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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

URDU: FIRST LANGUAGE

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 3247/01
Reading and Writing

General comments

The performance of the majority of candidates was more than satisfactory, with many of them producing very good performances. There seemed to be no significant problem for them coping with the different technical demands of the new question format, the only limitations being that of:

- the candidates' ability to understand and respond appropriately to the texts and the questions
- their linguistic ability and competence in reading and following instructions.

The paper consisted of two passages of about 350 words each, on a linked theme of *'My First Day at School'*. The first passage was a first person recount of the mainly very negative experiences of the author, the famous Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, in a school in Sialkot. The second passage was an account of a Pakistani boy's first day in a school in London.

Candidates had to read these passages and then answer just two questions which required extended responses. Marks were awarded for content, language and organisation/structure on a scale of 10, 10 and 5, giving a total mark of 25 for each question. There was equal weighting to each question giving a total for the paper of 50 marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

'donoN ybaratoN ke havale se nye talyb ylmoN ke taaseraat ka muwazana kijiye'

'Compare the students' experiences with reference to both passages'.

This question required candidates to write a direct comparison of the two contrasting experiences discussed in the texts.

Candidates were expected to:

- make comparisons making direct reference to these texts
- use, as far as possible, 'their own words'.

It was the second point that made the difference between satisfactory and good performances.

This question was satisfactorily rather than well answered by most candidates. The best were those who were able to extract the main points of each passage and fit them together in such a way as to make appropriate comparisons and contrast. Of course there are points from each text that should be mentioned: the fear and apprehension, the reaction of the other students and teachers and the impressions of the new students themselves.

The best ones were those who wrote their own response to the question, comparing and contrasting these different experiences. The most significant problem this year was that far too many candidates simply wrote two lengthy paragraphs, the first paraphrasing Passage A and the second summarising Passage B. Indeed, some even wrote the Urdu word for summary, *khwlaasa*, at the beginning of their responses. Because they were asked to compare the two passages, merely summarising them without making any direct comparisons or contrasts did not enable them to score high marks. That is not a *muwazana*. The better candidates wrote about the students in each school and then commented on their behaviour, the teachers and compared and contrasted their behaviour, and so forth. They did not merely paraphrase the whole passage without comment.

A vital part of the assessment criteria is to reward candidates' use of Urdu; if they are copying text from the passage, it is not their language and will not be rewarded. This question required information and ideas from the passages to be used, not nearly every word. Of course it is appropriate to quote from the texts, but a quote is a line or two, not a whole paragraph. Copying out large chunks of the text means that they are not going to be rewarded with high marks for using their own words and consequently cannot be given many marks for language.

Question 2

The main thrust of this question, although based on the main theme of the texts, is to provide a stimulus for more creative and imaginative writing on a topic deriving its theme from the texts, but not directly so. This time the candidates were asked to give their ideas on:

'yskul meN nye aane vaale tulba ki mushkylaat'

'The difficulties faced by newly arrived students in school'.

This gave candidates an ideal opportunity to demonstrate their powers of language and argument. The better candidates produced well planned and constructed essays discussing the problems faced by students and giving practical suggestions to make things easier for them. They were able to make their points using their own words within a planned framework, unlike weaker candidates who merely rambled from point to point in an unstructured way.

Although the question was designed so that candidates would not need to make use of much material from the passages, the weaker candidates did rely overmuch on material from the passages. One surprising point of interest emerged, and that was the fact that very few candidates made any mention of their own experiences at school in their responses.

Presentation of work is important and though there were very few candidates whose written Urdu was not up to the task, a minority of papers displayed a very messy handwriting style with crossings out and scribbled insertions.

The length of some of the responses is also problematical. The rubric states that answers should be about a side and a half of paper, depending on size of handwriting. The length of some scripts was well over double that limitation; these will have lost some marks for structure and content. It is very important to follow rubrics if high marks are to be achieved. That being said, overall the majority of candidates wrote relevant, interesting and linguistically accurate responses to both questions.

Paper 3247/02

Texts

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was very good. They showed a good command of language as well as sound knowledge of the texts. Most candidates demonstrated the ability to write very detailed responses and showed confident use of complex sentences. Their answers were relevant and well illustrated. Candidates attempted all four questions in the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Poetry

This question was about a poem written by Assad Ullah Khan Ghalib.

There were five parts to this question and candidates were required to answer all five parts. The majority of candidates attempted this question and on the whole the responses were very good.

- (a) Almost all the candidates answered this part correctly except for a few who mixed up the name of the poet Jigar Murad Abadi with Mir Taqi Mir.
- (b) In general candidates answered this part well and the majority wrote comprehensive answers, however they gave little information about the poem and the hidden meaning of the verse.
- (c) This was a very straightforward question and almost all candidates received full marks.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question very well, expressing the sentiments of the poet and showing a good understanding of the depth of feeling portrayed and making good reference to the verses.
- (e) Very few candidates were able to explain the meaning of the given phrases. Many candidates used the phrases in sentences without demonstrating that they understood the meaning.

Question 2

Azir Akber Abadi

With the exception of a very few candidates, most showed a very good understanding of this topic and were able to discuss the political, socio-economic era of his time. Those who illustrated their answers with quotations from his poetry achieved the highest marks.

Question 3

Prose

- (a)(b) Most candidates answered this question very well. Candidates covered the topic well and were able to correctly identify unacceptable social themes. They were also able to effectively communicate their feelings around the poor treatment of women by *Jirga*.

Very few candidates adequately discussed the character of *Girl*. Those who did picked up all the relevant points and clearly explained them. The remainder of candidates who attempted this question, narrated only the story rather than writing about the character.

Question 4

This proved to be a straightforward question for candidates. The majority wrote very well explaining their own feelings about injustice against women in today's society with reference to the text. Again some candidates only narrated the story, which was not what was required by the question. Candidates were expected to refer to examples from present society as well.