



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Urdu

46454

(Specification 4645)

Unit 4: Writing

Report on the Examination

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General comments

It was good to see that the majority of the schools/colleges were well prepared for the Writing Controlled Assessment and they used appropriate and various tasks for this unit. The tasks used by the schools/colleges included: 'A day in the life of a celebrity', 'The weather in Britain', 'My daily routine', 'My favourite sport', 'An unforgettable day of my life', 'Health and fitness', 'Food and drink', 'Importance of Urdu', 'A special occasion', 'My local area', 'My life as a teenager', 'My school', 'My work experience', 'Weekend activities', 'Free time and media', 'Lifestyles', 'Holidays', 'My life at home', 'What I do to keep fit and healthy' and 'My best holiday'.

The students work reflected that many of them were well prepared in order to fully benefit from the Controlled Assessment unit of the specification. The students' work also showed diversity and the work produced by some students was creative and imaginative. The work, too, reflected the interest displayed by the teachers and the students. Both the teachers and the students made good choice of tasks. Holidays and School and Work were the most popular tasks among the students.

Most students managed to produce two pieces of writing, which were not only developed and well structured by adding opinions, justifying them and giving examples, but also including complex structures. Most students' work on 'Holidays', 'My life as a teenager' and 'A day in the life of a celebrity' were interesting to read and showed the dedication and commitment of the students and teachers towards language learning.

It was pleasing to see that a good number of students submitted work that was well developed and well-structured. There was evidence of good teacher-generated structures. There was also some evidence where the submitted work indicated that the students were not well prepared to complete the tasks according to the specification. In some cases, the students were not given clear and sufficient bullet points to develop their chosen task by including opinions. Some students scored lower marks despite the fact they had included a lot of information but did not include any opinion. Thus, some students failed to gain a great deal of marks, which in turn brought their grades down for even the very able student. However, overall, students performed well in this unit and in many cases, to an outstanding level.

Administration

Most schools/colleges followed the instructions and the controlled assessment tasks were very well presented. In addition, schools/colleges are encouraged:

- to collate each student's work – i.e. the two tasks - together with the Student Record Form and the Task Planning Form. The use of treasury tags to keep portfolios together is preferred as paper clips and plastic wallets cause significant handling problems for the examiners.
- to make sure the examiner receives the full Controlled Assessment Task sheet relevant to the student or group. Marking cannot begin until the examiner knows what the students are writing about.
- to remind students to write neatly as poor handwriting can affect marks given.
- to send the work in the same student order as on the Attendance List, as would be done for a terminal examination paper.
- to check that the students have correctly filled in the Student Record Form and the Task Planning Form. There were errors with student numbers this year.

- to remind teachers that they should not write on the students' work (i.e. marks they may have awarded).
- to adhere to the deadlines given by AQA.

Task Planning

The use of Task Planning Forms is optional but beneficial for students if used correctly. Teachers are reminded that conjugated verbs must not be used and if they are they should be obliterated from the Task Planning Form. Good examples of Task Planning Forms were seen where students had numbered each word. Teachers are advised to spend time with their students modelling what is and what is not permissible on a Task Planning Form. Schools/colleges/colleges are also reminded that the task title must be written on the Task Planning Form.

Further advice

- Keep task titles simple, with a clear focus
- Avoid over complicated titles, where a student can easily be distracted into writing irrelevant material
- Ensure that all students know what is meant by a conjugated verb
- Check Task Planning Forms more carefully before the student completes the task
- Stress to students the importance of correct spelling on the TPF
- Where TPFs are used, students should be encouraged to use the full 40 words and ensure they cover the full content of the task
- Do not promote quantity at the expense of clarity
- Prepare language which is commensurate with the student's ability. Lower ability students can be disadvantaged through trying to use complex structures with which they struggle to communicate effectively
- Be realistic about what can be produced in one session of an hour
- Now that the Full Course specification has had a two year cycle, schools/colleges are reminded that there is a need to change the titles used as they can only be used for two years. Please see the 'Frequently Asked Questions' booklet on AQA's website for explanations of what is required.

Further support

Three further points to provide help to teachers:

- the guidance provided to examiners is published at the end of this report for your information
- at the time of publication of results, schools/colleges/colleges will receive the total mark out of 60 for Unit 4 as well as the UMS score for the unit. In order to access the breakdown of the mark out of 60 (ie the mark out of 30 per task and the mark awarded for each assessment criterion), schools/colleges/colleges must register with e-AQA and use the Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA).
- further examples of completed writing tasks with marks and video commentaries from the 2011 examination are available in the Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA. Further support materials will be publicised on the subject pages of the AQA website.

