

URDU

Paper 9686/02
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- Candidates are strongly advised to read and understand the **focus** of each question by reading the rubric carefully to grasp what exactly is being asked before answering the question.
- In answering **Questions 1, 3, 4 and 5** it is important to answer what exactly was asked in the question.
- A few candidates did not attempt some questions in section 3 and 4 that caused automatic deduction.

General comment

This paper was similar in standard and accessibility to previous years. Most candidates responded to the paper very well and scored good marks. Only a few candidates missed **Question 2**, and some parts of **Questions 3 and 4**.

In **Question 5(a)**, some candidates did not read the rubric carefully to answer the question correctly. However, most candidates gained 5–7 marks in average.

The Urdu text passage in **Section 1** was about the benefits of internet technology in classrooms. The text passage in the **Section 2** was about the negative aspects and dangers associated with internet technology in classrooms. Most candidates understood the passages very well and answered all the questions accurately.

Although, the majority of the candidates used their time and skills to answer all questions correctly, there were some cases where candidates copied responses from the inserts directly. In some instances, they extended their responses with unnecessary details showing a lack of understanding of the focus of the question. As a result answers ran beyond the space provided for answers. In other cases, some candidates wrote very well in terms of vocabulary and grammar, but unfortunately did not keep the focus on the specific details asked in the question; they did not carefully read and understand the rubric of the question.

Some weaknesses and errors in spellings and grammatical structures were still noticeable in lower ability candidates.

In one or two questions in **Section 1 (Question 3)** and **Section 2 (Question 4)**, some candidates managed to generate correct responses by lifting the text from the inserts. In a few cases, the candidates lifted text word by word from the insert indiscriminately without their own manipulation hence lost marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most of the candidates successfully attempted this question and scored good marks, but some struggled with (جائزہ) and ended up confusing (اندازہ) while a few got confused with (امکان). In a few cases, candidates lifted the material from **Section 1** insert word for word and thus lost marks.

Question 2

Some candidates did not understand the question. They were supposed to find the synonym for these phrases from the text passage 1. Some used their own words. Many candidates found (اضافہ کر سکیں) and (سہولتیں) difficult.

Similarly, correct spellings were missing on most of the required words. Specifically, some failed on (اپنے خیالات کا) (یہ بھی ممکن ہے) and (اظہار کرتے ہوئے).

Question 3

- (a) A few candidates failed to correctly answer (اب ہر کمرے میں ٹیکنالوجی موجود ہے), instead they wrote about technology in general.
- (b) Many candidates mentioned (معلومات) only in place of (مزید معلومات).
- (c) Most candidates answered this question very well but a few were confused about (کارکردگی) and linked it to their teachers' (تعلیمی کارکردگی کا جائزہ) rather than their own. Similarly, some were confused about the word (طرز عمل/چال چلن).
- (d) Most candidates did well. For some, instead of writing (پہلے تحقیق کے لیے) (لاہیری جاکر کتابیں پڑھنا پڑتی تھیں) they wrote (پہلے لاہیری جاکر کتابیں نہیں پڑھنا پڑتیں) and so on. However, some repeated the same information in their answers such as (ساری معلومات ایک ہی جگہ/انٹرنیٹ پر مل جاتی ہیں).
- (e) Most of the candidates understood the question well and successfully scored three points. However, some candidates could not answer all the four points and lost one mark. They did not grasp the focus of the (والدین کو مالی پریشانی نہیں ہوگی) due to lack of understanding of the key words (کیوں محدود ہونا چاہیے) in the questions and answered the opposite and lost mark.

Question 4

- (a) A good number of candidates were unable to respond to both points of this question. The majority of those who missed one point, misunderstood the first point. They wrote: (ہر طالب علم کے لیے سہولت دستیاب/حاصل) instead of writing: (تاکہ ہر طالب علم کو سہولت دستیاب ہو). Only a few candidates correctly answered this question due to missing the possibility/danger (خوشدہ ہے/خطرہ ہے/ہو سکتا ہے/ایسا نہ ہو کہ ہر طالب علم کے لیے سہولت دستیاب نہ ہو).
- (b) Was very well answered by the majority of candidates. However, some faltered on (ایک دوسرے کے خیالات یا) (جذبات سے آگاہی نہیں ہوتی).
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question well by writing all four points. However, a small number wrote only three points correctly.
- (d) Was a little problematic for some candidates answering (طلبا غیر محفوظ ہو جاتے ہیں). Some wrote it in general terms rather than for students thus missing the focus of the question.
- (e) Many candidates answered this question by suggesting solutions (دور زش کرنے سے) rather than indicating the subsequent problems caused by this. Many candidates wrote (نہیں زیادہ آتی ہے) as (نہیں آنے کی شکایت ہو جاتی ہے) again due to lack of understanding of the focus words in the questions.

