
GCSE URDU

8648/WH Paper 4: Writing (Higher)
Report on the Examination

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General comments

The quality of work produced for this new examination was encouraging. The paper differentiated well between higher and lower ability students at this tier. Students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier.

The quality of work seen in the overlap questions (1.1 and 1.2) was often of a higher standard than the Foundation tier. The ability to refer to a range of time frames and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well.

Where students failed to score marks, this was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. This was mainly due to inaccurate verb formation or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, which created more scope for error. Another barrier to achievement was omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2.

Question 1

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

The quality of work seen was generally good, with many students able to provide extended responses, which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misspelling or omission of bullet points and overlong responses, which led to more scope for error.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered.

In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'lapses') and this impacted on marks awarded.

Question 1.1

This was the least popular choice with students at this tier but it was a topic with which they are familiar. It is important to remind students that this new specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than just reproduce pre-learned language.

As would be expected, bullet points 1 and 2 were well covered, with many good responses. Bullet point 1 required students to describe their current part time job. Most students responded well, but there were occasions when students either used the cognate or did not make it clear. The aspect of the task that was often not covered was bullet point 3: 'کوئی پارٹ ٹائم کام جو آپ نے پہلے کیا ہو'. Where students omitted the task or did not relate the past part time job, this affected marks awarded for Content.

Question 1.2

This was by far the more popular choice for students and it was done well on the whole. Some students misinterpreted the third bullet point and did not mention the means of travelling. The first, second and last bullet points were done well. Many wrote at length in reply to the third bullet point, giving their likes and dislikes with reasons about their stay in the hotel.

Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. In relation to the first three elements, the following was seen: successful references to two or three time frames; different persons of the verb; detailed opinion (negative and positive); structures reflecting complexity were often successfully attempted, for example: infinitive constructions, adjectives, connectives, intensifiers, negatives, use of subordinate clauses and relative pronouns. Less successful language included some confusion of tenses and verb endings; problems with the possessive pronoun and spelling mistakes. As far as tenses were concerned, the more common problem was when students attempted to refer to a past event and sometimes used the present tense to do so with no time marker.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include opinions as required by the task.
- Make sure you write accurately.
- In some cases, the language of the bullet points can be used as part of your response. For example, in Question 1.1, the first bullet point is: اس وقت پارٹ ٹائم کیا ہے؟ You are given an ideal start to a sentence: اس وقت میرا پارٹ ٹائم کام ایک دکان میں ہے۔ If you do this, make sure the spelling is accurate. The fourth bullet point is: مستقبل میں کیا کرنا چائیں گے/گی؟ You are given an opportunity to talk about your future plans and you can also include your opinion with reasons. In Question 1.2, the first bullet point is: آپ جس جگہ گئے وہاں دیکھنے کے لیے کیا ہے؟ You are given an ideal start to a sentence: میں چھٹیوں میں ترکی گیا/گئی۔ وہاں بہت سی مسجدیں ہیں۔ بہت سے اگلے سال آپ کہاں جائیں گے/گی؟ You are given an opportunity to write about future holidays and you can also include your opinion with reasons.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total, about two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the points. The quality of responses was generally high, with most students able to complete both bullet points in each question, showing good ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and a variety of language. Again, the aim of this new specification is for students to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than reproduce pre-learned language. Where students were less successful, it was because they had misinterpreted the bullet points or they wrote very lengthy responses, which increased the scope for error.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of both bullet points), amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression and justification of opinions. Students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions, but there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'ambiguities') and, again, this impacted on marks awarded.

Question 2.1

This was the more popular choice with students, the vast majority of whom were able to write clearly about the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones. Again, this is a topic with which students are familiar and they were able to provide a great deal of information. Opinions and justifications were regularly. Many students achieved 10 marks or above for Content.

Unfortunately however the second bullet point was not done quite as well by some students. In addition, a number of students were able to express views only on one side of the discussion, without mentioning the other. This impacted on the marks for Content.

Question 2.2

Although Question 2.1 was a more popular choice, this question had a more successful outcome as the bullet points were both addressed well. Nearly all students were able to make a statement about the problems in their area due to pollution, many going on to provide detailed descriptions of the problems in their areas due to different types of pollutions.

Most students wrote mainly about air pollution and illnesses due to air pollution. The second bullet point was well addressed by students, suggesting many practical ideas to minimise pollution. What was also encouraging was the ability of many students to include information from the environment topic, with many references to problems in their local areas. This demonstrated an ability to use their knowledge to produce a more creative response.

Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language and a confident ability to produce complex sentences. It is worth noting that reference is not made to time frames or tenses in the criteria, but the use of these would be considered to be attempts at complexity. In

terms of variety of language, there was an impressive variety of connectives seen; 'لیکن۔ کیونکہ۔ اور۔'۔
'منفی اثر نقصان'۔ اس لیے۔ حالانکہ جب تو بہر حال۔۔ A range of negatives was attempted by some students; There was also a wide range of tenses, including the conditional tense. It is also worth noting that the criteria refer to style and register. This was not generally an issue with the quality of the work, but there were instances of attempts to include idioms that were sometimes highly unnatural and did not always reflect an appropriate style or register for the piece.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations, and the type of errors that students make. It is to be noted that a 'major' error is one that interferes with communication, and a 'minor error', but still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of students were able to produce work worthy of 3 marks and above. Common major errors included the inappropriate use of infinitives and poor formation of the past tense. Minor errors included gender errors, inaccurate adjectival agreements and minor misspellings.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the number of words required.
- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points in some way.
- When including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for Conveying key messages and 6 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

Conveying key messages

Key messages	Main issues
Last weekend I went	پچھلے ویک اینڈ پر instead of اگلے ویک اینڈ پر
However I like to keep fit	بہر حال struggled to translate however
My teachers there	وہاں struggled with
Are very helpful and friendly	struggled with مدد کرنے والے
Next year	اگلے سال instead of پچھلے سال

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. These inaccuracies were considered when deciding on the mark for the application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA website.