

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 it.
- It is important to provide detailed and precise answers in line with what was asked in the questions.

General comment

Most candidates did very well in the paper and scored high marks.

In **Section 1**, the Urdu text passage was about some advantages of book reading. The text passage in the **Section 2** contained disadvantages of book reading. Most candidates understood the passages very well and answered precisely in line with the focus of the questions.

Most candidates used their time and skills to handle questions appropriately. 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 required in the question.

Some errors in spelling 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

Majority of candidates attempted this question with success and secured good marks, but some struggled with the word (محروم) while a few got confused with the word (یادداشت).

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. Candidates were asked to find synonyms for the phrases from the first passage. Some candidates successfully used their own words. Some candidates seemed to misunderstand the word in **Question 2(d)** (شک).

There were spelling errors in a number of responses.

Question 3

In general, it was very well attempted by most candidates, except only a few who could not correctly answer **Question 3(a)** (لائبریریاں تیزی سے کم/بند ہو رہی) and **Question 3(b)** (کتابیں گھروں میں جمع کرنا لوگوں کا مشغلہ تھا) (ہیں).

In **Question 3(c)** some candidates wrote (طلباء کے لیے لائبریری بہت مناسب جگہ تھی/ان لائبریریوں میں ہر قسم کی کتابیں دستیاب ہوتی تھیں) both points as their answer and lost one valuable mark.

In **Question 3(d)**, candidates who simply copied from the passage answered the question incorrectly.

Similarly, in **Question 3(e)**, some candidates did not answer this question precisely (طلباء کو حقیقی/صحیح/درست معلومات ملتی ہیں) and (ان کا حافظہ اچھا ہوتا ہے) due to lack of understanding of the required keywords in the question.

However, candidates who understood the questions and answered them correctly and precisely scored full marks.

Question 4

In **Question 4(a)**, only few candidates have missed (لوگوں کو غیر ضروری باتیں بھی پڑھنی پڑتی ہیں).

In **Question 4(b)**, both (ورزش نہ کرنے کی وجہ سے جسم سست/بیمار ہوجاتے) and (معاشرتی زندگی پر منفی اثرات پڑتے ہیں) (ہیں) were interpreted in various ways taking them away from the correct and precise answers.

In **Question 4(c)**, (کتابیں مخصوص حالات میں لکھی جاتی ہیں/دنیا میں بدلتے حالات کا مقابلہ نہیں کر سکتیں) some candidates did not always relate their answer to the time/circumstances which demonstrated lack of understanding of the focus words in the question.

Most candidates attempted **Question 4(d)** very well.

In **Question 4(e)**, the phrase (کتابوں کو پھینکنے کا مناسب انتظام نہیں کیا جاتا) مناسب انتظام was often missed out in.

Question 5

Most candidates understood the focus (کتاب بینی کے فوائد اور نقصانات) in the question and explained the positive and negative aspects correctly.

Some candidates did not understand that the question was related to the positive and negative points for book reading in the given passages. They wrote points that were not from the passages.

Many candidates wrote a lengthy introduction and mentioned some of the positive and negative opinions outside the word count limit. Candidates are reminded that this is a summary question. Candidates can write in their own words but the answers must be taken from the given passages.

In **Question 5b**, most candidates gave their opinion and explanations very well about the book reading and scored full marks. However, some candidates did not understand the question fully and wrote about book reading in general without giving their opinion or explanation either from the passages or from outside the passages.

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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. The best candidates showed a genuine interest in the question that they had selected and were able to produce an extended piece of writing that was relevant and detailed, and showed a solid understanding of the issues raised in the question. Their essays were mature and thoughtful and clearly reflected an in-depth study of the chosen title.

A significant number of scripts did not address the precise wording of the question or show 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 agreement, articles and basic grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was the third most answered question, and several candidates were able to successfully attempt it. Notably, the best candidates presented a well-balanced argument evaluating the role a parent plays in their child's behaviour.

Strong candidates demonstrated a deep understanding of the topic and could effectively analyse the various factors that influence a child's behaviour. In their responses, candidates argued that parents play a key role in a child's development. They were also able to effectively take into consideration other factors making their arguments balanced and well-rounded. They acknowledged that parenting alone does not mould a child's personality and behaviour and that factors such as the child's friends, environment, beliefs, societal influences, and media exposure also play a part in shaping a child. The best candidates substantiated their arguments with relevant examples and insightful reasoning. They recognised that in today's day and age parents are spending less time with their children as they have to work to meet their financial needs. Therefore, they are not as involved in their children's lives.

