

SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

Paper 3248/01
Reading and Writing

Key messages

There are five exercises in this paper and candidates are expected to answer all the questions in every exercise.

Exercise 1 – (Questions 1–6) 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 and concise answers.

Exercise 2 – (Questions 7–15) is a multiple-choice exercise, based on a text divided into four paragraphs i.e. **A–D**. Candidates must identify where exactly different pieces of information are located in the text to be able to choose the correct answer.

Exercise 3 – (Questions 16–19) is a note making exercise. After reading the text passage, candidates must select the required information for each question and reproduce it in the form of short notes.

Exercise 4 – (Question 20) is a summary writing exercise, based on the text given for **Exercise 3**. Rather than summarising the entire passage, there are specific instructions given regarding the points to be included in the summary. Focusing on the required aspects, candidates must write a summary, keeping their responses within the limit of one hundred words. Along with the content, candidates are also assessed on the style and accuracy of language.

Exercise 5 – (Question 21) is a directed writing exercise. Candidates are asked to write an email as instructed. There are three prompts given to respond to in the content of the email and candidates need to keep their responses within the one hundred and fifty words approximately. In this question, candidates are also assessed on both the content of their responses as well as the accuracy and style of language.

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

Candidates need to have a good understanding of the vocabulary of the questions as well as enough practice in choosing appropriate information for their answers. If there is still time, they should also recheck their responses after completing the exam, to avoid any unintentional mistakes or unanswered parts.

General comments

This was a balanced paper catering for the needs of all ability candidates. The content of the paper covered a wider aspect of syllabus and also had a fair amount of challenge to effectively differentiate among varying levels of candidates' performance. Most candidates appeared well prepared and able to engage effectively with the content of the passages. The overall performance of the candidates was very good, which indicates that the questions were within the grasp of most candidates. In general, candidates performed very well on comprehension exercises, whereas the note making and summary tasks proved to be more challenging for lower ability candidates, either due to their limited exposure to the target language or some lack of practice.

Although a large number of candidates managed to achieve good marks, only the most capable ones were able to score full marks. The highest scored total in this exam was 50 out of 50 marks.

It was observed during marking that many candidates tend to lift their answers directly from the given text while answering inferential questions, especially in the summary task, which results in irrelevant and lengthy details. This impacts negatively the word limit as well as the linguistic quality of the response. Candidates should be able to understand the questions and select appropriate answers from the given text.

Like in previous years, a few candidates' responses indicated that answers are probably first written with a pencil and then overlapped using a pen, which can create a double image. If the work is not legible, this can affect the candidates' performance.

Some candidates also left questions unanswered. Since there is no negative marking on this paper and they have sufficient time to complete all exercises, candidates should be advised to attempt all questions.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1 – (Questions 1–6) – Short-answer questions

The text passage about baseball was accessible and easy to understand for most candidates. In general, this exercise was very well understood by a large majority of candidates and many candidates were able to score full marks.

Question 2 and **Question 3** were answered remarkably well by all candidates. However, some candidates struggled to answer correctly to **Question 4**, which required specific information from the text. **Question 1** was worth two marks, which asked about the name of the sport which baseball was originated from and when it was played. Almost all candidates correctly answered the first part of the question (the game is called Rounders), while some candidates could not identify the correct time period (18th century), therefore they lost a mark. Some lower ability candidates struggled to understand **Question 4** properly and gave ambiguous answers. This question about the reason for baseball's popularity in recent times required some inference as the text indicated that it was included in Tokyo Olympics again in 2020. The candidates needed to mention either the year or the point that it was included in Olympics once again. Candidates who missed out both of these details could not score a mark. **Question 5** was about the number of innings played in a baseball game and required a very simple and direct answer i.e. 9 innings. A few candidates did not read the question carefully and instead of innings, they wrote that there are nine players in a team, which unfortunately could not qualify for a mark.

Exercise 2 – (Questions 7–15) – Multiple Matching

This multiple-choice exercise focused on a passage about a teacher's first meeting with her students living in a remote area, whom she had been tutoring online. 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 the large majority successfully scored full marks in this task. However, **Question 9** and **Question 10** proved to be more challenging for some candidates as they have given the wrong answers.

