

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure that they understand the focus of the question by reading it carefully before answering.
- Candidates should answer **Question 3** and **Question 4** in their own words as far as possible, in order to demonstrate that they have understood what they have read in the two passages.

General comments

Most candidates understood the passages very well and answered the questions accurately. In some answers to **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates copied whole sentences or phrases from the passages or provided lengthy responses with unnecessary details, which suggested that they had either not understood the focus of the question or not fully understood what they had read in the passages. Answers such as these cannot be awarded marks for comprehension.

In other cases, candidates wrote very well in terms of vocabulary and grammar but did not keep their focus on the specific details asked for in the question.

Some errors in spellings and grammatical structures were noticeable in weaker responses.

In **Question 5(a)**, many candidates did not fully understand the focus of the question and therefore included irrelevant information in their summaries.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates attempted this question with success and secured good marks. Some misunderstood the word in **Question 1(b)** (تجارت) and confused it with (ہجرت). A few appeared to misunderstand the word in **Question 1(c)** (مطالعہ).

In a few cases, candidates copied a sentence from the passage and therefore the mark could not be awarded. Candidates must write sentences in their own words to show that they have understood the meaning of the word given in the question.

Question 2

Some candidates did not understand the requirements of this question and are reminded that they should read the rubric carefully.

The majority of candidates found **Questions 2(a)**, **2(c)** and **2(e)** challenging and these questions were not well answered. Many candidates answered **Question 2(c)** (مشکلات) in the singular form as (آسانی) instead of plural as (آسانیاں).

There were spelling errors in a number of responses.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates did well in this question and mentioned all three pieces of information required.
- (b) This question required candidates to write about the difficulties faced by the tourists. Most candidates answered correctly and scored full marks. Some candidates wrote about the condition of roads and the fact that there were not enough hotels, which was not required in this question.
- (c) Most candidates described the beauty of northern areas very well and mentioned all three points required. Some candidates missed out 'waterfalls' and therefore could not score the mark for that point.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question very well mentioning all three points required.
- (e) Some candidates found this question difficult to answer and a few missed out key pieces of information. For example, instead of saying that the Australian tourist learnt about *modern* Pakistan, candidates wrote simply that he had learnt about Pakistan.

Question 4

- (a) Only a few candidates answered this question correctly. Instead of writing about the country the tourists were visiting, many candidates wrote about the country the tourists were coming from.
- (b) This question required candidates to write about the advice given to the tourists by Mark Nelson. It was generally well answered although some candidates missed the point that life could be different in the country the tourists are visiting.
- (c) Most candidates managed to mention all three points required in this question and scored good marks.
- (d) A number of candidates missed the point that some tourists do not try to understand the situation in the country they are visiting. Some candidates mentioned all three pieces of information required and scored full marks.
- (e) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates understood the focus of the question (پاکستان میں سیاحت کے مثبت اور منفی پہلو) and summarised well a number of relevant positive and negative aspects of tourism in Pakistan as outlined in the passages.

Some candidates did not seem to understand that the question was related to the benefits and difficulties for tourists visiting Pakistan only, rather than worldwide. Many candidates got carried away in writing about the scenic beauty of northern Pakistan and wasted some of the word count on such descriptions. This meant that by the time they started writing about the positive and negative aspects of tourism in Pakistan they had already reached the permitted word limit and therefore marks could not be awarded.

Some candidates simply reproduced the text without focusing on the requirements of the question. A few candidates copied out details from the passages which were not relevant to tourists visiting Pakistan.

- (b) In **Question 5(b)** most candidates gave their opinion about tourism in their area or city. However, some candidates did not understand the question fully and talked about Pakistan as a country or tourism in general which was not the focus in this question.

Quality of Language

The majority of candidates scored highly for the quality of the language used in their responses.

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Paper 9686/03
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- plan their essay before they start writing in order to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments.
- write a composition on the essay title, **not** the general topic heading.
- stay within the prescribed word limit.

General comments

Overall, the performance of candidates was good, with a high proportion of excellent scripts. In the best essays, candidates showed a genuine interest in the question that they had selected and they were able to produce an extended piece of writing that was relevant, detailed and showed a solid understanding of the issues raised by the question. These essays were mature and thoughtful and clearly reflected an in-depth study of the topic area.

