

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2010

O Level

O Level Urdu (7648) Paper 1

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Paper 1

General Comments

The overall standard, demand and difficulty of this paper was similar to previous years. The majority of candidates produced good responses and achieved high marks. In questions 1 and 2, the two unconnected passages given for translation were interesting and within the level of this examination. A few pieces of accurate translation from Urdu to English was seen from centres. However, no significant improvement was noticed in the English to Urdu translation. There was a slight improvement in the essay and letter writing section. For more accessible tasks such as letter writing, candidates were expected to use fairly accurate language relevant to the task giving reasons for their apology for not attending the event. Responses with accurate and fluent language using sophisticated and appropriate vocabulary, adherence to the subject of the question and providing with realistic looking reasons scored high marks.

The translation passage in question 1(a) appeared to be more accessible for the majority of candidates, whilst in question 2(a) responses suggested that candidates found it 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 the wrong order.

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

By far the best translations were those that were carried out as complete sentences within the context of the passage.

Question 1 - Translation from Urdu to English

(a) This passage was about the *'e-Eye complaints'* 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. *'body muscles'*, *'headache and laziness'*, *'light in room'* and used alternative translations instead.

(b) This was a short passage about *'A visit to Damascus'* and carried 10 marks. The passage contained an average level of difficulty. However, one or two key words were misunderstood by many candidates. The words which proved to be challenging for candidates were: *'Hamshera - meaning real sister'*; *'Aakhari Aaramgah - meaning the last resting place/tomb or grave'*; *'Allah Ta'allah kay huzoor dua ki - meaning prayed to Allah Almighty'*; *'Tufail - meaning with the blessing of /through the kindness/favour of'*. In a few scripts, 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. However, most candidates managed to translate *'pandrah as fifteen'*.

Question 2 - Translation from Urdu to English

(a) This passage was about *'Keeping warm in winter'* and carried 15 marks. It gave advice on how to keep warm in winter. This passage proved to be accessible and most candidates produced good quality translations. A few words and phrases such as *'limited income'*, *'wool'*, *'several thin layers of clothing'*, *'traps your body heat better'*, *'hot drinks'*, *'gentle exercises'* and *'well heated'* proved rather challenging for some candidates. There was also evidence of shallow reading before translating and glossing over certain words and phrases.

(b) This short passage was about *'A chance to show off your talent'* and carried 10 marks. It was a straightforward passage and candidates performed well. However, in some instances, candidates struggled to translate phrases like *'new stars of the future'*, *'Britain got more talent'*, *'auditions'*, *'spokesman'* and *'host venue for the show'*. 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 scored above average marks.

- (a) This sentence was usually well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates struggled with the words '*young man*' and '*bride*'.
- (b) In this sentence, a few candidates made a variety of guesses about the phrase '*didn't manage to finish*'.
- (c) Some students found phrases like '*was the best movie*' and '*for a long time*' somewhat challenging.
- (d) This was usually well attempted by most candidates. A few candidates struggled to translate '*done that!*'
- (e) Mostly well done but some candidates struggled with phrases '*little house*', '*the lake*' and '*looking just magical*'.

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 (d), writing '*a letter to your friend apologising for not being able to attend his/her sister's birthday celebration and giving some realistic reasons rather than usual stories of serious illness or accident in your family*'. Some of these reasons sounded fairly unrealistic in real life situations where candidates claimed to be practically responsible for doing almost everything in the house.

A few candidates lacked the flavour of a good and realistic argument and reasoning in their writing and appeared to be fulfilling more or less a formality.

The second most popular question was (b), *'My favourite journey'*. This provided some good reading but many candidates described an mundane, ordinary journey as their favourite journey, which was a bit disappointing.

The third most popular topic was (a) *'Life without my mobile is hell'* provided some good and interesting reading. The candidates seemed to enjoy writing on this topic.

The last choice was (c) *'Who is more useful: a lawyer or a mechanic?'* This topic brought some good pieces of composition suggesting that both are important for the nature of their work.

Some candidates lost marks due to too many grammatical mistakes, poor quality of written language and lack of fluency in written language.

The ability to plan and present a balanced essay, with an introduction, argument/reasoning and a conclusion, as well as demonstrating a good command on Urdu language and a coherent approach, was evident in the majority of cases.

It always helps to maintain a realistic, natural and systematic approach in writing an essay or a letter by avoiding confusion and loss of focus within a specified topic.

Statistics

Paper 1

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary mark	100	70	61	53	48	39

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