

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 11

Key messages

Good answers were those with a detailed response that included specific details which elaborated on the precise part of the topic under discussion. Details could include facts, figures, dates, the personalities involved or any quotes from sources of authority to support the points made.

The space provided for an answer is a good indication of how much could be written.

Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improve a response.

General comments

The most successful responses understood what the question was asking and were able to give relevant detail that answered it. For some, there was a lack of understanding leading to an inability to do this, particularly in **Question 1** where many responses emphasised unnecessary details about names, the meaning of names and the significance of where the passage selected was taken from. This information limited the answer.

Most candidates clearly labelled their responses with the relevant **part (a)** and **(b)**, allowing examiners to see precisely what they were rewarding. However, some candidates combined the two parts and gave one answer for both. It is important that candidates write both parts separately, label them correctly and leave some space between the two parts of a question to make them distinguishable from each other.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The best responses clearly identified the themes of the passages they chose; they elaborated and offered some support through quotes from sources of authority. Some of the ideas explored included the creation of humanity, the bestowing of knowledge, the horrors of the Last Day, accountability and God's sublime nature. The best responses had a clear understanding of the question's demands and kept the response focused on exploring the themes and central ideas of the passages in **part (a)**.

Weaker responses either paraphrased the translation or gave general themes about God, His nature and His qualities. These comments lacked specific knowledge of the identified themes and were common to most suras.

- (b) Good responses showed significance of the themes by including detail about acknowledging God as creator, worshipping Him alone, acquiring knowledge, developing fear of accountability, having trust in God and not equating anyone else to Him. The best responses elaborated on the points made to show how these themes impact the lives of Muslims.

Weaker responses included simple suggestions about believing in God, fulfilling religious obligations and not committing *shirk*. Some responses had repetition of the themes from **part (a)**.

Question 2

- (a) Excellent responses demonstrated extensive knowledge of all three sources of law and their mutual relationship in law making. These responses began with a definition of each source, its validity in the Qur'an or Hadith, followed by good examples to show how these sources work together to formulate new legislation.

Reasonable responses focused more on the Qur'an and sunnah, only briefly mentioning *ijma'*.

Weak responses were characterised by a limited knowledge of the topic. Answers were restricted to having general information about the Qur'an and sunnah or Hadith without much reference to the question.

- (b) Good responses offered evaluation. Information in these answers stated that Muslims everywhere follow the same source of law and derive similar laws from the Qur'an, hence unifying them. Some also talked about the Qur'an's teachings about brotherhood and the unity of Muslims. The best responses discussed the unchanging nature of the Qur'an over 1400 years, this contributed to unifying the *umma*.

Weak responses were long and focused on the Qur'an itself or its general significance.

Question 3

- (a) This was, by far, the most popular of the three optional questions. Good responses were characterised by precise detail about the Prophet's life, from birth to prophethood. Many quoted excerpts from historical accounts of his life, in addition to general details about different events of his life. Weaker responses were characterised by inaccurate or under-developed information.

- (b) This question required candidates to show how the Prophet (pbuh) being brought up by several people prepared him for prophethood.

The best responses used two distinctive approaches. One approach spoke about how different individuals played an important role and taught certain skills to the Prophet (pbuh) and that this helped him with his future tasks. Another approach spoke about the environment that he grew up in and how facing personal loss, frequent change of guardianship, adjustment to new environments and self-dependence prepared him for a tough future life.

Weaker responses were able to identify notable influences of different personalities on the Prophet (pbuh) but could not link it to prophethood. The weakest responses gave a descriptive account of the roles played by different people in his life without any attempt to evaluate the impact they had.

Question 4

- (a) Good responses recollected the last pilgrimage of the Prophet (pbuh) and the historical Farewell Sermon delivered by him on the Mount of Mercy in detail. Many responses were centred around the Farewell Sermon only. These included a description of the main teachings of it, in particular, the rights of wives and slaves, the fulfilment of the Five Pillars and the equality of Muslims. Furthermore, other events that happened immediately after the Farewell Sermon, such as the revelation of the last verses of the Qur'an were included. The best responses narrated the events of the Prophet's performance of his only *Hajj*. This was an essential part of the question.

Weak responses wrote extensively about the Prophet's illness and his last days; this was irrelevant.

