

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Urdu (6UR01) Paper 1A
Spoken Expression (TE)

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Publications Code 6UR01_1A_1606_ER

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General

The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires candidates to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the candidates chosen general topic area. The teacher /examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite candidates to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus.

SECTION B

In the second part of the exam the candidate is expected to discuss and develop the general topic area as part of a wider conversation.

Assessment Principles

This paper carries 50 marks. It consists of a conversation between the visiting or teacher examiner on an AS topic area chosen by the candidate. The general topic areas are:

- Youth Culture and Concerns
- Lifestyle Health and Fitness
- The World Around Us
- Education and Employment

Stimulus cards are provided for each area. Before starting the examination, the candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided.

They may make notes of up to one side of A4 in this time, which they may refer to during the examination.

It is expected that the candidate will keep the notes throughout the exam and they, together with the card, will be collected at the end.

The speaking exam lasts between 8 and 10 minutes and is made up of two parts:

In Part A, the candidate is asked 4 questions relating to the stimulus card which are set by Edexcel. These questions are **mandatory** and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they must **not be re-phrased or expanded on in any way**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two to the wider issues developing from the stimulus material. For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are **as full and as detailed as possible**. The candidates' understanding of this stimulus specific topic area is marked out of 4.

In Part B, the teacher/examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by each student, and the teacher/examiner must move away from the subtopic of the stimulus card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics.

The candidates must also show a clear understanding of the chosen topic. The subtopics of each area are stated in the specification. The candidate's understanding of the general topic area is marked out of a total of 10.

The marks of 8 for Quality of Language (Accuracy), 8 for Quality of Language (Lexis) and 20 for response apply to the test as a whole. It is important that the full test lasts **at least eight minutes**. If the test is too short, it will be liable to a penalty.

Similarly there is no point in continuing the test beyond ten minutes and examiners will usually not listen beyond this point. It is possible that some candidates may start to tire significantly beyond 9 minutes or so and there is no need to prolong the exam beyond 10 minutes. Examiners should possibly remember that a written examination has a fixed time when candidates must stop and it is the same thing for an oral test.

The most popular topic area is Lifestyle, Health and Fitness.

Stimulus Card 1 was a passage on the effects of mother's exercise on their children's health. The first two questions, common to both cards A and B directly concerned with the particular stimulus were in the most part well answered. The third and fourth questions in each card were broader based ones relating to the general topic area. Most candidates were able to respond at length to these questions.

Stimulus Card 2 related to the effect of dental health on player's performance. The general questions were designed to provide candidates to talk at length about their chosen topic and then the examiner could broaden out the discussion. Very few candidates were unable to maintain a conversation for the required eight minutes or so.

The second most popular Topic Area was Youth Culture & Concerns.

The topic for Card 1A and 1B was about Peshawri slippers. The first two questions, being directly text based were straightforward and very few problems were reported. On both cards the general questions on this related to the importance of fashion in our life

Stimulus Cards 2A and 2B were based on a passage about child actors in Bollywood. It was well received. However, question 3 in card 2b was difficult to answer by many candidates.

The third topic area is The World Around Us.

Stimulus Card 1A and 1B was based on a passage about solar power. The direct questions were straightforward and only proved tricky for those few candidates whose reading skills were not really up to the required level for this examination.

What was interesting about Question 4 was that the responses seemed to demonstrate that many candidates did not consider it their responsibility to care for the environment but that it was the job of government and local councils to do the work.

Question 3 on 1B was not so well answered by some candidates. It concerned the environmental impact of solar power which they did not seem to understand sufficiently well to be able to give reasons for.

Stimulus Cards 2A and 2B were based on a passage about holidays. The first two text-based questions were straightforward for nearly every candidate. Q3 and 4 on Card 2A, related to candidate's opinion about holidays, appeared to cause no problems. Q4 on Card 2B, however, produced a wide variety of responses concerning the importance of holidays.

The fourth Topic Area was Education & Employment.

The passage on Cards 1A and 1B was about the importance of private tuitions for students to succeed in the exam. There were no notable problems for candidates here. Neither were there for the further questions on either card. In Card 1A Candidates were able to discuss the importance of exams from their own personal experience, which is always advantageous when having a discussion.

The second stimulus was based on youth training, which again is directly relevant to the candidates' own experience. Q1 and Q2 were very straightforward. The more general questions on both cards were also relevant and were well answered by most candidates.

Part 2 General discussion.

This part of the examination is heavily dependent on

a: the ability of the teacher-examiner to prepare suitably testing questions on the topic, and b: to respond flexibly to the candidates' responses, thus trying to maintain a naturalistic discussion rather than a list of stilted disconnected questions.

(There were a very small number of centres where the teacher-examiner asked only the first four questions from the stimulus and ended the test without any further discussion. Such candidates could score a maximum of only twenty marks.)

Many teacher examiners do this job very conscientiously and respond to their candidates' answers with appropriate questions. It is only when the questions are too rigid that the candidates' performance can be compromised. Some questioning does seem to me more appropriate for a GCSE level candidate and does not provide the candidate with the scope to demonstrate the full range of their linguistic ability, which is in many cases well above the standard required at AS Level. An example may be given in the Lifestyle, Health and Fitness Topic Area. Rather too many questions required candidates to talk about their diet and daily routine which is a topic too well covered at GCSE Level and is not really appropriate at this AS Level.

Conclusion

The overall level of performance is extremely high this year as candidates and teachers become more familiar with the format. As long as the test is conducted correctly most candidates are achieving extremely high marks.

Administrative Matters.

As usual, the centres' ability, or otherwise, to complete and send the correct paperwork is one of the major issues for the examining team. The time spent chasing up the right documents, or getting signatures on the Oral Forms can be time-consuming. Many centres are still using the old Oral Form, please use updated forms from the website. Also please ensure CDs are functioning before sending or alternatively send on a USB drive.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>