



GCSE

URDU

8648/SF Speaking

Report on the Examination

8648/SF

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General comments

As always, there was a wide range in the standard of work produced by students and their performance was generally good. Great credit for this goes to the students themselves and also to the hard work and skills of their teacher-examiners. This was seen most clearly in generally good marks achieved in the Role play. Practice with past examination papers had clearly prepared students very well for this part of the test.

The Photo card and General conversations were often not as strong as the Role play but there were still some excellent conversations for this tier. These conversations showed good interaction between student and teacher-examiner. However, there were occasions when this was not the case and where students found it a challenge to maintain a conversation. In spite of this, the standard overall was good.

Correct conduct of the test by teacher-examiners is crucial and many teacher-examiners conducted the exam well. There were many schools/colleges where exams were conducted by a native speaker who did not have sufficient knowledge of the requirements of the AQA specification and they did not follow the sequence chart provided by AQA in the Paper 2 Teacher's Booklet. This adversely affected students' marks. Poor timing, especially of the General conversation, sometimes led to a loss of marks.

Teacher-examiners should not use English during the course of the test. The mark scheme says: 'If, in any part of the test, the teacher-examiner either asks a question or gives a prompt in English, you must ignore the student's reply'. In the Role play, it is acceptable for the teacher-examiner to prompt the question task by saying to the student: 'کیا آپ مجھ سے کوئی سوال پوچھنا چاہتے/چاہتی ہیں؟' or something similar in Urdu. However, if the teacher-examiner asks in English 'Have you got a question?', whatever the student says will score zero, as clearly stated in the mark scheme. It was not uncommon for that to happen.

Examiners used a Speaking Score Sheet (SSS) in order to arrive at fair and consistent marks for all students. A copy of this can be found at the end of the mark scheme.

Teacher-examiner-examiner Tester Performance records (TTPRs)

The information provided on the TTPR is intended to provide teacher-examiner-examiners with feedback on the conduct of the speaking tests to inform the conduct of future tests. It is not possible to provide more detailed feedback than the information on the TTPR form. The feedback is provided on the basis of need only and will not be necessary for every school/college.

A breakdown of marks for each section of the speaking test for each student in your centre is available free of charge in ERA (Enhanced Results Analysis). ERA is accessed via Centre Services.

Role plays

It was pleasing to see a good performances by students in this year's Role plays. However, the task where students have to form a question was the least well done. Teachers are advised to practice formulating questions as part of teaching and learning.

In terms of the conduct of the Role play task, most teacher-examiners adhered to the script in the Teacher’s booklet and followed the guidance perfectly. In cases where teacher-examiners reworded the script giving away key vocabulary, any subsequent response by the student was invalidated.

Some students’ performance was affected by:

- using English/Mirpuri/Punjabi words
- missing out the student question or asking irrelevant questions not part of the task
- using the wrong tense
- not following the teacher-examiner script in the Role play
- the teacher-examiner-examiner asking the question which was supposed to be asked by the student.
- poor conduct of exam by a teacher-examiner examiner unfamiliar with the AQA test
- allowing the students to give lengthy responses which went beyond what was required by the bullet point task
- the teacher-examiner giving lengthy answers to the question asked by the student.

Some students struggled to understand the following phrase:

ریل گاڑی کا ٹکٹ خریدنا۔ ڈی وی ڈی خریدنا

The following phrases (cognates) proved very challenging for students to read.

اپرٹس شپ۔ رائے۔ ڈی وی ڈی کی قیمت

The published mark scheme has more detail as to the kind of responses that were worthy of two, one or zero marks per bullet point task.

Photo cards

Generally, students seemed well prepared for this part of the test. Many teacher-examiners had clearly read Appendix 4 of the mark scheme, which deals with the marking of the Photo card, and passed this information on successfully to their students. Any teachers who are not fully aware of how the Photo card is marked are strongly recommended to read Appendix 4 of the mark scheme and to look at the examples that are given for the award of different marks.

Approximately a third of students achieved a mark in the top band and a further third accessed the 10-12 band. Most students were able to give a reasonably well developed response to the first prepared question اس تصویر میں کیا ہے؟

In the case of lower attaining students, the responses to this question were brief and very basic.