- (b) Good responses identified the most important teaching from the Farewell Sermon and showed strong reasoning why it is important for Muslims. For example, the rights of women and wives was a popular choice, other responses included information about fulfilling duties related to the Five Pillars of Islam and the importance of following the teachings in the Qur'an and sunnah. The best responses argued that acting upon these teachings would guarantee a peaceful society. Weaker responses had a descriptive account of the teachings, instead of an analysis of how the teachings are significant.

Question 5

- (a) Strong responses showed extensive knowledge about the different scribes and duties performed by them, including, but not limited to, writing the divine text. Zayd ibn Thabit, 'Ali and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud were the scribes most likely to appear in answers.

Weaker responses used a different approach. These answers included information about how the Qur'an was revealed in different ways and how companions used to preserve and memorise it. Such responses also gave precise details of the official compilation of the Qur'an under Abu Bakr and 'Uthman.

- (b) Responses included information about the ease of accessibility of the Qur'an on the internet, the availability of translations in numerous languages, guidance on pronunciation, a critical evaluation on demand and that this was mostly free.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 12

Key messages

Good answers were those with a detailed response that included specific details which elaborated on the precise part of the topic under discussion. Details could include facts, figures, dates, the personalities involved or any quotes from sources of authority to support the points made.

The space provided for an answer is a good indication of how much could be written.

Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improve a response.

General comments

Confident and well-answered responses to **part (a)** questions were characterised by having a precise understanding of what the question required and responding with the relevant information. Weaker responses did not manage to show their understanding in the same way.

Part (b) questions ask candidates to apply their knowledge of a topic, usually from **part (a)**, and successful responses show skill at doing this. These answers can show how a Muslim might act on a particular lesson or explain why something is important. Weaker responses were more generalised, they mentioned teachings or the expected conduct of Muslims in relation to the topic under discussion without regard for what is being asked.

Good responses showed focused, development of their argument, whereas weaker ones introduce theirs and move on to another without any elaboration or link to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The best responses focused on the themes of the passages selected, developing them well. Such responses talked about God's role as the creator and sustainer, hence deserving of worship. From the passages, candidates wrote about His greatness, the protection provided by Him, His creations' vulnerability, the special relationship, a promise of higher rewards and consolation to His prophets in particular the Prophet (pbuh).

Weaker responses either identified the wrong theme, for example, seeking forgiveness in Sura An-Nas or merely paraphrased them. Weaker answers tended to be very general, offering teachings which could be found in a vast selection of passages rather than focusing on the specific and distinctive themes of the passages selected.

Weak responses wrote extensively about the sura the passage was from, its number, the meanings of the name of that sura, and where it was revealed, while only talking about the content in just a line or two.

- (b) Excellent responses refer to the precise themes of the passages selected, choose a few of them to talk about and show how these themes are significant in the belief system as well as the practical lives of Muslims. Good responses talked about the creation of a strong sense of reliance on God as well as responsibility towards God's creations and nature, from passage (i), different forms of

protection, from passage (ii), and trust in God's assistance in times of trials and tribulations along with increased respect for the Prophet (pbuh) for passage (iii).

Weaker responses were characterised by repeating themes from **part (a)**, making simplistic statements about what Muslims ought to do, writing about *tawhid*, *shirk* and following the basics of Islam for every passage and not developing the points enough.

Question 2

- (a) The strongest responses gave precise details of the Prophet's experience of receiving the first revelation of the Qur'an, some quoted 'Aishah's Hadith and conversations between Khadija and the Prophet (pbuh) and Waraqa's prediction. Further development included descriptions of the archangel's interaction with the Prophet (pbuh) and his reaction to the supernatural experience. Weaker responses included a basic outline of this event only.
- (b) There were many good responses explaining the significance of the Qur'an being revealed over 23 years. Reasons given included, that passages were revealed according to the needs of the Muslim community, therefore it was spread over a long period; that the Prophet (pbuh) underwent immense physical hardships while receiving a revelation, therefore, to ease the pressure it was sent in parts; that gradual revelation ensured steady application of new rules and regulations which were hard for new converts to adopt suddenly; and that it also facilitated complete and error free preservation of the divine message.

Question 3

- (a) Good responses were focused and demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the tribes and politics in Madina when Muslims arrived there. Some wrote about the background of different pagan and Jewish tribes, and their origins, occupations, and their role in Madinan society. Others focused on the nature of their relationships, highlighting how two main pagan tribes were in constant conflict with each other while this animosity was further stimulated by Jewish tribes. The best responses gave the precise terms of the Constitution of Madina.

