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# GCSE

# URDU

8648/SH Speaking

Report on the Examination

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## General comments

This year students at Higher tier performed well in all three parts (Role play, Photo card and General conversation) for this tier. This was clearly evident as high marks were achieved in the Role play, Photo card and General conversation.

It was pleasing to see many excellent conversations. These conversations showed good interaction between the student and teacher-examiner. However, there were some occasions when this was not the case and where students found it a challenge to maintain a conversation. Where conversations were high scoring, credit for this goes to the students themselves and also to the hard work and skills of their teacher-examiners. Practice with past examination papers had clearly prepared students very well for this part of the test.

Correct conduct of the test by teacher-examiners is crucial; it is extremely satisfying to note that most teacher-examiners conducted the tests in a highly professional way. The prescribed combination of Role play, Photo card and General conversation in the sequencing chart was adhered to by the vast majority of teacher-examiners.

However, it was clear that some tests had been carried out by non-specialist Urdu teacher-examiners who had very little knowledge of the requirements of the AQA specification and may have been employed as examiners due to speaking the language. This negatively impacted the performances of some very capable students and influenced the overall outcomes, due to unfamiliarity with the requirements of the tasks. For example, in the Photo card, teacher-examiners are allowed to paraphrase the question, but sometimes the alternative version used was not a paraphrase. Examples are given in the Photo card section of the mark scheme.

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 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 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.

Most students were appropriately entered but there were some students who would have benefitted from entering at Foundation tier.

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 Tester Performance records (TTPRs)

The information provided on the TTPR is intended to provide teacher-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

Most teacher-examiners adhered to the script in the Teacher’s Booklet and followed the guidance perfectly. In some cases where teacher-examiners re-worded the script and gave away key vocabulary, any subsequent response by the student was invalidated. The majority of students performed well in all tasks in this year’s Role plays.

In Role play 11, students were asked about the importance of Maths and English. This bullet point caused an issue, as some students described the importance of each subject separately in detail which meant that they only answered the question partially in the first two responses and as a result the subsequent responses were ignored.

Here are the Urdu phrases, which some students found very challenging. Other tasks that are not mentioned were generally completed well, especially those asking for opinions and, where appropriate, reasons.

سی ڈی میں مسئلہ۔ اس کا حل۔  
 پچھلے سال سیاحوں کے لیے سہولتوں میں بہتری۔  
 مستقبل۔ اسکول یونیفارم میں تبدیلیاں۔  
 پچھلے سال۔ امتحان کی تیاری۔

Some students also struggled to form questions for the following given phrases:

استاد/استانی کا پیشہ۔ رائے  
 استاذہ کی مدد کی ضرورت

The students performance was affected by:

- teacher-examiners not being familiar with the requirements of the AQA GCSE Urdu speaking test and not following the teacher script in the Role play
- missing out the student question or asking irrelevant questions not part of the Role play
- the teacher-examiner asking the question which was supposed to be asked by the student
- using the wrong tense
- allowing the students to give lengthy responses which went beyond what was required by the bullet point task
- using English/Mirpuri/Punjabi words

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

## Photo card

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 teacher-examiners 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.

Just over two thirds of students achieved a mark in the top band (13 – 15) and a further third accessed the 10-12 band. Some students gave over-long responses where a lack of clarity had an impact on the marks awarded. Most students were able to give a reasonably well developed response to the first prepared question؟ اس تصویر میں کیا ہے؟ 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 I)

اس تصویر میں ایک خاندان ہے۔ وہ ایک پارک میں ہیں۔ وہ پودوں کو پانی دے رہے ہیں۔ وہ بہت خوش ہیں۔ مجھے پودے لگانا اور ان کا خیال رکھنا پسند ہے

There were a small number of cases where students spoke only briefly about the content of the photo before giving a personalised response. A good number of students invented a present continuous form to describe activities in the picture. For example, in Card L:

وہ کام کر رہے ہیں۔ وہ خوش لگ رہے ہیں

Here are the tasks, which some students found challenging. Tasks that are not mentioned were generally executed well, especially those asking for opinions and, where appropriate, reasons.

Reference to a lack of knowledge of use of 3<sup>rd</sup> person verbs and past verbs are not made repeatedly but should be understood.

نوجوانوں کے لیے پیدل چلنا کیوں ضروری ہے؟ کیا نوجوانوں کا دوسرے ملکوں کی یونیورسٹیوں سے تعلیم حاصل کرنا اچھی بات ہے؟ کیوں/کیوں نہیں؟ ایک اچھے استاد/استانی کی کیا خوبیاں ہیں؟ کسی بھی پیشے میں کامیابی کے لیے کون سی خوبیاں ہونی چاہئیں؟ سمندر میں بہت زیادہ پلاسٹک ہونے کی وجہ سے سمندر میں رہنے والے جانوروں پر کیا اثر ہوا ہے؟

The following question was read by some teacher-examiners asking students to give their response in present tense. Teacher-examiners are reminded that they can not change the tense.

سمندر میں بہت زیادہ پلاسٹک ہونے کی وجہ سے سمندر میں رہنے والے جانوروں پر کیا اثر ہوا ہے؟

Most 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 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 within the time allowed. Only three pieces of information are required for each question.
- not asking the questions in the order on the Candidate card which caused confusion for students
- not using all three tenses
- not using 3<sup>rd</sup> person verbs
- using English/Punjabi/Mirpuri words/phrases.

## General conversation

For most students, the conversation element of the test was where they performed best. Just over half of students achieved a mark in the top band 9-10 for Communication and two thirds scored a top band mark for Range and accuracy of language. Well over two thirds of students accessed a mark in the top band 5 for Pronunciation and intonation and Spontaneity and fluency.

Students' performance for Communication was affected by a combination of wrong themes, poor timing and not asking appropriate questions to fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria.

However, there were many impressive and spontaneous conversations from the highest attaining students. Some students' performance was 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 the 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 conducting the General conversation for the minimum amount of time. The required length of the General conversation is between five and seven minutes at Higher tier. Each theme must last for a minimum of two 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-examiners 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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Role play number \_\_\_\_, Photo card letter \_\_\_\_, General conversation theme chosen by student Theme (1, 2 or 3).

- 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-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 a 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 three-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 2'30", 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 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.