

# Examiners' Report Summer 2009

O Level

O Level Urdu (7648)



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## Contents

1.	Paper 1 Examiners' Report	5
2.	Statistics	9



# Paper 1

## General Comments

The overall standard and demand of this paper was broadly similar to previous years. The majority of candidates produced responses of good standard and scored good marks. In questions 1 and 2, the two unconnected passages given for translation, were interesting, relevant and within the level of this examination. Some outstanding pieces of accurate Urdu to English translations were seen from large centres. In general, no significant improvement was noticed in the English to Urdu translation. However, some structural improvement was evident in essay writing and letter writing. For more accessible tasks such as the letter, candidates were expected to use accurate language relevant to the task. Responses with occasional use of sophisticated and appropriate vocabulary and adherence to the subject of the question attained high marks.

The translation passage in question 1(a) appeared to be more accessible and straight forward for the majority of candidates, whilst question 2 (a) responses suggested that candidates found it a little more demanding. This provided an overall balance in the paper and allowed for differentiation. There were some key words imbedded in the passages to allow further differentiation. The majority of candidates produced good pieces of translations, however, some candidates continued to lose marks on spelling mistakes and also for writing numbers and dates in reverse order.

A tendency of phonetic Urdu writing was still widely evident, indicating that the candidates understood the text, could translate well into Urdu, but struggled to write in Urdu correctly.

By far the best pieces of translations are those where proper translations are carried out as complete sentences within the context of the passage.

### Question 1 Translation from Urdu to English

- (a) This passage was about the *'Pakistan elections'* and carried 15 marks. The general information of the text was adequately conveyed by most candidates, and was well translated.

There were some candidates who struggled to produce a good and proper translation. Many candidates continued to misinterpret straightforward words, e.g. *'observers'* *'transparent and peaceful'*, *'unity, faith and discipline'* and used alternative translations instead. A few candidates even managed to translate *'sixty years'* as seven years or seventy years.

- (b) This was a short passage about *'British public paying bill out of their savings'* and carried 10 marks. The passage contained an average level of difficulty. The following proved to be challenging for candidates: *'rate of inflation'*; *property tax''*. In a few cases, the glossing over of certain keywords and phrases was also evident. The writing of numbers and dates were used as a way of differentiation during marking.

### Question 2 Translation from Urdu to English

- (a) This passage was about *'Tippu Sultan'* and carried 15 marks. It described some of the history of Tippu Sultan's era. This passage proved to be accessible and candidates produced high quality translations. A few words such as *'Mysore'*; *'gun'*; *'dagger'*; *'calendar'*; *'coinage'*, *'seven new government departments'* proved more challenging. Although the majority of good candidates got the numbers right however, some candidates continued to write Urdu numbers but in reverse order making it meaningless for the purpose of the examination. It has been strongly advised in the past that writing numbers in English is sufficient and acceptable for this examination and do not cause any reduction in marks. Some candidates misunderstood the passage and thought that Tippu Sultan made the church himself rather he got it made.

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

- (b) This short passage was about *'Sialkot city'* and carried 10 marks. It was a straightforward passage and candidates performed well. However, in a few

instances, candidates struggled to translate '*north-east*'; '*at the foot of snow-covered peaks of Kashmir*', '*Swedish government*', '*new specialist university*', '*local industries to flourish*'. Many candidates made basic errors in the spelling 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) This sentence was usually well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates struggled with the phrase '*blessing*'.
- (b) In this sentence, many candidates made a variety of guesses about the phrase '*did not bother*'.
- (c) Some students found '*one of those*', '*red-brick houses*' challenging.
- (d) This was usually well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates struggled to translate '*clown laugh*'.
- (e) Mostly well done but a few candidates struggled with phrases '*absorbed*' and '*own thoughts*'.

### Question 4 Essay or Letter

In this question, there was a choice of three essays and one letter based on a given stimulus, candidates had to justify their opinion or choice.

The first most popular topic was (a) '*Life without modern technology*'. This provided some good and interesting reading. The candidates seemed to be enjoying writing on this topic.

The second most popular question was (d), writing '*a letter to your cousin apologising and giving the reasons for not being able to attend his/her special event*'. Most candidates wrote letters responding very well, adhering to the task set and offering a variety of reasons to justify their inability to attend. However, only a

few candidates lacked good arguments and reasoning in their writing and appeared to be fulfilling more or less a formality.

The third most popular topic was (c) *'How can I ensure cleanliness in my area?'* This provided some good and interesting reading. The candidates seemed to be enjoying writing on this topic. However, some of those ideas were fairly unrealistic if put to practice in real life situations.

The last choice was (b) *'How does the media affect my opinion on international issues?'* There were good pieces of composition with a few sparkles from some of the major media coverage agencies.

Some candidates lost marks due to too many mistakes through 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 the majority of 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 1

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary mark	100	71	62	53	48	40

### Note:

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





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