Weaker responses demonstrated only partial knowledge of the subject and gave only the names of the tribes present and a few main details of the constitution (including religious freedom), the combined defence of Madina and recognition of the Prophet's leadership and non-co-operation with the Quraysh.

Weak responses were also compounded by some irrelevant information. For example, an unnecessary emphasis on the expulsion of Jewish tribes, which was not relevant to the question, or extended notes with minute details of the bond of brotherhood created in Madina. Similarly, some responses started from the Pledges of 'Aqaba, or the Prophet's migration; these answers spent a lot of time discussing the initial activities of Muslims in Madina, which did not earn them any credit.

- (b) Good responses talked about how Muslim leaders today should give rights to minorities living in a Muslim community, ensuring freedom of religious practices and the security of lives, property, and places of worship. Some also mentioned entering into peace agreements at local or wider levels to guarantee protection against any form of external aggression. These responses were also able to talk about the possible impact of these measures or gave specific examples from around the world.

Weaker responses made simplistic suggestions about cooperating with peoples from other religious backgrounds.

Some responses incorrectly talked about the Brotherhood of Madina, in **part (a)**, and only discussed how to help the needy in society in **part (b)**, hence not getting any credit.

Question 4

- (a) Excellent responses gave reasons for both battles, provided good details of the preparation (in particular, the Tabuk Expedition and how the Muslim community responded to the donations appeal), the movement of forces and the events and outcome of the battles. Better responses also

included the Prophet's quotations pertaining to the roles of some of his Companions in these battles.

Weaker responses either attempted only one battle or confused them with other battles, such as the Battle of Tabuk with the Battle of Mu'tah. The lack of finer details and inaccuracies were the main characteristics of weak responses.

- (b) The main lesson from the Battle of Tabuk is one of perseverance. Good responses highlighted how Muslims can learn to have faith in God, be determined and show resilience in the face of adversities. These responses concluded with specific examples from everyday lives, where these characteristics of determination and unwavering faith in God's assistance can be applied.

Weaker responses were simplistic, saying Muslims should believe in God and be steadfast. Other weak responses talked about the wrong battles or discussed general lessons to be learned, such as following a leader's orders or helping the community in times of hardships.

Question 5

- (a) Good responses gave comprehensive information on both personalities, information about their background, the tribe they belonged to and their parents. Some narrated the particulars of Bilal's conversion and the persecutions faced by him afterwards. Such answers also talked at length about his role after migration to Madina. For Abu Sufyan, responses had details about his part in the different battles fought against the Muslims, as well as his attempt at reconciliation and finally his conversion. The role played by him in the defence and expansion of Islam was also highlighted.

Weaker responses talked about Bilal's conversion and his role as the first *mu'azzin* and Abu Sufyan fighting against Muslims while accepting Islam before the Conquest of Makka where his house was declared as a place of safety.

- (b) The question required candidates to choose **one** personality and show how their conversion to Islam has lessons about equality.

Strong responses displayed a complete understanding of the question's demand. The responses on Bilal discussed how an oppressed slave became one of the close Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) after his conversion, showing that Islam is about equality of humans. Furthermore, how there was no place for discrimination in Islam based on the ethnic or social background of a person. Excellent responses went on to say that in Islam piety is the only criteria for superiority.

Those choosing Abu Sufyan talked about everyone becoming equal after converting to Islam. These responses further explained that discrimination against someone based on their past deeds is condemned in Islam, once repented, everyone deserves equal treatment.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 21

Key messages

Read the question carefully to understand what it is asking.

Select precise information with which to answer the question. Do not write everything you know about a topic but stay focused on what is being asked. Use supporting quotations and examples where applicable.

General comments

Candidates showed good knowledge of the topics for **part (a)** answers. The amount of knowledge on display determined the success or otherwise of the response. Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improved answers.

For **part (b)** answers, candidates successfully presented their understanding of the importance of the topic and supported this with generally sound reasons.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Good responses were characterised by their understanding of the teachings of the Hadiths; answers were able to clearly describe their teachings about what Muslims believe. Better responses were developed or supported with information from other Hadiths. Weaker responses relied on the translation in the exam paper and paraphrased the information, rather than show any independent understanding.

The first three Hadiths in the question paper were the most popular choices with candidates.