A significant number of essays did not address the precise wording of the question or showed a misunderstanding of the task set, leading to generalisations and irrelevant answers. It is particularly important that essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general overarching topic area.

Planning is a useful step in writing a good essay as evidenced by a number of scripts. Candidates who organised the material and their ideas, even briefly, before writing, tended to gain higher marks for Content and were more likely to present their arguments logically, using paragraphs and a range of linking words. Candidates who were not as deliberate in their planning ended up repeating points already made which affected the overall structure of the essay.

Quality of language

The best essays demonstrated a good level of grammatical accuracy and variety in the choice of vocabulary and structures, including topic-appropriate vocabulary and thoughtful use of linking words, which enabled candidates to communicate their ideas effectively.

The best essays included a wide range of clause structures and complex sentences. Candidates who achieved the highest marks were very deliberate in their use of sophisticated idioms and metaphors to further enhance their essays.

Some candidates showed little grammatical and structural awareness and there were inaccuracies in irregular verbs, subject-verb agreements, articles and basic grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a very popular question and a number of essays included some excellent points. The best responses contained an insightful and relevant discussion of the benefits of modern-day technology and how it has made life more convenient and easier for people in their daily lives.

Many candidates provided a balanced argument and mentioned the issues caused by an overreliance on modern machines such as laziness, health issues and a society that is becoming deskilled. Although many felt that machines help reduce the time taken to complete tasks, the best responses detailed how this has resulted in higher unemployment rates as large businesses and industries are now replacing human labour with machines. In addition to this, the maintenance of machines and affordability was discussed alongside the many benefits they provide.

Some candidates successfully argued that machines have caused people to become impatient and we now live in a generation where we expect things to be completed instantaneously. A comparison with life before machines was made to further emphasise this point.

Question 2

This was a fairly popular question and candidates thoughtfully presented their discussion reflecting on our modern-day lifestyle and what impact this has had on eating habits and general health. Many candidates suggested that an organic and balanced diet has many health benefits, but a busy and fast-paced lifestyle does not always allow for healthy home cooked meals.

For convenience, many people now opt for fast food, home delivery services and ready meals which are high in calories and have a detrimental impact on one's health. The best responses extended the argument and linked this trend to the various physical and mental health issues that could arise as a result, including heart disease, diabetes, depression and obesity. Irregular mealtimes and an inconsistent diet were also mentioned as a contributing factor to an unhealthy lifestyle. Many candidates gave reasons as to why this may be a modern-day issue including a lack of time, busy schedules, jobs that are more demanding and both partners being in full time employment.

The best essays not only discussed the increase in bad eating habits but also provided an effective counterargument, with extensive knowledge about health-conscious individuals and the various life choices they make. Some provided examples of people who have specific dietary requirements such as vegans or those who choose to follow a healthy diet plan in order to avoid illnesses and to optimise their physical and mental health.

Question 3

This question was attempted by some candidates and they were able to show sound knowledge supported by well structured and coherent arguments. Some gave a general response discussing only unemployment and the reasons behind it, including not enough available jobs and an unfair selection process. The better responses went on to provide examples of what governments can do to minimise these issues. Furthermore, they commented on relevant issues such as COVID-19 and the impact this has had on employment regardless of one's skill set.

The best responses used more complex sentence structures to convey their points. Many candidates suggested governments that lack resources struggle to tackle the issue of unemployment in their countries which then results in higher crime rates. A few candidates had relevant suggestions, in their conclusions, on what the government can do to help reduce unemployment rates such as providing the population with opportunities to learn new skills and by supplying them with the tools and resources that could help them earn an income.

Question 4

This was not a very popular question and only a small minority of candidates attempted it. Those that did showed a deep understanding of foreign aid and how this benefits developing countries. The highest scoring essays described how the aid is a temporary solution to a much larger problem that needs to be tackled by the government. Candidates provided a well thought out conclusion summarising the main points and suggested more long-term solutions that could have a more lasting impact.

