

FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH

The standard of the Paper was appropriate and in accordance with the level expected of the students. The Paper was well-designed to assess the basic knowledge of Grammar, Reading, Comprehension and Writing skills. Approximately 50 percent of the Paper was set with the aim to evaluate the writing skills of the students. The standard of writing skills depend, to a considerable extent, on the reading habits and persistent efforts to express one's thoughts in a coherent and logical manner along with the correct usage of grammar and vocabulary.

Comments on various questions are as follows:

- Q.1 (a) A fair number of the students were able to match the idioms with their correct meanings as can be observed from the following selected replies:

To run around in circles	To do a lot of activity but accomplish little
To take (someone) for a ride	To fool or trick someone
To rise to the occasion	To meet the challenge
To be in hot water	To be in serious trouble

- (b) Replies to the Question on Parts of the Speech were generally satisfactory. Students who had made sufficient preparations and were clear in their concepts, were however, able to score high marks.

Q.2 This Question had 3 sub-parts.

- (a) Replies to the first part pertaining to punctuations were below standard. The common errors were as follows:
- i. The words spoken by Shazia and Alia were not placed between inverted commas.
 - ii. A full stop was placed after the first sentence which was a question and hence question mark should have been used.
 - iii. Commas were not placed after the words 'Shazia asked' and 'Alia replied'.
- (b) The second part of the Question required conversion from Indirect to Direct Speech. Lack of knowledge of grammar was apparent. A number of students failed to adhere to the tense of the verbs in the original sentences. On the other hand, necessary changes were not made to replace the words spoken by the First Person, into the words spoken by the Second Person.

- (c) Change from Passive to Active Voice. Once again inadequate knowledge of grammar and lack of exposure to good quality reading material was apparent in the replies. The expected replies to questions in which a number of the students lost marks are given below:

Active Voice: I know her.

Passive Voice: She is known to me.

Active Voice: The leaders are seeking a fair resolution to the crises.

Passive Voice: A fair resolution to the crisis is being sought by the leaders.

Active Voice: The CIA director and his close associates have pursued a policy of whitewashing.

Passive Voice: A policy of whitewashing has been pursued by the CIA director and his close associates.

- Q.3 (a) This Question required identification of the appropriate degree of comparison of the adverb. Replies were generally below the expected standard as the students were unable to select the right degree of comparison of the adverbs in most of the cases. Some of the common mistakes were as follows:

- In part (i) many students used the word 'least' instead of 'less'.
- In part (ii) many students used the words "were well" instead of the word "better".
- In part (iii) and (v) the same words were required to be used as were given in the brackets. Consequently many students got confused and gave incorrect replies.
- In part (vi) many students used the words "more far" instead of the word "farther".

- (b) Replies to this part regarding matching of the abbreviations with the appropriate proper nouns were not up to the standard. Even those students who knew the correct answers were not careful enough to write the first alphabet of the words in capital letters.

- Q.4 (a) This Question was set with the objective to test the basic knowledge of grammar. Students who had made adequate preparations were able to respond correctly.

- (b) The answers to the question regarding filling of blanks with appropriate phrasal verbs were not upto the mark. Only few students were able to score high marks. Some of the common mistakes were as under:

In part (i), a large number of students used the words 'left over' instead of the correct choice of 'stepped down'.

In part (ii), many students used the words 'put forward' instead of the correct choice of 'fell through'.

In part (iii), many students were not able to select the correct option of 'take over'.

In part (iv), however, majority gave the correct answer i.e. 'put forward'.

- Q.5 Letter of Complaint regarding the harsh and unreasonable attitude of the security personnel at the airport. Quite a number of the students were unable to differentiate between the staff of PIA and the security staff of the Civil Aviation Department. The 2300 hours flight means a flight whose scheduled time of departure is 11 P.M. This point was misunderstood by a number of the students. Some of the replies included legally threatening attitude. Inadequate vocabulary and poor writing skills resulted in loss of precious marks scoring opportunities.
- Q.6 In this Question, which carried 16 marks, the students were required to demonstrate their reading, comprehension and writing skills. Approximately, 50 per cent of the students were able to obtain passing marks. Ability to fully grasp the core issues and comprehend the salient points of the subject material would have enabled the students to score higher marks. The appropriate replies to parts (b),(c) and (d) of the Question as can be observed from the Text are:
- (b) Saving of time
Ready availability of information
 - (c) Speed reading
Retention ability
Asking relevant questions
Full understanding of the message
 - (d) It allows them more time to review and polish their work and it also prevents them from procrastination.

The quality of the précis was generally unsatisfactory as a number of students were unable to identify and concisely state the key points given in the text. Quite a number of the students did not comply with the requirement of Word Count although it was specifically mentioned in the Question.

- Q.7 The ability to write grammatically correct and interesting dialogues depends on a reasonably adequate vocabulary and a sense of imagination. A number of the students were unable to distinguish between week days and week ends and lost precious marks. Perhaps the students were overwhelmed with their studies and the Cricket World Cup and therefore, these two topics were the dominant points of discussion in most of the dialogues. Excessive use of slang was also observed which is not acceptable in examinations, especially that of Function English. The overall standard was well below the mark.
- Q.8 The topics in the Question on the Essay were relevant and of general current interest. A large number of the students selected the topics of “The Dengue Fever Scare” and “Technology – Makes life Simpler or Complicated.” Lack of coherence in the construction of sentences, grammatical errors and poor expressions were observed in a number of the replies.

(THE END)