

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE O Level Urdu (7648)

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URDU 7648, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

The overall standard and the demand of this paper were broadly similar to the previous years. The majority of the candidates produced a high standard of work and scored good marks. However, some candidates continued to lose marks due to too many mistakes in translating and poor quality of written language. In questions 1 and 2, the two unconnected passages given for translation were within the level of this examination. Outstanding pieces of accurate Urdu to English translations are on the increase from many centres.

Translation passage in question 1(a) appears to have been more accessible and straightforward for candidates, while question 2 (a) responses suggests 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 some improvement comparing to previous years, however, candidates continued to lose marks due to spelling mistakes.

In some instances, a tendency of using phonetic Urdu writing was evident, indicating that the candidate understood the text, translated it well to Urdu but was unable to write it properly.

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 '*Natural Henna*'. The general information 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. '*Mashraqi Tehzeeb*' as traditional rather than eastern civilisation; '*hathon aur paroun*' as hands and legs rather than hands and feet'.

(b) This was a short passage about '*Peshawar City*'. This passage proved a little more demanding for some candidates than the previous one. The stumbling blocks were words indicating directions. Strangely, many candidates translated these directions in the opposite way. e.g. 'shumal' was translated as south rather than north. 'Maghreb' was translated as east rather than west. Many candidates read 'darah Khaiber' meaning Khaiber Pass as 'darya' and translated it as 'Khaiber River'. In only a few instances, Urdu numbers were seen written in the opposite order, which made them totally meaningless. Candidates are advised not to write Urdu numbers unless they are 100 percent sure. Writing numbers in English is sufficient and acceptable for the examination. In few cases, glossing over of certain keywords and phrases was also noticeable.

QUESTION 2: Translation from English to Urdu

(a) The first passage was about '*The Importance of Security*'. The latest security measures used for residential apartments were discussed. This passage was little more demanding than passage (b). A few names of modern gadgets, proved demanding for some candidates. Other words and phrases like 'recently retired' resigned rather than leaving job after completing their serviceable age, and 'lock up and leave' their property safely'; 'less maintenance' were translated in a variety of ways.

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 'The Exotic Middle East' was straightforward and easy to access. In few instances, candidates used a variety of wild guesses to translate 'camp in desert', 'malls of Doha' and 'indoor ski slopes'. Many 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) Many candidates made a variety of guesses about the words, 'bright' and 'frosty'.
- (b) In this sentence, the difficulties were seen around the words 'difference' and 'hard work'.
- (c) This was usually well attempted by most candidates.
- (d) Most candidates performed well but many candidates translated 'right to vote sensibly' in various ways. Many wrote 'vote karna' rather than 'vote daina'.
- (e) Some candidates struggled with phrases such as 'in a few moments' and 'above the clouds'.

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 friend asking advice on going to England for your higher education' was proved to be a popular option for the majority of the candidates. Many candidates wrote letter which responded very well to the task. However, there were some candidates whose work lacked imagination and they appeared to have just completed a formality.

The second most popular topic was (a) 'The best way to care for orphan children', provided some good and interesting reading. The candidates seemed to be enjoying writing on this topic.

The third popular choice was (c) 'Why I dislike professional-type beggars'. 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 issue.

The last choice was (b) 'How do I know who is my best friend'. There were good examples of comparison of good qualities verses bad qualities among friends which guided these youngsters.

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	74	65	56	51	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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