Some candidates wrote essays that provided one side of the argument emphasising the point that parents are solely responsible for their children as they are the primary caregivers. They argued that a nurturing and supportive family environment can significantly contribute to positive behavioural outcomes regardless of external influences.

Overall, the best candidates skilfully demonstrated analytical thinking and critical evaluation and wrote relevant essays that directly addressed the question. They accepted the role parents play but could also effectively argue that peer pressure and the company a child keeps will also shape them. Therefore, attributing all responsibility solely to parents may oversimplify the multifaceted nature of child development and conduct.

Question 2

Although this question was not attempted by a vast majority of candidates, those that did attempt it raised some insightful and relevant ideas. The candidates, who explored the topic, recognised the significant responsibility the government holds in maintaining law and order. They recognised that in order to maintain law and order in society there must be collaboration between the government, citizens and various societal institutions such as community groups, schools and religious organisations. These candidates argued that for law and order to prevail citizen participation is vital and must not be overlooked.

The best candidates showed a good understanding of the roles the government plays such as creating and enforcing law, establishing law enforcement agencies, and ensuring the judicial system operates fairly, and consistently and treats everyone equally. While the government provides the infrastructure for law and order it is the citizens who must adhere to the laws and cooperate with the enforcement agencies. These candidates emphasised that a balanced partnership between the government and citizens is vital for creating a safer and more secure society.

High-achieving candidates made good points that showed a sound understanding of the issues raised and wrote essays that were accurately written using language articulately and fluently.

Question 3

This question was attempted by a very small number of candidates who were able to show sound knowledge providing well-structured and coherent arguments. The best responses addressed the specific question and considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way, with points that had been elaborated and justified.

Many candidates were able to identify how advancements in technology such as virtual reality and high-definition travel documentaries can now provide viewers with an immersive experience of many popular tourist destinations. As a result, people can experience foreign cultures without physically travelling. The best candidates gave a balanced argument by also mentioning that these virtual experiences cannot replicate the unique benefits of international travel such as exposure to different customs, languages, traditions which help to create tolerance and global harmony. Some candidates also mentioned the enriching experiences and cultural attractions which are available to people within their own country making domestic tourism an appealing option for many people. They were able to further enhance their point by mentioning the benefits of this on the country's economy.

Question 4

This was the second most popular question attempted. These candidates displayed a balanced argument, carefully analysing how the internet can help someone make money.

The candidates acknowledged that technology and online platforms have made it easier than ever to earn money online and this has expanded the avenues for making money. They highlighted how individuals can

utilise online platforms to sell their products to a global market without the constraints of a physical location providing opportunities which were previously unimaginable. Furthermore, platforms like Youtube and Tiktok which many people now watch for entertainment purposes allow individuals to showcase their skills and talents to a wider audience which can again provide financial growth.

Moreover, the candidates discussed the benefits of using online classes to educate oneself and acquire new skills which could then help an individual earn money. There is a plethora of information and resources available online that could help someone create and start their own business.

The best responses gave a balanced argument and highlighted the potential limitations that arise as not everyone has equal access to technology and success can sometimes depend on digital literacy. They also mentioned the challenges of digital security and how often accounts can get hacked online.

Question 5

This question was the most popular question answered on the paper. Those who were able to answer the question specifically did well. The best responses argued that environment conservation is a shared responsibility and that all members of society play a role in maintaining a clean environment. Candidates also recognised that younger individuals are frequently at the forefront of environmental campaigns due to their enthusiasm which can inspire change within societies. However, they discussed how older generations play an equally crucial role as they usually have the power to implement systematic changes, create regulations and hold significant influence over environmental policies and practices.

The question required a balanced argument that acknowledged that environmental conservation is a collective responsibility that involves individuals of all ages. While the youth inject rigour and a sense of urgency into environmental movements, the influence and experiences of the older generation are equally valuable in creating long lasting change. By addressing these aspects, candidates can provide a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of the question. Many candidates provided a strong conclusion emphasising the main points of their essay and were able to provide their own thoughts and opinions.