- (b) The best responses highlighted the ways which the teachings could be put into action and provided examples from the life of the Prophet (pbuh), the Companions or from the present for support. For example, for Hadith 3 responses stated that honouring one's guests or giving food to a neighbour show how to put this Hadith into action.

Weaker responses were characterised by their descriptive response or a rewritten answer from **part (a)**.

Question 2

- (a) Many responses showed an understanding the *Sahih* Hadith. Better responses developed the answer with examples of each category and giving the chain of narrators for a *Sahih* Hadith.

Other good responses included the rules of *isnad* and some of the qualities of the narrator and compiler to ensure the authenticity of *Sahih* Hadiths. These answers also explained how the *matn* was important, adding to the overall development of the answer.

Weak responses included detail about weak Hadiths but called them fabricated (*mawdu'*). A Hadith cannot be weak and fabricated at the same time. This sort of confused thinking highlights the errors in weaker responses.

- (b) There were many good responses, with answers highlighting the importance of classifying Hadiths into the different categories (because Hadiths are used in law-making), sound reasons for the consequences of not doing so and the benefits of classification.

Question 3

- (a) A popular question in which responses showed good accounts of both battles. Names of commanders, dates, tactics, details of the battle itself, the outcome and consequences were aspects that the best responses included. Weaker responses were characterised by less development or missing information.

- (b) Responses stated clearly why victory at Buwayb was significant for Muslims. For example, many responses stated that the victory gave a boost to the morale of the Muslims because they had defeated the Persian army or that it was significant because the Muslims now controlled southern Iraq and benefitted in the ways one would expect.

Question 4

- (a) Good responses showed an understanding of the reasons for the revolt against 'Uthman and they knew the events of the rebellion. Reasons for the revolt included, the appointment of relatives and clan members to important government posts, leniency shown towards them in both personal and professional conduct, 'Uthman's spending from the public treasury on his relatives and burning copies of the Qur'an. Some responses were confused about the names of cities from where the rebels came and the names of governors.

- (b) Good responses were able to show they had selected the most serious consequence of 'Uthman's assassination and gave reasons for their selection. This evaluation was required for a successful answer. Weaker responses were characterised by a list of consequences without saying which was the most serious and why.

Question 5

- (a) Most responses included a description about how Muslims prepare for the Friday prayers and gave its key features. This description included things such as, preparation (which includes bathing), wearing clean (but not necessarily new) clothes, trimming nails, wearing *ittar* and performing *wudu*.

The second part of the answer was where more specific knowledge was seen. Good responses included detail about the two *adhans* and the sermon and that two *fard* are read instead of four. Some responses missed that it replaces the *Zuhr* prayer, can be read only behind an *imam* and only *fard* are read in congregation.

- (b) Good responses gave clear benefits of praying in a congregation. Responses mentioned the spiritual rewards, the increase in the feeling of brotherhood and the charity. There were examples based on candidates' own experiences to help develop the answer.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 22

Key messages

Read the question carefully to understand what it is asking.

Select precise information with which to answer the question. Do not write everything you know about a topic but stay focused on what is being asked. Use supporting quotations and examples where applicable.

General comments

Candidates showed good knowledge of the topics for **part (a)** answers. The amount of knowledge on display determined the success or otherwise of the response. Good relevancy, accuracy, and depth improved answers.

For **part (b)** answers, candidates successfully presented their understanding of the importance of the topic and supported this with generally sound reasons. However, there were some common factors hindering good answers. These include, misunderstanding the question, placing emphasis on factual or descriptive information, taking a stance or making a claim which was not substantiated by evidence and making simple suggestions about a code of behaviour for present day Muslims, in response to any question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Good responses were characterised by their understanding of the teachings of the Hadiths; answers were able to say clearly, what the teachings were. Better responses were developed or supported with information from other Hadiths. Weaker responses relied on the translation in the exam paper and paraphrased the information, rather than show any independent understanding.

For Hadith 4, good responses said that the Qur'an is a source of guidance for all Muslims until the end of time, therefore it is vital for them to stay connected to it by reading and understanding it and benefitting from the guidance it provides. Whereas weaker responses spoke about memorising the Qur'an and focused on the *hafiz* and how important it was for them to keep in close connection to the Qur'an. This interpretation somewhat missed the big message of the Hadith.

For Hadith 14, weak responses focused on the teaching of showing mercy in general, whereas stronger responses focused on how mercy should be shown in all aspects of a Muslim's life, including business transactions.