When completing a multiple-choice exercise, candidates must ensure they select only one of the four available options by marking it clearly. If they wish to change their answer, they must cross out the previous answer before selecting a new one. Selecting more than one box, without clearly stating which was meant to be the candidate's last attempt, will result in the answer being invalidated.

Exercise 3 – (Questions 16–19) – Note-making

This year, the note making exercise was based on a text passage about the history and importance of hobbies. This comprehension exercise posed comparatively more challenges:

Question 16 was worth three marks and candidates had to write three developmental stages related to the accessibility of hobbies for different social classes:

- ruling class/emperors
- elite class/ nobles

- middle class/ common people.

Many candidates gave wrong answers for this question and consequently lost marks. The answer required some level of inference and candidates had to read the first paragraph completely to select the required information. While some responses were precise and directly addressed to the question, a number of candidates provided ambiguous answers or copied incomplete or unrelated information from the text.

Question 17 focused on individual and collective objectives of hobbies (مشاغل کے انفرادی اور اجتماعی اہداف).

Candidates who only wrote examples instead of objectives, could not achieve one or both marks. Some candidates also lost marks because they changed the order mentioned in the question and did not clarify which goal was individual and which one was collective, making the answer ambiguous.

Question 18 was worth two marks and required the impacts of hobbies related to physical and mental

activities (جسمانی اور ذہنی مشاغل کے اثرات). Candidates who were not able to achieve marks for this question either gave only examples of both types of hobbies or could not clarify their answer as to which impact is associated with physical or mental hobbies.

Question 19 was worth two marks and the candidates had to write two main causes, mentioned in the text, that prevented people from participating in hobbies (i.e. shortage of time and financial problems). Candidates who lifted their answers directly from the text mostly focussed on only one answer or gave irrelevant details while missing out the required information.

Exercise 4 – (Question 20) – Summary

Summary task was based on the passage for **Exercise 3**. Candidates were clearly instructed that they can use some of the notes they made for the previous exercise. However, candidates had to decide which part should be used according to the instructions given for the summary. Only 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 content of the summary. In this exercise, four out of ten marks are allocated for the content, while the remainder six marks are reserved for accuracy and language style.

Candidates had plenty of opportunities to achieve full marks on this exercise. The points given for discussion were specific and clear and demanded exact information. Candidates' overall performance on this task was good, and they produced some very outstanding responses, showing a thorough understanding of the text as well as an excellent command on language usage and delivering the required information in minimum words to ensure they comply with the length required. However, the number of candidates scoring full marks on this task remained limited. Some candidates were not familiar with this style of summary writing and tried to summarise the whole passage, following mistakenly the pattern from previous years, giving lengthy irrelevant details, which either made them miss out the required information or neglect the word limit. Moreover, as there is an allocation of marks for language, relying on direct lifting of lengthy pieces of information from the text will affect the language marks negatively, as well as adding extra length to the response. Some candidates seem to neglect the importance of spelling and grammar, producing many spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, which affected their performance in the language area. As for this exercise, candidates are reproducing the information from the text provided, tailoring it to suit the demand of the topic, the spelling and grammatical errors should be avoided to ensure they can secure high marks for language.

Some candidates struggled with the idea of writing a summary according to the given instructions and went overboard with lengthy paragraphs including an overall information from the whole passage, even stretching their answers to extra sheets. The topic for the summary exercise was clearly mentioned in the question

(مشاغل میں حصہ نہ لینے کی وجوہات اور مشاغل کے ممکنہ منفی اثرات سے بچاؤ) which required specific information. The first

part of summary (وقت کی کمی، وسائل کی کمی) was usually well attempted and most candidates successfully

selected the required information. For the second part, they could choose two out of three possible answers but due to a careless reading of the question, some candidates wrote two or more points about possible

negative impacts of hobbies (دیگر ضروری امور متاثر ہونا، بجٹ متاثر ہونا، جسمانی مشاغل میں چوٹ لگنا) instead of writing any two points about 'Prevention of possible negative impacts', i.e.