Question 5

- (a) Most of the candidates understood the focus ((کلاس روم میں ٹیکنالوجی کے فائدے اور نقصانات)) of the question and explained the positive and negative aspects correctly.

However, some candidates did not understand that the question was only asking the benefits and dangers of using internet technology in the classrooms.

A few candidates did not cover both aspects. Some candidates simply reproduced the text without following the wording of the question, thus not showing the comparison skills required for this question. A few candidates copied out irrelevant details from the insert.

- (b) In case of **Question 5(b)**, a significant number of the candidates did not understand the question fully. The question asked to give their opinion about the use of technology in their own school.

Many candidates did not give opinion about their own school but talked about technology in schools in general.

There was a variety of responses to this question. However, candidates who included the question demand (اپنے اسکول میں) within their response gained higher marks.

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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

Content

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, 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 topic. A significant number of scripts, however, did not address the precise wording of the question or misunderstood 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 the 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 link 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 were error-free with evidence of a wide range of clause structures and complex sentences being used. 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 with irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, articles and basic grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a very popular question and candidates raised some excellent points when attempting to answer it. The best responses contained an insightful and relevant discussion raising points for both sides of the argument. They also provided a well thought out conclusion summarising the points raised as well as highlighting their opinion. Most candidates mentioned that the youth of today is more independent and has developed more skills as a result of having access to the internet and more learning opportunities. They were able to compare this to the youth of the past who had fewer advantages and were more dependent on their

family for their education, food and social standing. The best responses could also compare the core values and principles of the youth of today compared to the past. They discussed how today they do not have the same resilience and patience as everything is so accessible to them and instantaneous – from ordering food and having it delivered to your doorstep to learning a new skill online. A few candidates suggested that there were many drawbacks to this approach as the youth of today is impatient, less motivated and easily distracted meaning they are less hard working.

The vast majority of candidates could see how in the past the youth suffered from fewer health issues as they were more active, less reliant on modern day transport and their mental health was unaffected by social media and other modern age issues. Today however the youth are more stressed and suffer from health issues such as anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. Access to fast food has also resulted in a large population of the youth becoming overweight and unhealthy.

Some successfully argued that the youth today have more opportunities for success as there are many different avenues that can be taken in order for you to achieve your goals. In the past, the youth had fewer resources and their success was determined by their social economical backgrounds.

Less successful essays were very one sided and provided examples and points for the youth of today but did not balance their argument with reference to the youth of the past.

Question 2

This was a popular question and there were some very interesting responses. Candidates thoughtfully presented their discussion reflecting on media and the impact it has on society. Most candidates discussed modern day social media and the increase in platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube where a member of the public can openly express their views and opinions with very little thought on how their posts can negatively affect others. Hate speech, cyber bullying and racism online were mentioned and the best candidates could give examples of the impact these factors have on a person's self-esteem, mental health and overall well-being.

Most candidates agreed that more should be done to protect people online as there is very little accountability for what people are sharing. Some candidates mentioned other outlets of media and how certain news channels and printed media is biased and is used as a way of spreading propaganda. The best candidates emphasised the influence media outlets have as most people will forge an opinion on a topic or issue based on what they have read or heard about on the news. Therefore, there is a responsibility on these media outlets to deliver accurate and unbiased news. Most candidates agreed that there should be sanctions for people who spread false news and complete freedom results in exploitation and scandals that can be detrimental to a person's wellbeing and to a society as a whole.

The best candidates gave detailed answers not only discussing the problems created by the freedom of media but effectively provided a counterargument, showing extensive knowledge about human rights including freedom of speech. Some provided examples of how some people rely on social media for the most accurate information regarding events that have taken place and how social media has played a big role in peaceful movements and protests related to current issues.

Question 3

This question was attempted by some candidates who were able to show sound knowledge providing well-structured and coherent arguments. The best responses addressed the specific question, considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way, with points that had been elaborated and justified. Many candidates were able to identify that there should be equal opportunities available for education for both boys and girls. It was pleasing to see that candidates had thought about both sides of the argument with some responses identifying that the need for education is essential for both girls and boys. Candidates made relevant and well thought out points and could justify their ideas by giving examples of successful men and women throughout history who were able to achieve their goals as a result of being given an equal chance when they were in education. More able candidates extended this argument by providing suggestions of what can be done to minimise any issues such as having a fairer selection process. Furthermore, they commented on relevant issues such as COVID-19 and the impact this has had on employment regardless of one's skill set or gender.

A small number of candidates argued that some families do not prioritise education for girls as they believe they should be trained to be homemakers instead however they also highlighted that mothers who are educated can give their children and future generations a more insightful view of the world therefore making

a greater contribution to society. Many responses included points that suggested that in certain cultures men are seen as the bread winners and are responsible for the finances needed to run a household. Therefore, boys' education is seen as more important as compared to girls' in certain societies. Many candidates gave a well-rounded conclusion emphasising the need for both girls and boys to be educated in order to help develop a society and a nation.

