

# SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

**Paper 3248/01**  
**Reading and Writing**

## **Key messages**

The format of this paper has undergone significant changes this year. However, the overall standard, quality, and linguistic demand remain consistent with previous years and are appropriate for the level of this examination. The topics selected for this assessment were engaging, informative and approachable for the majority of candidates. The questions maintained an appropriate level of difficulty to effectively differentiate among variable levels of candidates' performance.

**Exercise 1 – Short-answer questions:** This exercise consists of a comprehension passage. There are six questions worth one or two marks each, set on the information given in the passage, which require brief answers.

**Exercise 2 – Multiple matching:** This is a multiple-choice exercise, based on a text divided into four paragraphs (A-D). Candidates have to identify where exactly different pieces of information are located in the text.

**Exercise 3 – Note-making:** This is a note making exercise. After reading the passage, candidates are required to select the required information and reproduce it in the form of short notes.

**Exercise 4 – Summary:** This is the summary writing exercise, based on the text given for **Exercise 3**. Rather than summarising the whole passage, there are specific instructions given regarding the points to be included in the summary. Concentrating on the required aspects, candidates have to write a summary, keeping the response within the limit of one hundred words. Along with the content, candidates are also assessed on the language used.

**Exercise 5 – Writing exercise:** This is the directed writing exercise. Candidates are asked to write an email as directed. There are three prompts given to respond to in the content of the email, keeping the response within 150 words approximately. Here also, candidates are assessed on both the content of their response, as well as the accuracy and style of the language used.

Candidates are expected to use their own words while answering questions to demonstrate their understanding and therefore, should avoid lifting sentences directly from the passage and using them as their answer.

Whilst minor spelling errors are not penalized in comprehension exercises, there are specific marks allocated for language in the writing tasks. Nevertheless, it is important that candidates' work is legible throughout. It is also important that candidates write their answers in the correct spaces provided. There is an adequate provision of space for each response in the question paper. However, if the candidates find an answer exceeding the given space or they change their mind after writing an answer and want to utilize the blank pages or continue the answer on an extra sheet, they should clearly mention this in the answer space to avoid any confusion. It is recommended to always attempt an answer rather than leaving a blank space.

Candidates need a good understanding of the vocabulary of questions, as well as enough practice in choosing appropriate information from the passages to write their answers. If there is still time, they should also check their responses at the end to avoid any unintentional mistakes or unanswered parts.

## **General comments**

It was a balanced paper catering for the needs of all ability candidates. The content of the paper covered wider aspects of the syllabus and had a fair amount of challenge for all candidates. The overall performance

of the candidates was very good, which indicates that most candidates were well prepared, and questions were within the grasp of a large majority of candidates.

In general, candidates performed very well on comprehension exercises, whereas summary and directed writing were more challenging for lower ability candidates, either due to their limited exposure to the target language or lack of practice. Although many candidates managed to achieve good marks, only the most capable ones could score full marks. The highest scored mark in this exam was 50 out of 50.

Many candidates tended to lift their answers directly from the given text while answering inferential questions, especially in the summary task, which resulted in irrelevant and lengthy details. It also affects negatively the word limit as well as the linguistic quality of the response. Candidates should aim to carefully read and understand the questions and select appropriate answers from the given text.

Another increasing issue is writing over their responses. Complete responses are probably first written in pencil and then overlapped using a pen, creating a double image. If the work is not legible, it can cause a disadvantage to the candidate. It was also observed during marking that some candidates tend to leave questions unanswered. Since there is no negative marking on this paper and they have sufficient time, candidates should be advised to try attempting all answers.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Exercise 1 – (Question 1 – 6) – Short-answer questions**

The text passage about **مرزا سالہ خان غلب** was accessible and easy to comprehend for most of the candidates. In general, this exercise was very well understood by a large majority of candidates and many candidates scored full marks. **Question 3** was answered exceptionally well, whereas, some candidates struggled with **Question 1**, despite the multiple acceptable responses for this direct question. **Question 2** and **Question 5** were worth two marks each; some candidates only provided one detail which was worth only one mark. Some candidates struggled to understand the questions properly and gave ambiguous answers. Many candidates misunderstood **Question 6** as well, which was worth one mark. The question asked the reason for Mirza Ghalib spending a lot of time writing letters. The required answer was that he considered it his duty to reply to all the letters he received from his friends. Candidates who gave ambiguous answers were not able to achieve a mark in this question.