There were some candidates who wrote essays on pollution and the negative impacts of it and only linked their points to the question in a limited capacity. Candidates need to answer the question set; those who provided a pre-learned answer for a question they had prepared for rather than the question on the paper, were unable to provide specific points and gave more generalised opinions on the broader topic area. This resulted in their scores being limited to low band marks.

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Paper 9686/04
Texts

Key messages

To do well in this examination, candidates should:

- choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** in each of their chosen questions and think carefully about the focus of the questions
- explore all required elements of the question and provide a complete and relevant answer
- ensure not to answer more than one question on the same text
- make a stance or give opinions and also give justifications or references to expand their responses
- 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 the question rather than writing about the life and achievements of the author.

Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to the chosen questions, 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 out 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. Right hand answer booklets are very useful to follow the flow of Urdu text.

It was also evident throughout the scripts that some candidates were overly conscious of the total number of words. Candidates are advised that there is a certain amount of room available for additional words. This lack of awareness led to an abrupt ending.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** A large number of candidates attempted this question and secured good marks in both parts. Many candidates managed to address the focus of this question very well. This is a passage-based question, and all the answers should be given with reference to the ghazal mentioned in the question. Most candidates managed to answer part **(i)** very well but only those who answer part **(ii)** in detail were able to access the high mark bands in the mark scheme. Many candidates, while attempting part **(ii)**, repeated the same content explaining the given poetry only. The candidates should remember that in part **(ii)** they needed to discuss the whole ghazal rather than the given couplets.

- (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 have 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 very good number of candidates have attempted this question and secured good marks. The majority of candidates secured better marks in both parts if they have given due attention to the focus of the (ii). The candidates who focused their responses only on the given extract did not score well.
- (ii) Some candidates reproduced the explanation of the same couplets (a)(i) and did not concentrate on the main focus of this section with reference to the whole 'Nazam'.
- رومانی پہلو کی عکاسی کرتی ہے۔ failed to score top band marks. Many candidates also wrote about other aspects of his poetry such as 'Siasi' aspect. However, the candidates who focused on the required aspect with reference to the whole 'Nazam' secured better marks.
- (b) This question was the most popular in section one. The majority of candidates have explained well with regards to the demand of the question, whereas some only discussed poet's life and his contributions rather than addressing the question. Those candidates who understood the question demands and addressed (شاعری میں زندگی کی محرومیاں بہت نمایاں ہیں) have secured top band marks. However, there was a phrase (جن اشعار کا مطالعہ کیا ہے) in the question, which restricted some candidates to give references only from the poems in the syllabus.

Question 3

- (a) A very small number of candidates attempted this question. Some candidates have simply explained the extract from the poem. Only some candidates have addressed the focus of the question in their discussion in respect to the given poem.
- (b) There were very few attempts to answer this question. Some candidates who have attempted the question and analysed the poetry in the light of the focus of the question, gained good marks.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates have attempted this question. Strong candidates have addressed the focus (ایک خاص دور کی عکاسی), made a good stance and defended it with quotations from the text. Good references were made to the issues being faced by people in the developing countries and how people are forced to take actions to survive. Some candidates wrote about that era whereas some candidates compared this with the present era.
- (b) Many candidates have attempted this question and secured good marks. However, some candidates describe the story rather than discussing how the novel holds the mirror to the society. The candidates who targeted the focus of the question and gave examples secured marks in the top band.

Question 5

- (a) This was a popular option in **section 2**. The majority of responses to this question produced some excellent outcomes. Some weaker candidates struggled to discuss the demand of the question with focus/keywords (اس کاموضوع یا انداز بیان). They reproduced the story and gave a brief summary.
- (b) This was another popular option in **section 2**. Many candidates who produced detailed responses secured good marks. This question asked candidates to analyse the Afsana and its importance in the present era for readers. Weaker candidates appeared to be dependent on narrative. The candidates with command on the subject matter secured top marks.

Question 6

- (a) Majority of the candidates who attempted this question secured good marks by analysing the characteristics of 'Saleem' proving if he was thinking like a prince or not. Many strong candidates compared the traits of his character depicted in the play and made solid conclusions.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse the reason of Anarkali's death within the drama in the light of events. Those who understood the focus of this question and included their own opinions with reference to the text secured the top band marks. However, some responses which only described the character could not secure higher marks.