Question 4

This question was attempted by a small number of candidates. Those that did however showed a deep understanding of leisure activities and the important role they play in our lives and overall health. The highest scoring candidates described how it can be difficult to find the time for these activities but could outline why they were essential for good physical and mental health. Candidates provided a well thought out conclusion summarising the main points and suggested more long-term solutions that could have a more lasting impact such as incentives within the workplace to ensure employees have a better work-life balance.

Some candidates provided a general essay highlighting the variety of leisure activities available to us, but the points made did not relate to the essay question and therefore these candidates could not score high marks for content. It is advised that candidates ensure they are addressing the precise wording of the question and not writing irrelevant and general essays that relate to the overarching topic area but do not target the precise terms of the question.

Question 5

This was a very popular question and there were some very interesting responses. Candidates provided good compositions which contained thoughtful discussions on the benefits and disadvantages of scientific development. Thoughts were justified with clear and relevant facts and opinions which showed a sound understanding of the question.

Most candidates mentioned that there have been many advancements in science over the years and these have greatly benefitted us by providing us with more efficient, safer and useful tools and resources. Candidates were able to provide examples here to justify their thoughts such as the vital role science has played in relation to machines, medicines and transport, etc.

They supported their argument with facts and used a range of examples to build a well-structured and coherent essay. Furthermore, they made points to suggest that there have been some major disadvantages to the progression science has made. Some examples included atomic and nuclear weapons; holistic remedies being replaced by modern day medicines that have many side effects and environmental issues that have increased as a result of this. Some candidates also mentioned specific inventions such as the bulb, computers, telephones, microwaves and how these appliances help us in day to day life.

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Paper 9686/04 Texts
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Key messages

Teachers should:

- think carefully about which texts to prepare and aim for ones that their candidates can handle conceptually.
- train their candidates to manage their time in the examination and answer **only** three questions, each on a **different** text.
- encourage candidates to think carefully about the focus of question and plan each essay before they start to write.

Candidates should:

- choose carefully either **Question (a)** or **Question (b)** on each of their chosen set texts and provide a complete and relevant answer to each question;
- write the question number clearly in English at the start of each question;
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions;
- explore all elements of their chosen questions and understand their focus.

General comments

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

It was evident that centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. 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 this session's questions, but at other times there was evidence of responses being based on questions from previous years' papers which were therefore not relevant to the question being answered this year.

The best responses were those where candidates had planned their essays before starting to write which led to a clear conclusion.

Candidates are advised to leave time to re-read, check, and edit their work.

It was also evident throughout the scripts that the candidates were over conscious of the total number of words and were regularly counting and writing the number of words after each paragraph.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a) A good 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 one very well but only those who answered part two in detail scored higher marks.
- (b) This is 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 and secured relatively good marks but those who wrote a general essay on the poet could not score good marks.

Question 2

- (a) A very good number of candidates have attempted this question and secured good marks. Majority of candidates have secured better marks in both parts. Candidates who focused their responses on the given extract scored well.
- (b) This question was the most popular in section one with the majority of candidates answering well. Weaker candidates only discussed the poet's life and his contributions rather than addressing the question. Those candidates who understood the question's focus and addressed (تہذیب دور کی عکاسی) secured top marks. However, some candidates were a bit confused about the focus of the question and did not expand their answers.

Question 3

- (a) A very small number of candidates attempted this question. Some candidates simply explained the extract from the poem. Only a minority 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 attempted the question and analysed the poetry in the light of the focus of the question, gained good marks.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates attempted this question and most of those who addressed the focus (برائیوں کی وجہ طوائف) and made a good stance and defended it with quotations from the text secured marks in the upper bands.
- (b) Many candidates attempted this question and secured good marks. Weaker candidates who wrote about the character rather than the characterisation could not score high marks.

Section 2

Question 5

- (a) This was a fairly popular option in **Section 2** but some of those who attempted this question, misunderstood the focus of the question and could not secure good marks. Some candidates struggled to discuss the demands of the question with the focus on تبادلے کا فیصلہ کس حد تک ضروری تھا and simply reproduced the story and characters of the Afsana.
- (b) This was another popular option in **Section 2** and many candidates attempted this question and wrote detailed responses to this question and secured top band marks. This question asked candidates to analyse the Afsana with reference to the issues faced by the poor people. Weaker candidates appeared to be too dependent on narrative and memorised oddments.

Question 6

- (a) The majority of candidates who attempted this question secured good marks by analysing the characteristics of the main character 'Akbar' and whether he was a coward or a strong character.
- (b) This question asked candidates to express their own opinion regarding Saleem's love for Anarkali within 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 marks but those who simply described the characters could not score high marks.