

# URDU AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0539/01  
Reading and Writing

## Key messages

- In **Exercise 1, 2 and 3**, candidates do not have to write their answers in full sentences as long as the meaning is clear. The quality of language is not assessed in this exercise.
- In **Exercise 2**, complete accuracy and precise information is required when filling in the personal details.
- In **Exercise 4 and 6**, marks are awarded both for content and for language.

## General comments

The paper was accessible to nearly all of the candidates that were entered correctly for this level. Nearly all candidates were able to attempt all parts of the question paper. Only a very small minority left some or all of the questions unanswered.

In the Reading exercises, candidates are expected not only to understand the information provided in the passage but also to be able to distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions. They are required to demonstrate the ability to extract relevant information from stimulus materials such as forms and advertisements, scan for particular information, then organise and present the information in the required format.

In the Writing exercises, candidates need to ensure that answers fulfil the requirements of tasks whilst demonstrating development of ideas. In relation to the quality of language, the most successful responses evidenced an ability to employ a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary. It should be noted that candidates are expected to make appropriate use of writing conventions such as paragraphing and punctuation.

In general the performance on this component has been very encouraging. The majority of candidates did well in all Reading exercises, showing good understanding of the reading passages. In **Exercise 6** almost all the candidates were able to write with fluency and express their opinions. The compositions were subjective and interesting to read.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–6**

The stimulus text was the advertisement of a beauty product; comprising of information and specific aspects of the beauty cream in the required answers.

The majority of candidates answered these questions successfully and achieved good marks. In particular Questions **1, 4 and 6** were done well by nearly all candidates.

### **Question 2**

There were 2 suitable responses and candidates were required to select one option only.

Most candidates understood the task and selected the correct answer. A small minority chose turmeric or honey which were wrong answers and were not awarded credit.

### Question 3

The majority of candidates successfully understood the question and selected the right response. A few incorrectly suggested it helps to clear skin blemishes or keeps your skin fresh.

### Question 5

This was handled well by nearly all candidates; only a minority were confused and gave the reason for discount instead of stating the discount amount.

### Exercise 2, Question 7

In this Exercise candidates are required to transfer information from the text provided and enter specific details in the given form template. Nearly all candidates handled all parts of this question with great success. The text was based on singer Mehdi Hassan's life and his achievements. Candidates were required to fill in seven specific details on the form.

Some candidates got confused mainly with two details, and chose the distractors, e.g. putting Saleem Gailaani instead of Muhammed Hussain for the person who introduced Mehdi Hassan as a singer in the film industry and they chose to write Hassan's award was given by Pakistani Government instead of Indian Government.

### Exercise 3, Questions 8–9 (a, b)

In this Exercise the candidates are required to make brief notes relating to the provided text under given headings for each question. Although majority of candidates performed well in this Exercise, for some, certain parts of this exercise provided more of a challenge..

### Question 8a

The majority of candidates understood the task and answered well. A very small number of candidates gave incorrect answers such as 'lazy' instead of 'laziness'.

### Question 8b

This part was particularly challenging for certain candidates. They suggested incorrect answers, such as water and soap.

### Question 9a

Precise responses were required for a full answer to the two parts. Most candidates gave correct details. Those who scored less well would have benefited from providing the exact required details.

### Question 9b

This part of the question proved to be very challenging for candidates. The answer required specific detail about the inventor's future achievement. "The increase in wealth and fame" was an acceptable answer, however if the candidate gave the answer with a verb form which suggested past or present achievements not future prospects, then the answer became invalid. Most higher ability candidates met the demand of this question. Candidates who did not cover all aspects of the question, e.g. wrote fame or money, did not score full marks.

### Exercise 4, Question 10

In this Exercise, candidates are asked to write a summary on the main aspects of the given passage. Here, to perform well, they have to identify the main points from the entire text and present them in 100-word summary in an appropriate format and using appropriate language. In this summary up to 6 marks are available for content and 4 marks for language. Most candidates did extremely well in this task and scored high marks. They wrote with precision in their own words and kept their answers within the specified word limit. It was pleasing to notice that most of candidates appeared to be well-prepared for the requirements of this Exercise. Having read last year's Principal Examiner Report to Teachers, many centres successfully trained their candidates to respect the word limit and avoid complete lifting from the text. Having said this,

some candidates still need to be reminded that if they rely heavily on lifting from the passage for their summary, they will be unable to achieve high marks for language.