- مشغلے اور ضروری امور میں توازن
- بجٹ کے مطابق اخراجات
- جسمانی مشاغل میں احتیاط

Candidates should practice more the new summary writing style and understand how to present their answers in a more effective manner. 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. They should be able to extract the gist of the required information for their summary, separating the extended details in order to meet the word limit requirement (100 words). If they reproduce the information without properly cutting down on unnecessary details, they will end up exceeding the allowed word limit. They must also be careful about the accuracy of the selected information as well as spelling and grammatical structures in order to avoid losing content and language marks.

Exercise 5 – (Question 21) – Writing exercise

This exercise consists of a directed writing task. Candidates had to write an email to a friend, telling him/her about an unsuccessful online shopping experience. They were presented with three prompts regarding the information they needed to include in their email, i.e. what did they purchase and why, what did they not like about it and what is their opinion about online shopping. For each prompt, they needed to include at least two points to gain the full six marks for content. Most candidates successfully met the demands of this exercise and gained high marks. Some candidates could not score full marks on the last prompt regarding their opinion about online shopping, because they did not give two clear points or one point with some elaboration.

While many candidates appeared to be very well prepared for the task, there were also a few responses where candidates were confused about the requirements of the writing task and neglected all the directions about the content. If there is no valid point included in the content, no language marks can be awarded. Therefore, it is very important to tailor the response according to the instructions given in the question. Some candidates also presented their answers in a very casual manner, producing many spellings errors which could be easily avoided. The points discussed in the email should be clear and unambiguous and the spelling and grammatical structures should also be up to the mark. In this task, eight marks are allocated for accuracy and style of language, therefore, candidates should be careful regarding their spelling and their use of grammatical structures as well.

SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

Paper 3248/02
Grammar, Writing and Translation

Key messages

To achieve a good grade in this examination, candidates must complete all four exercises.

- **Exercise 1 – Sentence transformation:** In this exercise, candidates read five short sentences that they have to transform/complete using the prompts given, ensuring that the meaning of the original sentence remains unchanged.
- **Exercise 2 – Multiple-choice cloze passage:** In this exercise candidates are tested on the application of grammar within a context. Candidates read a short text with several gaps to be filled in with the multiple-choice options given to each gap.
- **Exercise 3 – Extended writing exercise:** In this exercise, candidates are asked to write a piece of continuous prose of approximately two hundred words. A set of short prompts is also provided, which candidates may use to help them completing their essay.
- **Exercise 4 – Translation:** Candidates translate a short passage of approximately one hundred and fifty words from English into Urdu.

General comments

This paper consists of four specific exercises, comprising a total of seventeen questions, with a maximum of 50 marks. Candidates are assessed on their grammar, writing and translation skills.

Candidates performed very well in **Exercise 1** and **2**, with most of them achieving full marks.

However, in **Exercise 3**, the extended writing task, some candidates were unable to reach the top levels of the mark scheme and achieve full marks, as they struggled to develop their ideas effectively and distinctively in their own words within the required word limit.

For **Exercise 4**, candidates were required to translate an English passage of one hundred and fifty words into Urdu. Candidates are continuously improving their performance in this task, which shows that they have practiced and are more comfortable using the vocabulary required for this exercise.

Some candidates were unable to demonstrate strong translation skills, as they either translated English words inaccurately into Urdu, omitted key messages or transliterated certain key words. As a result, they were unable to achieve full marks.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1 – (Questions 1–5) – Sentence Transformation

The objective of this exercise is to assess candidates' grammatical understanding. Candidates were asked to complete the prompts given without changing or altering the meaning of the original sentence. The completed sentence needed to be clear, legible, and convey the intended meaning without ambiguity.

Candidates have generally performed well in this exercise, with most of them achieving full marks. However, **Question 4** and **Question 5** proved to be more challenging for many candidates, as they struggled to complete the sentences using appropriate vocabulary that accurately conveyed the intended meanings.

In **Question 4**, many candidates used Urdu words **اختتام** and **خاتمہ**, which are close in meaning to the correct answer but were not appropriate for the specific context of the sentence.

