

URDU: FIRST LANGUAGE

Paper 3247/01
Reading and Writing

General comments

The performance of the majority of candidates was at least satisfactory, with some producing very good performances. A significant number of candidates, however, with good linguistic ability and competence in reading the given text, failed to follow the instructions closely, which affected their ability to respond appropriately to the texts and questions.

The paper consists of two passages of approximately 350 words each, on a linked theme. This year's theme was "drinks." Candidates are asked to read the passages and then answer two questions which require extended responses. The first question requires candidates to compare and contrast the two passages. Many candidates merely summarised the two passages without contrasting or drawing any comparisons between the two texts.

QUESTION ONE

DonoN ybaratoN ke havale se cae or koka kola ki samaji ahmiyat ka muwazana kijiye
Compare the social importance of tea and Coca Cola with reference to both passages

This question was a direct comparison of the contrasting drinks discussed in the texts. Candidates were expected to: (i) make comparisons making direct reference to these texts
(ii) use 'their own words' as far as possible.

It was point (i) that made the difference between satisfactory and good performance

This question was satisfactorily rather than well answered by most of candidates. The best responses were from 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 the similarities the most obvious were the popularity of both drinks, the stimulating effects and cost limitations. There were more contrasting points than similarities. Many candidates simply wrote two lengthy paragraphs, the first one paraphrasing Passage A and the second summarizing Passage B. Indeed, some even wrote the Urdu word for summary, '*khwlaasa*', at the beginning of their responses. Because candidates are asked to compare the two passages, merely summarizing them without making any direct comparisons or contrasts did not enable them to achieve high marks - that is not a '*muwazana*'. The better candidates wrote a number of points and compared and contrasted them and 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 own language and will not be rewarded. This question required information and ideas from the passages to be used. It is appropriate to quote from the texts, but a quote is a line or two, not nearly every word. Copying out large chunks of the text means that candidates are not going to be rewarded with high marks for using their own words and consequently cannot be given too many marks for language. That being said, many candidates wrote excellent Urdu using mostly their own words.

QUESTION TWO

The purpose of this question, although based on the main theme of the texts, is to provide 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 write a response to a friend who has sought advice on healthy drinks:

'aap ka dost aap se sahit baksh mashrubat ke bare meN mashvarah karta hai. Aap use kya mashvarah deNge?'

'Your friend asks your advice on healthy drinks. What advice would you give?'

The overall performance in this question was higher than in the first. It gave candidates an ideal opportunity to demonstrate their use of persuasive language and their imagination.

The better candidates produced well planned and constructed essays discussing the pros and cons of different types of drinks, giving practical suggestions for healthy drinking. They were able to make their points using their own words within a planned framework, unlike weaker candidates who wrote in an unfocused and unstructured way.

Although the question was designed so that candidates did not need to make use of much material from the passages, the weaker candidates relied too much on the given material and wrote solely on the benefits or otherwise of tea and Coca Cola. This limited the scope of their response, which could and should have included any drink, particularly healthy ones such as water, milk, lassi, juice, etc. Candidates were not restricted in the format of their response, some wrote dialogues, some paragraphs on each drink, but most wrote in the form of a letter. Several candidates appeared to be unaware that the word '*mashruha*' refers to drink not food and wrote on food without mentioning drink and therefore lost marks for content.

There were very few candidates whose written Urdu was inadequate, although a small number of candidates presented their work in a messy way, with crossings out and scribbled insertions, in contrast to those who wrote well planned and organized essays.

Many responses were well over the prescribed length. 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 and therefore lost some marks for structure and content. It is very important to follow the rubrics if high marks are to be achieved. At this level it is an appropriate linguistic skill to write concisely and therefore necessary for candidates to try to keep within the prescribed limits.

The majority of candidates, however, wrote relevant, interesting and linguistically accurate responses to both questions within the prescribed limits.

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

Paper 3247/02
First Language Urdu

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was very good. On the whole candidates showed that they had a good command of the language and a thorough understanding of the texts. Most candidates were confident in their ability to use complex sentences enabling them to write very detailed and relevant responses to the questions, which were well illustrated. Candidates attempted all of the four questions, including **Question 5** and **6**, which were set on the recently introduced text.

Comments on specific questions

POETRY

Question 1

This question related to a poem entitled '*Shekwa*' written by Allama Iqbal.

There were six parts to this question and candidates were required to answer all six parts. This was a very popular question for candidates and the majority of the responses were very good.

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this part correctly except a few who named the poet but did not give the title of the poem. Both the poet and the title of the poem were required.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this part very well and comprehensively. A few candidates however were unable to express the inner meaning of the verse.
- (c) Most of the candidates answered this challenging question very well. Candidates expressed the sentiments of the poet very well making reference to the verses and showing a good understanding of the depth of the feelings portrayed.
- (d) This was a very straightforward question and almost all candidates got full marks.
- (e) This part of the question was well attempted. The majority of candidates were able to compare the given poem with another poem from the text and showed that they understood them very well.
- (f) The majority of candidates achieved full marks for this part, writing very detailed responses in confident and articulate language.

Question 2

Ataf Hussain Hali

With the exception of a very few candidates, the majority showed a very good understanding of the topic. Most candidates wrote about the simplicity and natural style of his national poems. Those who illustrated their answers with quotations from his poetry achieved the highest marks.

PROSE

Question 3

(a) Almost all candidates who attempted this question scored very good marks. Candidates covered the topic thoroughly and were able to correctly identify the habits of Mrs Niaz. They illustrated their points with quotations from the original text.

(b) The majority of the candidates discussed the attitude of civil servants giving examples from society. Some very good answers were given which were clearly explained with quotations.

(c) This part of the question was again answered very well with good marks achieved.

Question 4

Most candidates answered this question very well and included their own feelings about society. Again those who supported their answers with quotations from the text scored the highest marks. Candidates were expected to give their own opinion in relation to the question which they did successfully.

Question 5

(a) Candidates who attempted this question on the new set text answered very well and achieved good marks. They were able to write extensively about the characters.

(b) The second part of the question was very well attempted and candidates supported their answers with close reference to the novel.

Question 6

Only a few candidates attempted this question and those who did made close reference to the text and gained high marks.