### **Exercise 5, Questions 11–17**

This Exercise required candidates to understand and distinguish facts and ideas from the given information in the text. Candidates were required to answer a series of questions testing detailed comprehension of a longer passage. The majority of candidates were able to provide precise and accurate responses which scored well.

For large majority of candidates **Questions 11,12,13,14 and 17** proved to be highly accessible. In **Question 14** the full detail of museum ( *Sainsi Ajaiyb ghar* ) was required to gain a mark. **Question 15 and 16** proved to be more challenging for all.

### **Question 16**

A popular incorrectly supplied answer was ‘they have to rush around’. Candidates had to write climbing ‘a lot of stairs’, ‘climbing the stairs’ on its own was not sufficient to score full credit.

### **Exercise 6, Question 18**

For this Exercise, candidates were asked to write an essay describing a school or college library. Most candidates handled this task extremely well. The best written compositions gave interesting, logical and descriptive accounts by employing appropriate register/ style and variety of language structures. Many candidates used the suggested prompts/bullet points to organise the information and their reasoning to write about their existing or ideal library. There were also some candidates who decided to choose to write on the given theme in their own format, rather than by following the suggested prompts. Both approaches were equally eligible for credit. There was noticeable improvement in the organisation and layout of written pieces, e.g. formation of paragraphs.

Candidates are reminded that the key to a successful performance in terms of content is to ensure that their composition is of clear relevance to the given task title and to make sure that ideas are fully developed; the written account should sustain the reader’s interest. Similarly, in order to achieve the highest marks for language, candidates should make sure that they use a variety of verbs, good language structures, idioms/proverbs, and suitable, accurate vocabulary all way through. They should also present their ideas in well-structured paragraphs that have clear links with each other. Candidates should also avoid using English written words, though transcribed words for certain names and places are permissible.

# URDU AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0539/02  
Listening

## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- listen to the recording carefully to identify the specific information needed to answer each question
- read the instructions and questions with care throughout the paper and if a question consists of more than one part, be careful to respond to all of them
- always attempt an answer rather than leaving a blank space

## General comments

Many candidates appeared to be very well prepared for this examination and responded adequately to the questions. This paper is assessed for 'listening for understanding' and therefore feasible phonetic attempts at answers are accepted as long as the meaning is clear. However, candidates must ensure that their responses are comprehensible and unambiguous. If the response is spelled in a way to make another word that changes the meaning (e.g. منظور/منزل instead of منظر or مهار instead of مهارت), a mark is not awarded.

As there is no specification given about the use of Urdu or English numerals where required, it is advisable for the candidates not to take chance with using Urdu numerals if they are not completely sure about their accuracy.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Exercise 1. Question 1 – 6**

This first exercise tested the understanding of six short conversations/monologues. Candidates had to respond to questions using key information gathered from the recordings. The majority of candidates performed well in this part. Candidates should be able to differentiate between the key information and extended information while answering these questions, e.g. **Question 2** required the response that she is going for shopping with her friend, and only going with her friend was not enough to score a mark. Similarly, **Question 3** asked where Anjum and Sara are planning to go. The required answer was that "they are planning to go to the gym", and candidates who wrote that they are planning to start exercise lost marks as the response does not suggest that they have fully comprehended the question.

### **Exercise 2. Question 7**

In this exercise, candidates had to fill in the blanks with correct information from the recording of a voice message left on telephone by a mother for her daughter. There were many responses that showed a very good understanding of the recording and the questions. However, some candidates found the spellings of کھڑکیاں، میزبان، کانفرنس etc. a bit challenging. Generous marking allowed all feasible phonetic attempts at answers to be accepted as long as the meaning is not changed.