Responses were enhanced where students had used the ‘PALMS (Physical, Action, Location, Mood, Something else)’ technique to develop their answers. Examples of these included – (Card B) اس تصویر میں ایک باپ اور دو بیٹے ہیں۔ وہ فٹ بال کھیل رہے ہیں۔ وہ پارک میں ہیں۔ وہ خوش ہیں۔ لگتا ہے۔ مجھے فٹ بال کھیلنا پسند ہے۔

At Foundation tier, many students also invented a present continuous form to describe activities in the picture. For example, in Card D:

اس تصویر میں لوگ خوش لگ رہے ہیں۔ وہ کچھ دیکھ رہے ہیں۔ وہ چھٹیوں پر جا رہے ہیں۔

Questions differentiated well, with a wide range in the quality of answers, but there were some that were done noticeably less well than others. Teachers are strongly recommended to read page 20 of the mark scheme and to look at the examples that are given for the award of different marks on pages 21 - 28.

These questions were the ones which students found most challenging.

گھر سے کام کرنے کے کیا فائدے ہیں؟
 ایک اچھی ملازمت حاصل کرنے کے لیے کون سی خوبیاں ہونا ضروری ہیں؟
 آپ کو کس قسم کے کالج میں پڑھانی کرنا پسند ہے؟ کیوں؟
 آپ کے شہر میں گاڑیوں کی وجہ سے کوئی مسئلہ ہے؟ کیوں/کیوں نہیں؟
 لوگ بجلی کس طرح بچاتے ہیں؟
 نوجوانوں کے لیے کتابیں پڑھنا کیوں ضروری ہے؟

Most teacher-examiners conducted the Photo card task very well. Some students' performances were affected by:

- teacher-examiners using the student's card instead of the teacher-examiner role in the Teacher's Booklet to conduct the exam and therefore missed out the two unprepared questions impacting on student marks
- allowing students to go into far too much detail with 12, 13 pieces of information for some prepared questions which limited how many questions were answered. Only three pieces of information are required.
- not asking the questions in the order on the Candidate card which caused confusion for students
- not using the required tense/s.
- not using 3rd person verbs.
- using English/Punjabi/Mirpuri words/phrases.

General conversation

Students performance in the General conversation was very pleasing. Almost half of students achieved a mark in the top band 9-10 for Communication and Range and accuracy of language and a mark in the top band 5 for Pronunciation and intonation and Spontaneity and fluency.

Students' performance was affected by a combination of wrong themes, poor timing and not asking the right sort of questions to elicit developed responses. There were many impressive and spontaneous conversations from the highest attaining students. However their marks for Communication was not as good as their marks for Range and accuracy. This was due to using the wrong combination of themes, resulting in the theme of the Photo card being duplicated in the General conversation and poor timings of the two themes. Some students' performances were also affected because teacher-examiners did not tailor questions to the ability of the students in order to elicit the best performance from individual students. Most students scored higher marks for Pronunciation and intonation and Spontaneity and fluency.

In most tests, there was good interaction between the student and the teacher-examiner, whereas at other times there was little interaction and the conversation took the form of a list, with often unconnected questions. The students who performed best were those who were asked open questions which invited developed responses and these responses were then followed up by the teacher-examiner to provide evidence of spontaneity.

For many students, the conversation element of the test was where they performed more confidently. However, some students' performances were affected by:

- only covering one theme rather than two which meant that some high attaining students only had access to half of the Communication marks
- not being well prepared for the 2nd theme in the sequence chart allocated by AQA
- not asking a question in the General conversation
- not asking questions to demonstrate a range of aspects required by the assessment criteria (opinions, justifications and use of tenses).
- no genuine interaction between teacher-examiner and the student in terms of a conversation
- asking very closed questions and not giving an opportunity to students to extend their answers
- giving lengthy responses which resembled a monologue rather than a conversation
- using the same questions for Foundation and Higher students irrespective of the ability or interests of individual students
- only using the suggested questions in the Teacher's Booklet which does not allow for a genuine conversation
- not using differentiated questions for different levels of ability
- not conducting the General conversation for the minimum amount of time. The required length of the General conversation is between three and five minutes at Foundation tier. Each theme must last for a minimum of one and a half minutes and, if one or both are under that time, there is a penalty of two marks for Communication. Timing of the first theme begins when the teacher-examiner starts to ask the first question relating to that theme. The timing of that theme ends, and the second one begins, when the teacher-examiner asks the first question relating to the second theme. In other words, the changeover time between themes is added on to the first theme. Timing of the second theme ends when the teacher-examiner says 'End of test'.

