (a) The first passage was about '*A bionic cure for blindness*'. This passage was found more demanding than passage (b). Scientific terms were found demanding by some candidates. Some of these words and phrases like '*orbiting satellite*' and '*tiny electrodes*' were translated in a variety of ways. Candidates were not penalised for such errors. There was also evidence of shallow reading before translating and glossing over certain words and phrases.
- (b) The second passage, a shorter one about the '*Power of the ear*' was straightforward and easy to access. In this instance, candidates used a variety of wild guesses to translate '*ear lobes*' as ear holes, '*several yards*' as few miles and '*pull*' as *lift*. Some candidates continued to make basic errors in spellings of simple Urdu words.

### **QUESTION 3: Translating grammatical sentences**

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

- (a) Candidates made a variety of guesses about the words, risk and cancer. Some candidates translated them correctly as '*im-kaan*' and '*sar-taan*'.
- (b) This was usually well attempted by most candidates. The difficulties were seen around the words '*aunt*' and '*dishes*'.
- (c) In this sentence, the main key words were '*covered*' and '*fresh green*'.
- (d) Most candidates performed well but many missed out the word '*caused the whole room*'
- (e) Many candidates struggled with phrases such as '*make sure*' and '*polluted rivers*'.

#### QUESTION 4: Essay or Letter

In this question, there was a choice of three topics for essays (narrative, imaginative and discursive) and one letter based on a given stimulus as usual.

The letter (d) *writing a letter to your cousin explaining what you did during your last summer holidays* was the most popular option and the majority of candidates responded very well to the task. However there were some candidates whose work lacked imagination.

The second most popular topic was *do I miss my mobile phone more than my mother*. It sounded very simple, but some candidates were unable to express that they would miss their mother more than their mobile phones but could not live without a mobile phone. However, a number of good written pieces of Urdu composition were seen here.

The third popular choice was (b) *what comes first: my country or myself*. Again some really good pieces of balanced essay writing were seen here. Many candidates tackled this topic very sensitively and managed to produce a factual looking picture of their perceptions around this topic.

The last choice was (c) *the book that inspired me*. There were good examples of good written pieces of Urdu on famous books, which inspired these youngsters. Holy Qur'an was the most popular choice under this topic.

The ability 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 was evident in most cases. It is important to maintain a realistic, natural and systematic approach in essay and letter writing.

#### 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.

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