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GCSE

**URDU**

8648/WF: Writing Foundation  
Report on the Examination

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### General Comments

There was a wide difference in the quality of work and the paper discriminated well. Many students were able to gain marks in all questions and it seemed that the vast majority had been entered at the appropriate tier. Many students showed a good knowledge of the vocabulary required for the tasks and many had the grammatical knowhow to deal with the different tasks. Time frames were tested in questions 3 and 4 and, again, there was evidence that a good number of students were confident in this area. Where students failed to score marks 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 2 and 4. Where a student's grammatical knowledge was lacking, this would invariably lead to some loss of clarity which had a negative impact on communication and quality of language. In questions 2 and 4, many students far exceeded the recommended word count and very often, in so doing, made more errors which meant they got a lower mark for quality of language than they may otherwise have done.

### Question 1

Marks in this question are for communication only and each of the four sentences written by the student was worth a maximum of two marks. Because clarity of the message is the key element, the students who were most successful in this question were those who used simple language, usually with a verb like ہے or ہیں, followed by something they could see in the photo. The sentences had to relate to something that was in the photo. If there was ambiguity or a delay in communication in what the student wrote, then a mark of one was given. This included instances where the verb was omitted. Many students scored full marks for this question, whereas majority of students achieved one mark for each sentence. The best responses included successful use of phrases such as 'اس تصویر میں۔۔۔۔۔ ہے۔' There were some instances where students did not write in full sentences. There were also some instances where students wrote answers without joining the Urdu letters and very few instances where students wrote phonetically using English letters.

### Advice to students and teachers

- Include a verb, but keep the sentences short and simple to make sure you communicate a clear message.
- Always join the Urdu letters and don't write phonetically using the English alphabet.
- Teachers are reminded that students are required to write four sentences about what is in the photo. Each sentence is marked separately and is worth a maximum of two marks.

### Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

### Content

The criteria for assessment address both coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The most successful responses were concise and addressed all bullet points. Some students struggled with the last bullet point, 'آپ اپنا ہوم ورک کتنی دیر تک کرتے/کرتی ہیں،' and other bullet points were the most accessible and students addressed them well. Where any bullet points were omitted, this obviously limited the marks that could be awarded. In addition, inaccurate language

that led to a delay in communication, and hence ‘lapses’, had an impact on marks awarded for Content.

### Quality of language

Many students were able to score three marks and above. There were good attempts at variety, for example different ways of expressing opinions and different persons of the verb. Where students failed to score marks, this occurred when verb formations were not accurate and where they had attempted to write much more than the 40 words and therefore created more scope for error.

### Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the number of words required.
- Mention all of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them.
- Tick off the bullet points once you have addressed them.

### Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for Conveying key messages and 5 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well, with vast majority of students able to score some marks.

### Conveying key messages

Key messages	Main issues
We do not get time to play at home.	Many students missed ‘at home’
The journey was very long	Some students found the word ‘journey’ difficult
I am sending this letter to Pakistan	A variety of Urdu words for ‘letter’ were seen
She did her homework and then she went to sleep	The past tense was not always well produced

### Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent award of marks for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. Because of this, when awarding marks for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, inaccurate language was considered.

**Advice to students**

- Practise high frequency words and phrases.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words as mentioned above.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may score you a mark. Leaving it blank is not a good strategy.
- Check verb tenses and endings.

**Question 4**

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. Students were able to achieve full marks by writing in the region of 90 words. Many did this, but others lost marks for Content because they wrote around half that amount or because they wrote too much and made more errors in so doing. This affected the mark for Quality of language. At this tier, it was the students who wrote concisely and accurately who scored the highest marks.

**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’ in the criteria) and this had an impact on marks awarded. Therefore, students who conveyed information in relation to all four bullet points did not necessarily score a mark of 8 or 9 if there were lapses in clarity.

**Question 4.1**

This was a very popular question. All four bullet points were answered well and often more was written in relation to the first two bullet points than the others. The fourth bullet point was to write opinion about shopping from this online shop and many wrote just a couple of sentences about that. The 3rd bullet point was not done so well at this tier, mainly because of the need to refer to the future event. If the present tense was used, this clearly led to a lack of clarity in the intended message. However, there were some good examples of appropriate responses.

**Question 4.2**

Many students answered this question and most of them produced a good response, but some did not develop this bullet point to include a range of verbs in future tense and wrote only one sentence about how young people would benefit from this centre. Overall students’ performance in content is better than the quality of languages. Majority of students gained 4 or above marks in content. Some students didn’t give their opinion about the facilities in the community centre.

**Question 4.3**

This was an additional question added for this series. This was not as popular as the other two questions. Bullet points 1, 3 and 4 were generally well done as these showed good development. Bullet point 2 was about the benefits of open days for students and some students could not elaborate on that. Bullet point 4 was usually quite well done as some students used this as a prompt to write about their career plans when they finish university.

**Quality of language**

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. Students were able to show a variety of vocabulary in relation to the four bullet points of their chosen question. This came automatically as they were asked to write about diverse topics. Both questions elicited language which referred to past, present and future events and students had the opportunity to show a knowledge of different tenses. This was not always done successfully, in particular with the bullet points requiring reference to the past. When giving opinions, many students were able to use different verbs and adjectives which lent greater variety to their writing. Two bullet points per question directly elicited opinions. Complexity at this tier was achieved in various ways: infinitive constructions; subordinate clauses; the use of longer sentences formed using connectives; comparatives; negatives; the use of a range of adjectives and range of tenses.

The other strand in Quality of language is the accuracy of the writing. The more common, major errors were with verbs, either with the wrong person or the wrong tense of the verb. Another major error, which prevented was spelling mistakes. A good number of minor errors, for example of gender or adjectival agreement, at times led to a lower mark.

**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.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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