- (b) Strong responses gave concrete examples of how the teachings they wrote about could be implemented in Muslims' lives. For example, putting Hadith 19 into action could be as simple as only eating lawful (*halal*) food. Weaker responses repeated the teachings given in **part (a)**. There is a clear distinction in the demands of both **part (a)** and **part (b)** answers, and the best responses are prepared to make that distinction.

Question 2

- (a) Most responses showed they knew what *ijma'* was and how it was used, some were confused between *ijma'* and *qiyas*. Weak responses did not have information about who was eligible to practice *ijma'*. Good responses included the rules that were established for the sake of maintaining consistency in decisions made through *ijma'*.

The second part of **part (a)** clearly asked the candidates to give two examples of *ijma'* from the time of the Companions. Weak responses did not focus on this key instruction, with examples ranging from when the Prophet (pbuh) practiced *shura* to the present when covid rules were followed in mosques through *ijma'*. These examples were read as development of the first part of the question where the candidates were asked to write an account of *ijma'*. For marks to be credited for the second part of **part (a)** the examples needed to be from the time of the Companions. The main examples given were the election of the first caliph, the compilation of the Qur'an either in the time of Abu Bakr or 'Uthman, *Taraweeh* in congregation and two *adhans* for Friday prayers.

- (b) Good responses explained or attempted to explain *qiyas* with reference to the conversation between the Prophet (pbuh) and Mu'adh ibn Jabal, some responses were developed and gave examples of *qiyas*. The most popular examples being the use of nail polish and the validity of *wudu*. Good responses included information about the link between *asl*, *far'*, *illa* and *hukm* with a relevant example of the prohibition of alcohol in Islam.

Answers which disagreed with the lead statement in the question were also credited when the reasons for disagreeing were explained and supported.

Question 3

- (a) Responses showed a variety of ways of answering this question. One way was to take each Rightly Guided Caliph in turn, identify their leadership quality and give examples of how that quality was acted upon. For example, the justice of 'Umar or 'Ali with an example from their life where they showed justice.

Good responses gave a list of their achievements and linked them to the caliph to show how they reflected the leadership quality. For example, Abu Bakr's election speech or sending the expedition to Syria. The leadership quality shown is his humility and humbleness and the quality of following the Prophet (pbuh), even after his passing, by adhering to his wishes when sending Usama as the leader of the expedition. The strongest responses included leadership qualities of all four caliphs.

- (b) Religious freedom, social welfare and honesty in dealing with public resources were some of the examples of leadership chosen and written about in the best responses. Weaker responses answered the question too vaguely. These answers did not choose an example of leadership shown by the caliphs that could be applied by today's leaders. Rather, the responses listed qualities.

Question 4

- (a) Strong responses kept the focus of the answer on how the rebels came back to Madina after leaving once their main demand was met, how they laid siege to the caliph's house and what ensued and the details of the attack on the caliph. The causes and background of the rebellion was read as development of the answer. However, many candidates made the causes of the rebellion the focus of the answer and only wrote briefly about 'Uthman's martyrdom and 'Ali's election. Very few answers gave a good account of 'Ali's election even if they gave a good account of 'Uthman's martyrdom.
- (b) There were many good responses giving reasons for opposition to 'Ali such as, the delay in avenging the assassination of 'Uthman, the change of governors that led to the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin and the emergence of the Kharijites.

Question 5

- (a) The strongest responses understood that Muslim belief is that all will gather on the plains of 'Arafah on the Day of Judgment and that this belief is only one aspect of the significance of the Day of 'Arafat. These responses were able to give a fuller account by recounting that it is the ninth day of *Dhu al-Hijja* and the climax of *Hajj* and linking this to its significance. Weaker responses gave valid points of significance but some focused the answer solely from the point of view of the Day of Judgment. They may well have confused the *Day of 'Arafah* with the Day of Judgment.

Strong responses noted that *Eid-ul Adha* indicates the completion of the compulsory rites of *Hajj* and that it is an important festival in Islam because it brings families and communities together and spreads goodwill in the wider community. In weaker responses, *Eid-ul Adha's* significance was presented from a narrow perspective about the sacrifice that Ibrahim and Ismail were willing to make for God.

- (b) This was a well-answered question and most responses showed that the statement meant that it was not necessary to perform *Hajj* more than once and that it was not the number of *Hajj* performed but the sincerity in performance that matters.