

Examiners' Report January 2008

O Level

O Level Urdu (7648/01)

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January 2008

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The overall standard and the demand of this paper were broadly comparable to the previous years. The majority of the candidates produced a high standard of work and scored good marks. In Q1 and Q2, the two unconnected passages given for translation were well within the level of this examination. Outstanding pieces of accurate Urdu to English translations are on the increase from many centres. Some improvement was also evident with English to Urdu translation. The quality of answers including good quality language and use of extensive vocabulary to even less demanding questions provided an evidence for high grade marks.

Translation passage in Q1(a) appears to have been more accessible and straightforward for candidates, while Q2(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 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 were 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 1: Translation from Urdu to English

(a) This passage was about '*1001 years of inventions*' and carried 15 marks. The general information of the text was adequately conveyed by most candidates, and very well translated. Only the last part of this passage was more demanding and required careful reading before translation.

There were some candidates who struggled to produce a good and proper piece of translation. In previous reports candidates have been advised not to write Urdu numbers unless they are 100 percent sure of them. Writing numbers in English is sufficient and acceptable for this examination and does not cause any reduction in marks. Many candidates continued to miss the straightforward words and used alternative translations instead; e.g. '*special exhibition*' was confused with display/fair etc, '*17th century*' was translated as 70th century, The word '*west*' was used to indicate European countries, but it was translated as east in many cases, '*sighting of new moon at dusk and its timings*' was really badly handled and made meaningless by many candidates.

(b) This was a short passage about '*Eyesight for driving*' and carried 10 marks. The words and phrases which proved to be stumbling blocks were '*good eyesight*', '*cannot watch even TV properly*', and '*irresponsible act*'. These made the translation less accurate and in some instances meaningless. In a few cases, glossing over of certain keywords and phrases was also evident.

QUESTION 2: Translation from English to Urdu

(a) This passage was about *'Healthy schools'* and carried 15 marks. It talked about the latest measures taken to improve children's health in schools. This passage was little more demanding than passage 2(b). A few words of modern terminology used such as *'healthy schools'*, *'healthy eating'*, *'planning menus'*, *'packed lunches'*, *'infant pupils'*, *'healthy tuck shops'*, *'colourful displays'*, *'leaflets'*, and *'exercise'* proved demanding for many candidates.

There was also evidence of shallow reading before translating and glossing over certain words and phrases.

(b) This passage was a short one and carried 10 marks. It was about the *'Rice worldwide'*. It was straightforward and easy to access except the numbers, which provided differentiation. In few instances, candidates used a variety of wild guesses to translate *'most staple'*, *'across cultures'*, *'calorie intake'*, *'global production'*, *'non sticky'* and *'4.5kg'*. 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 phrase *'on the radio'*.

(b) In this sentence, the most difficulty was noticed around the phrases *'hard work with honesty'* and *'will be rewarded'*.

(c) Some candidates stumbled on *'shouldn't miss'* and *'your side of the story'*.

(d) This was usually well attempted by most candidates except some struggled with *'nothing good'*.

(e) Mostly well done but a few candidates struggled with the phrase *'only talkers and not doers'*.

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 and asking reasons for their choice. The (d) writing *'a letter to your father explaining why you would prefer to marry a girl from Pakistan or UK or USA'* proved to be the most popular option for the majority of the candidates. The majority of the candidates wrote letters responding very well to the task set. However, there were some candidates whose work lacked good arguments and reasoning in their writing and appeared to have just completed a formality.

The second most popular topic was (a) *'Every rich family should sponsor a child from a poor family'*, provided some good and interesting reading. The candidates seemed to be enjoying writing on this topic.

The third popular choice was (c) *'My preferred style of studying'*. Some really good pieces of balanced essay writing were seen here. Many candidates tackled this topic very sensitively and managed to produce a factual picture of their routines. Some did go onto explain why while others left it like a narrative of their routines.

The last choice was (b) *'How can I improve the image of my country across the world?'* There were good pieces of composition but many lacked the sparkle on how to convey their vision and perceptions across the world.

Some candidates' lost marks due to making too many mistakes in translating and poor quality of written language.

The ability to plan and present a balanced essay, with an introduction, argument/reasoning and a conclusion as well as a good command of the Urdu language and a coherent approach was evident in most cases. It helps to maintain a realistic, natural and systematic approach in essay and letter writing to avoid confusion and loss of focus on a specified topic.

Statistics

Paper 01

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary mark	74	65	56	51	40

Notes

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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