#### **Exercise 2 – (Question 7 – 15) – Multiple matching**

This multiple-choice exercise was based on a passage about facts related to Fast Food and its impact on health. The passage contained four paragraphs (A-D). The candidates had to identify which paragraph contained the selected pieces of information for each question. As a whole, this exercise was very well attempted by many candidates and a large majority of candidates successfully scored full marks on this task. However, **Question 13** and **Question 14** proved to be challenging for some candidates as they were not able to provide the correct answers.

While attempting a multiple-choice question exercise, candidates must always be careful to clearly tick only one out of the four given boxes. If they change their mind afterwards, they must cross out the previous answer before they tick another. If more than one box is ticked, the answer will not be valid.

#### **Exercise 3 – (Question 16 – 19) – Note-making**

This was a note making exercise, based on a very interesting text passage about the world's coldest village named **اویکیاون**. This comprehension exercise posed, comparatively, more challenges than the previous two exercises.

- For **Question 16**, the annual average and lowest temperature in the village was asked, which is clearly mentioned in the text. Many candidates missed **منفی** or **سینٹی گریڈ** in one or both parts of the answer and lost marks.

- **Question 17** had two parts. In the first part, candidates had to state the meaning of the name given to the village and secondly, they had to describe the relevance of this name to the village. The first part was mostly accurately answered, while some candidates struggled with the second part of the question and gave irrelevant or ambiguous responses.
- **Question 18** was about two challenges faced by photographers in the area. It was mostly well attempted, and many candidates scored full marks with their answers.
- **Question 19** was about three unique facts regarding the lifestyle of the inhabitants of this village. Although only three out of four acceptable points were required for three marks, many candidates misunderstood the question and gave partial or completely irrelevant answers. Some candidates gave

رات کو مویشیوں کو جمع کر کے بند کیا جاتا ہے and could

رات کو گاؤں کے تمام مویشیوں کو ایک ہی جگہ بند کیا جاتا ہے (تاکہ وہ گرم رہ سکیں) not convey the required information

Some candidates even wrote **مشینوں** instead of **مویشیوں**. Similarly, the point that refers to: 'they do not need to use a refrigerator to preserve food, and fish as they remain useable for months', could not appropriately convey the required detail without mentioning the use of a refrigerator.

#### Exercise 4 – (Question 20) – Summary

The summary task was based on the passage given for **Exercise 3**. Candidates were clearly guided that they can use some of the notes they made on the previous exercise. However, candidates had to decide which part should be used according to the instructions given for the summary. Unlike previous years' pattern of summary writing, where candidates needed to summarise the whole passage, this paper requires a summary according to the given instructions, where two aspects of the topic needed to be covered and two points for each aspect had to be mentioned, making four distinct points for the summary content. Four marks are allocated for the content, while six marks are reserved for language.

There was plenty of opportunity for candidates to score maximum marks in this part. The points given for discussion were specific and clear and demanded exact information. The overall performance of candidates on this task was good and there were some outstanding responses, showing a thorough understanding of the text, as well as an excellent command of the language and delivering the required information in the required word limit. However, the number of candidates scoring full marks on this task were limited. It was noticed that some candidates were not familiar with this style of summary writing, and they tried to summarise the whole passage and gave lengthy irrelevant details, even missing out the required information or neglecting the word limit. Moreover, as there is an allocation of marks for language also, relying on direct lifting of lengthy pieces of information from the text affects the language marks, as well as adding extra length to the responses. It was also observed that candidates struggled with the spelling and grammar structures, producing sometimes several avoidable errors, which affected their marks for language. As candidates are reproducing the information from the given text after tailoring it to suit the demand of the topic, often using the same key vocabulary as in the text, can avoid, to a great extent, many spelling and grammatical errors.