Question 5

This was a popular question and there were some very interesting responses which contained thoughtful discussions on the negative impact of plastic on our environment. In the best essays thoughts were justified with clear and relevant facts and opinions which showed a sound understanding of the question.

Most candidates mentioned how it takes many years for plastic to decompose and how toxic substances are released into the air when plastic is burnt. The air pollution caused can result in respiratory health problems and is dangerous for the environment. In addition to this, the best essays explored the problem of littering and how plastic waste in the sea can cause big complications for animals and sea life.

Most candidates supported their arguments with facts and used a range of examples to build a well structured and coherent essay. Some candidates gave alternative suggestions on how recycling plastic and the use of biodegradable materials can counteract the problem. They made points to suggest that plastic is a useful and important material, with many benefits and therefore, completely prohibiting the use of plastics would be impossible to do. However, limiting the use and only using plastic where there is no alternative option could greatly benefit the environment.

URDU

Paper 9686/04
Texts

Key messages

To do well in this examination candidates should:

- choose carefully either part (a) or (b) in each of their chosen questions and think carefully about the focus of the question.
- explore all required elements of the question and provide a complete and relevant answer.
- include detailed and relevant references to the set work.
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and then reach a sound conclusion.

General comments

Candidates are reminded that they must write their chosen question numbers clearly in English.

Candidates should not write an opening paragraph which addresses, in rather general terms, the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should focus on the requirements of the question rather than writing about the life and achievements of the author.

Candidates should select the question they want to answer carefully and ensure that what they write in response to it is relevant. In some essays the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to the chosen question, but at other times, answers were generalised or seemed to be an answer to a question from a past paper which had been used as exam practice.

The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes/essays plans were often evident on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion. Candidates are advised to leave time to re-read, check, and edit their work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A good number of candidates attempted this question and many secured good marks in both parts. This was a passage-based question and answers need to make reference to the ghazal mentioned in the question. Most candidates managed to answer part (i) very well but only those who also answered part (ii) in detail were able to access the high mark bands in the mark scheme.
- (b) This was an essay type question where candidates were asked to analyse the poetry of a given poet with reference to the focus in the question. Only a few candidates attempted this question. There were a number of good responses but some candidates simply wrote a biography of the poet rather than addressing the statement given in the question.

Question 2

- (a) A good number of candidates attempted this question and some wrote good essays. Candidates who focused their responses on the given ghazal scored well.

- (b) This question was the most popular in this section. The majority of candidates wrote good answers and focused on the precise requirements of the question. Others discussed the poet's life and his contributions and did not answer the question which had been asked.

Question 3

- (a) A very small number of candidates attempted this question. Some simply explained the extract from the poem. Only a minority addressed the focus of the question in their discussion in relation to the given poem.
- (b) There were very few answers to this question. Some of those who attempted it analysed the poetry well in relation to issues in society.

Question 4

- (a) Due to an issue with the wording of this question, careful consideration was given to responses in order to ensure that no candidates were disadvantaged.
- Many candidates attempted this question and understood the requirements. There were a number of interesting and relevant responses.
- (b) Very few candidates attempted this question. Most of those who chose to answer it addressed the focus mentioned in the question (منظر نگاری کی اہمیت). Some candidates did not seem to have understood the requirements of the question and simply described the novel in general.

Question 5

- (a) This was a fairly popular question. Some of those who attempted it misunderstood the focus of the question. Some candidates struggled to discuss the demands of the question and simply reproduced the story and wrote about the characters.
- (b) This was another popular question in this section. Many candidates wrote detailed responses and analysed the *afsana* with reference to the issues faced by poor people. Weaker essays were too dependent on narrative and memorised oddments.

Question 6

- (a) The majority of candidates who attempted this question secured good marks by analysing the drama *Anarkali* with reference to characterisation. Those candidates who simply described the characters in the drama could not access the higher mark bands.
- (b) This question asked candidates to express their opinion regarding Dil Aram's actions in the drama in the light of the given statement with the keywords (دلآرام نے جو بھی کیا وہ ٹھیک تھا). Those who understood the focus of the question and included their own opinions, were able to access the higher mark bands. Some essays simply described the character of Dil Aram with insufficient focus on the requirements of the question.