Advice to teacher-examiners

- Train native speakers to ensure they follow the AQA specification ie use of correct themes, timing, use of Urdu throughout the assessment and not re-wording the script for the Role play.
- Ensure all teacher-examiner have access to the *Instructions for the conduct of the exams* available on the AQA website in advance of conducting any tests
- Ensure the exam is conducted by a teacher-examiner with good Urdu language skills.
- Use the sequence chart in the Teacher's Booklet to allocate the cards to each student.
- Do a short test recording before the first student's test to check recording levels and clarity.
- Position the microphone or digital recorder so that it picks up student voices clearly.
- In the Instructions document, you are told how to introduce each student in English. This is what you should say at the start of the recording for every student: GCSE Urdu examination, June (year of exam). Centre number ____, student number ____, student name ____.
Role play number ____, Photo card letter ____, General conversation theme chosen by student Theme (1, 2 or 3).

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- Everything said by the teacher-examiner must be clearly audible. Instances of whispering will be referred to AQA, as will instances where it sounds as though something is being written down.
 - Use Urdu throughout the exam once you have introduced the student and his/her Role play and Photo card combinations and the nominated theme for the General conversation in English.

Key advice on each section of the speaking test for teacher-examiner-examiners

Role play

- Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Role. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of 0 for Communication in that task.
- If you see that a student is starting to give the wrong answer to your question, stop him/her and repeat the question. Once the student completes an incorrect answer, a mark of 0 for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is given subsequently.
- If a student asks for repetition of your question or if there is no answer, you may repeat the question.
- If there is a two-part question in an unprepared task, ask the first question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second question. Failure to do so often leads to the student having to ask for repetition.

Photo card

- You may paraphrase a question, provided the same meaning is maintained. However, be careful that that is the case or the student's reply will not be credited.
- Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any follow-up questions.
- Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question in the two-minute maximum time, you may be better to interrupt an answer and ask the next one.

General conversation

- Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible.
- Train students to give and justify opinions without necessarily being asked to do so. This can form the basis of different starter activities.
- Be sensitive to the ability of the students – someone who struggles to describe his/her town is not going to be successful discussing more challenging aspects of the topic, for example the impact of global warming.
- Try to ask students questions that reflect their interests. Don't ask all students identical questions.
- In order to achieve a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation, follow up a student's response by asking about what they have just told you.
- Announce the change of theme in Urdu.
- Keep a close eye on the time. If one of the themes lasts for less than 1'30", there is a deduction of two marks for Communication.
- The maximum length of the General conversation is five minutes. Everything after that will not be marked.
- Remember to prompt the student to ask you a question if they don't do it without being asked. It is better to get them to ask you the question in their nominated theme so that you don't forget to do it later on.
- If the first question the student asks you makes no sense, get them to ask you another one.

Advice to students

- Use the 12 minutes preparation time wisely.
- You can write down exactly what you are going to say in the Role play tasks and in response to the three questions on the Photo card.
- For the Photo card questions, try to prepare answers of at least three sentences, using a verb in each one.
- Listen carefully to the questions that your teacher-examiner asks you for the unprepared questions in the Role play and Photo card and to all questions in the General conversation.
- Make sure you know common question words such as کیا؟ کیسے؟ کہاں؟ کب؟ کیوں؟ کہاں
- You can ask for repetition of a question in any part of the test, but make sure it is in Urdu. You can say کیا آپ مجھے سے دوبارہ سوال پوچھ سکتے/سکتی ہیں؟ for example.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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