### **Exercise 3. Question 8 – 13**

This part required candidates to replace the underlined expressions with correct ones, based on the recording of a report about Shandoor Polo Festival. Generally the candidates scored well in this task, but only a few could answer **Question 10**. A large number of candidates wrote تربیت instead of تربیتی, which does not convey the required meaning. Many candidates also found **Question 11** challenging, as they found the word مهارت unfamiliar.

#### Exercise 4. Question 14 – 21

Here, candidates had to answer short questions based on the recording of a research report about clove. For this part, the candidates are expected to write their answers in a complete sentence. The allocation of marks for each question corresponded with the number of pieces of information required for each question. Although there were many candidates who displayed a good understanding of the recording and questions, it was observed that some candidates faced difficulty in understanding the questions or sorting out the required information.

**Question 15** was not very well understood by some candidates. They were asked the reason for why traders in the past had shown a growing interest in clove. The required answer was that it used to be a costly item.

**Question 18** was about two medical uses of clove i.e. it reduces pain and is good for treating cold and flu. Both responses had to be correct in order to gain two marks. Candidates who only mentioned the word flu and did not write that it is useful for the treatment of flu could not be awarded a mark as the answer was incomplete.

**Question 19** had two parts, i.e. one benefit and one harmful effect of clove. Some candidates confused the second part of question with **Question 18** and thus lost a mark; although the question clearly asked the benefits of massage with clove oil.

**Question 20** was worth one mark. The candidates were asked to mention the category of people who are absolutely prohibited from using clove. The required answer was “children under two years of age.” Candidates who gave more than one answer and mentioned expecting and lactating mothers too, could not be awarded a mark as their answer did not clearly show that the question was understood correctly.

# URDU AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0539/05  
Speaking

## Key messages

In order to do well in this exam, candidates should:

- choose a particular aspect of a topic rather than deal superficially with a broad area in **Part 1**;
- be prepared for a spontaneous discussion in **Part 2**, leading on from the presentation;
- hold a conversation on general topic areas led by the Examiner;

Examiners should:

- ask questions which allow the candidate to access the full range of marks;
- discuss the areas mentioned in the presentation;
- make sure that specification guidelines and procedures have been followed to conduct the examination correctly.

## General comments

### **Assessment**

In general, the marking was close to the agreed standards in most Centres. Examiners should ensure that they use the assessment criteria consistently. It is also important to conduct the Speaking test as it is set by CIE to ensure candidates can access the full range of marks.

### **Recordings and documentation**

Most recordings were audible and in most cases the time limits were adhered to. The accompanying paperwork was generally clear and accurate. Both were, on the whole, in line with good practice.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part 1: Presentation**

Most of the topics presented by candidates were appropriate and according to the syllabus requirements. The most popular areas were daily routine, holidays, world around us, comparison between rural and urban life, school discipline, and shopping. Some candidates took a very general approach and tried to deal superficially with a very broad topic. Candidates are advised to choose one particular aspect of a wider topic. This could be an area in which they have a personal interest, or in which they have some experience, so that they are able to share their opinion and ideas. The best presentations were of candidates who chose specific topics and were therefore, able to develop the conversation in Part 2 through their personal interest in the subject.

The candidates should select and prepare their topic for presentation which must reflect aspect(s) of life in an Urdu speaking community or an Urdu speaking culture well before the examination. The examiner conducting the exam should be aware of the selected topics of their candidates to prepare appropriate questions to lead an interesting discussion and adhere to the time limit set for each part.

## **Part 2: Discussion**

The Examiner should encourage the development of ideas during the conversation by asking appropriate and specific questions on the subjects mentioned within the presentation. The best questions were open and allowed candidates to expand on their chosen topic. Such questions enable candidates to meet the required criteria to achieve well, where they are sufficiently prepared.

## **Part 3: General conversation**

In this section the candidate and Examiner should engage in a conversation which lasts between 3–4 minutes. The Examiner may begin this section by asking straightforward questions about the area of interest, but should then move on to a more in-depth discussion. Well-prepared Examiners were ready to react to what the candidates had said and lead the discussion on to new and unexpected areas. The strongest performances were those of candidates who were prepared to talk about several topics and take part in the conversation as it unfolded.