It was also observed in this question that some candidates, who demonstrated to have some difficulties in producing their own summary, went over the word limit with long paragraphs, sometimes even stretching their answers to extra sheets, despite the summary's topic being clearly mentioned in the question

(اویسیا کوں کے باریوں کا مخصوص رہن سہن اور حکومت کی جانب سے کیے جانے والے اقدامات (i.e. **اقدامات**), which required specific information.

Candidates must practice more the new summary pattern writing and understand how they should present their answers in an effective way. Candidates should make sure that they read the passage very carefully and then choose the specific information according to the topic given for the summary task. Candidates should be able to extract the gist of the required information for their summary, separating the extended and unnecessary details, in order to meet the word limit requirement of 100 words, approximately. If candidates reproduce the information without properly cutting down on redundant details, they will end up exceeding the word limit. Candidates must also be very careful about the accuracy of the selected information to avoid losing marks.

### Exercise 5 – (Question 21) – Writing exercise

This exercise consists of a directed writing task. Candidates had to write an email to the principal of a local college, thanking him/her for their admission to the college. Three prompts were given regarding the information candidates needed to include in their email. They had to include their selected subjects and reason for their choice, their academic performance at school and finally, their opinions about extracurricular activities. For each prompt, they needed to include at least two points to gain the full six marks for content. Some candidates successfully met the demand of this exercise and obtained good marks. While many candidates missed out one or more details and lost marks. The points required to be discussed in the email should be clear and unambiguous. This exercise also allocates eight marks for accuracy and style of language; therefore, candidates should be careful about their spelling and grammar when producing their answers. Several candidates were not able to achieve marks on the last point regarding extra-curricular activities as they did not understand it and have confused these with criminal activities and there were also other candidates that, on the first prompt, simply did not write the reason why the subjects were chosen in the college.

Some candidates have shown that they were very well prepared for the task. However, some responses demonstrated some lack of understanding of the requirements for this writing task and have completely neglected all the directions about the content. If there is no valid point included in the content, no marks can be awarded for language. Therefore, it is very important for candidates to tailor their responses according to the instructions given in the question.

# SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

**Paper 3248/02**  
**Grammar, Writing and Translation**

## Key messages

To achieve a good grade in this examination, candidates should attempt all four exercises.

- **Exercise 1 – Sentence transformation:** In this exercise, candidates read five short sentences and then they have to transform/complete the second sentence using the given prompts, without changing or altering the original meaning of the first sentence.
- **Exercise 2 – Multiple-choice cloze passage:** In this exercise, candidates are tested in the application of grammar within a context. Candidates read a short text with several gaps to be filled in with one of the multiple-choice options given to each gap.
- **Exercise 3 – Extended writing exercise:** In this exercise, candidates are required to write a piece of continuous prose of approximately 200 words. A stimulus of short prompts has also been given to aid candidates, if they wish to use them to complete their essay.
- **Exercise 4 – Translation:** Candidates translate a short passage of approximately 150 words from English into Urdu.

## General comments

This paper consists of four exercises which include seventeen questions and the total marks for the paper is 50 marks.

This June 2024 was the first examination under the revised syllabus and many candidates performed well and achieved their full potential.

For **exercise 1** and **exercise 2**, candidates' performance was very good and most candidates achieved full marks.

In **exercise 3**, the extended writing question, some candidates could not reach the top levels of the mark scheme for content and for language and achieve full marks, as they could not developed their ideas effectively and distinctively in their own words within the appropriate length.