In **Question 5**, a significant number of candidates were not able to earn the mark as they used incorrect words such as **ارادہ** and **مقصد**, which were not grammatically correct to accurately complete the sentence.

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

In this exercise, candidates were given a passage containing ten gaps, each corresponding to a question. Candidates were required to read the full passage carefully and then select the appropriate word for each gap from the four options given. Candidates indicated their answers by simply ticking the box with the option they believed was the correct one.

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the text and selected the correct answers. However, some candidates found **Question 6**, **Question 8**, and **Question 13** more demanding due to their limited knowledge of the target language. As a result, they selected incorrect options from the options given — most notably choosing option **A** instead of option **B** for **Question 6**, option **B** instead of option **D** for **Question 8** and option **A** instead of option **D** for **Question 13**, which prevented these candidates to achieve full marks on this exercise.

It was also observed that some candidates placed ticks in more than one option on the same question, which prevented them to get the marks. It is important that when a candidate changes their mind and want to change the option they selected, that they clearly state which one is their final answer. This will avoid any confusion while marking and candidates will be able to get the mark, if they select the correct option.

Exercise 3 – (Question 16) – Extended writing

In this exercise, candidates were required to write a piece of continuous prose of approximately two hundred words based on the statement provided: *'It is necessary to be highly educated to get a good job.'*

Two stimuluses were provided to support their writing:

1. *'Life is generally not successful without higher education.'*
2. *'Skilled people can be more successful than educated people.'*

Marks were awarded based on the band descriptors, with ten marks allocated for **content** and ten marks for **language**.

Most candidates approached this topic thoughtfully, presenting well-balanced arguments on whether higher education is essential for securing a good job or if a highly skilled individual, without formal education, can achieve greater success. Many candidates supported their viewpoints with relevant examples and insightful comparisons, evaluating both the value of academic qualifications and the importance of practical skills in achieving career success. These responses were awarded higher marks for both content and language due to their coherence, depth of analysis and effective use of language.

Some candidates focused exclusively on the second prompt, emphasising that the skilled individuals are more likely to succeed in today's competitive job market. On the other hand, some candidates concentrated solely on the general importance of education, without addressing the specific role of higher education in securing a good employment. As a result, these responses did not fully meet the task requirements and candidates were unable to achieve the marks from the top band of the mark scheme.

A small number of candidates encountered difficulties with fluency and language accuracy, although they generally managed to communicate their ideas effectively.

To improve future performances, candidates should be encouraged to begin their essays by engaging directly with the given statement, as this helps to establish a clear focus from the outset. Furthermore, they should aim to develop and elaborate more their ideas, offering well-reasoned arguments, supported by specific and relevant examples to the task. Adopting this structured and thoughtful approach will not only enhance the coherence and depth of their writing but will also increase their potential to attain higher marks.

Exercise 4 – (Question 17) – Translation

In this exercise, candidates were required to translate an English passage of one hundred and fifty words into Urdu. The passage focussed on the charity work theme, highlighting the significance of voluntary work or service in the society. The task aimed to assess candidates' ability to convey meaning accurately while maintaining the tone and context of the original text.

The marks were awarded based on the band descriptors for this exercise, with five marks allocated for **communicating key points** and ten marks for applying **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Candidates who successfully conveyed all the key points of the passage were awarded with the full five marks for content and were able to achieve full marks for language, if the language was at the same standard. However, some candidates frequently relied on transliteration of English words rather than providing accurate Urdu equivalents, which resulted in a loss of marks.

In addition, many candidates struggled with the correct translation of key vocabulary or omitted important words and phrases altogether, affecting both clarity and completeness of the translation task, which ultimately prevented candidates to reach higher bands in the mark scheme.

Overall, most candidates effectively conveyed the core message of the passage, demonstrating a sound understanding of its main themes and context. Many translations reflected clear comprehension and appropriate use of language, with several candidates achieving high marks in both content and linguistic accuracy.

Despite occasional spelling and grammatical errors, candidates generally demonstrated effective communication skills in translating from English into Urdu, indicating a strong understanding of both languages.