For **exercise 4**, candidates were required to translate an English passage of 150 words into Urdu. The performance on the translation question has shown significant improvement compared with previous outcomes under the former version of the syllabus. However, some candidates struggled, as they either translated the English words incorrectly into Urdu or omitted/missed the main key messages.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Exercise 1– (Questions 1 to 5) Sentence Transformation**

The main objective of this exercise is to test the candidates grammatical understanding.

The candidates were asked to complete the second sentence with the prompts given, without altering the meaning of the actual sentence.

The completed sentence must be clearly legible and the meaning should be conveyed unambiguously.

Overall, candidates performed well in this exercise. Most of the candidates have achieved full marks. Some candidates found **Question 3** and **Question 4** more challenging as they could not complete the sentences with the appropriate words to give them the correct meaning.

### **Exercise 2 – (Questions 6 to 15) Multiple-choice cloze passage**

In this exercise, there was an Urdu passage with ten gaps that candidates had to complete by choosing the correct option from the four given to each gap.

Candidates were required to read the passage carefully in order to decide the appropriate option according to the context of the passage. Candidates simply had to tick the box in front of the correct answer.

A large majority of the candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the text and select the correct responses. Some candidates, due to limited knowledge of the target language found **Questions 9, 10, 12** and **14** more challenging, as they could not select the appropriate answer.

Some candidates have also put a tick in more than one option in each question and lost their marks. Candidates need to ensure they are clear on the option chosen. Therefore, candidates are advised to clearly cross out the incorrect answer and highlight their final answer. Candidates that have crossed out the incorrect option and have made their selected option clear, were awarded with the mark, as long as it was the correct option.

### **Exercise 3 – Extended writing (Question 16)**

In this exercise, candidates were required to write a piece of continuous prose of approximately 200 words on the holidays topic which was provided in a form of a statement.

In this examination, the statement was: 'Spending holidays abroad is one of the best ways to gain information'. Candidates were provided with two stimulus that could be in the favour or against the statement.

The marks were awarded according with candidates' performance against the mark scheme's band descriptors, with ten marks available for content and ten marks available for language.

Most candidates have approached this topic effectively. They have discussed the benefits of traveling abroad and referred: gaining cultural and historical information, attending local events and interacting with local people as the most significant ways of gathering information.

Some candidates have argued against the statement, pointing out that even without travelling abroad on holidays, valuable information can be obtained through alternative sources like internet, books from local libraries or through the media.

Several candidates decided to approach both sides of the statement and have given their ideas in favour and against, within an appropriate length. They have given their own conclusive opinion and have also gained high marks in content and in language.

Some candidates could only manage to provide simple relevant points which lacked depth in their arguments and could not go to higher levels for both content and language.

A few candidates struggled with language fluency and expression. While some ideas were clear, they could have benefited from using more sophisticated Urdu language, including a varied vocabulary and more complex sentence structures.

Overall, candidates have performed well in this exercise, showing a clear understanding of the topic and their ability to articulate their thoughts in a coherent and cohesive way. Although, candidates are encouraged to develop or elaborate their points or ideas more in depth to back their arguments up. They should support their ideas/points with concrete examples to enhance the quality of their essays and to achieve higher marks in this exercise.

#### Exercise 4 – Translation (Question 17)

In this exercise candidates were required to translate an English passage of 150 words into Urdu. This series the passage was on the Education topic.

The marks were awarded according with the candidates' performance in the light of the band descriptors presented in the mark scheme. There were five marks for **Communicating key points** and ten marks were available for **Applying linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Candidates who communicated all points clearly scored full marks for content and many were able to achieve the full ten marks for language, if they have made no spellings/grammatical mistakes.

Some candidates have frequently transliterated English words and lost marks as they have not attempted using the appropriate Urdu words.

Many candidates struggled to translate key words correctly into Urdu, have not translated some key words or missed some of the words when translating and therefore lost some marks.

Overall, candidates have shown an improvement on their performance in this translation task. Despite some spelling or grammar inaccuracies, candidates were generally successful and displayed good communication skills when translating from English into Urdu.