Advice to Students

Below is some advice you may wish to provide to your students:

- Once you know the title of your task and your teacher has given you the bullet points to use in your task, think carefully about how you intend to write about each one and prepare to write as much as you can and as clearly and accurately as you can
- It will improve your mark if you can use a variety of vocabulary and structures, if you can express opinions clearly and, when you can, justify these opinions by giving a reason. It also helps if you can use different tenses by saying what you did in the past, and/or what you are going to do or will do in the future, for example
- You are allowed to use a Task Planning Form on which you may write up to 40 words (in the target language and/or English) and you may use this form at Stage 3 (once it has been checked by your teacher). Be sure to spell words accurately on this sheet so that they will be accurate when you write up your piece of work. It might be wise to include the same order of bullet points on your Task Planning Form as the teacher gave you on the Task Sheet and then jot down a few words next to each one. If you are worried you may forget what a target language word means, you could write the English translation next to it, as long as the English word is included in your final count. Remember not to use conjugated verbs (parts of verbs in whichever tense); if you want to jot down verbs, you can only include infinitives
- You are allowed to use a dictionary when you write up your piece of work. You should use this to look up occasional words, but do not waste too much time looking up lots of words; you only have 60 minutes and you need to write as full a response as you can. Remember that your dictionary is likely to contain verb tables and you could always use it to check that you have written the part of the verb/the tense of the verb accurately
- Be sure that everything you write is relevant to the title
- Try to write as much as you can about each bullet point but keep an eye on the clock. Remember you only have 60 minutes. If you follow the order of the bullet points provided, this should bring a well-organised structure to your piece, but if time is running out you might choose to round off the piece neatly even if you have to cut short what you were intending to write.

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Task Planning Forms (TPF)

If more than 40 words have been used, examiners will ignore when awarding a mark, the parts of the student's response (ie the phrases or clauses) which use words noted on the TPF beyond the first 40.

If a conjugated verb appears on the TPF, examiners will ignore the clause(s) where that verb is used when awarding a mark for Range of Language and Accuracy. If the sentence (with the conjugated verb discounted) still communicates, then it may be counted towards the mark for Content.

Visuals on Task Planning Forms must not appear on Task Planning Forms in June 2012 and beyond.

2. Exactly what do examiners mark?

- They mark the student's response **to the title**.
- They do **not** mark a response to the bullet points which have the status of guidance. The student may choose to ignore the bullet points completely.
- The response must be relevant to the title.

3. Must the title relate directly to the Contexts defined in the specification?

No. The title can be anything.

4. How do examiners identify the title?

- The title is the task.
- The task and the scene-setting may seem blurred or merged together. The focus is the task.
- See examples in *Additional Exemplar Tasks: Controlled Assessment Writing and Speaking* on the AQA website within the Teacher Resource Bank for your language at <http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/languages.php?id=11&prev=10>, where the task and scene setting are clearly separated

5. What is a relevant response?

- The response must be relevant to the task.
- Students are not penalised for not responding to the scene setting details.

6. And what if there is a significant amount of irrelevant material?

- It would affect the mark for CONTENT.
- Only the material which is relevant should still be assessed for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY.

7. What if a student has omitted an entire aspect of the title?

A student with the task 'Home, local area and special occasions' who writes nothing about home area, for example, could be considered to have completed two thirds of the task. The piece could therefore be eligible for the 10-12 band for Content, assuming the piece fulfils the criteria for that band in other ways. This would still allow the student access to all mark bands for language.

8. What if there is a significant duplication of material across the two pieces of work submitted?

- The same material cannot be credited twice.
- Incidental and occasional overlap do not count as duplication.

9. What if it is clear the student's entire response is identical (ie exactly the same, word for word) to model answers in a textbook or to the wording of tasks from other students at the same centre?

The work would be referred to AQA's Irregularities/Malpractice Department.

10. Does the number of words affect assessment?

- The quality not the quantity of work affects the assessment outcome.
- 200-350 words across both tasks if aiming at grades D-G, 400-600 if aiming at grades A*- C, is for **guidance** only.
- Obviously, the shorter the assignment, the more difficult it becomes to meet the upper bands of assessment criteria for CONTENT (and therefore other categories).
- There is no *upper* limit on the number of words. The whole piece will be read and marked by the examiner.

11. How does the CONTENT mark affect the marks for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY?

Content Mark	Maximum Mark for Range of Language	Maximum Mark for Accuracy
0	0	0
1–3	1–4	1-2
4–6	1–6	1-3
7–9	1–8	1-4
10–12	1–10	1-5
13–15	1–10	1-5

12. The criteria for assessment

(a) CONTENT

The criteria for CONTENT refer to ideas, points of view and, in the 4-6 band, opinions. In terms of assessment, how are they viewed?

They are all viewed as one notion. Ideas, points of view and opinions are the same for assessment purposes. In terms of evidence, there must be more than one instance of this feature.

How do examiners decide between the 3 marks available for **CONTENT** in each mark band?

If the descriptor fits the piece exactly, then the examiner will award the middle mark in the band. If there is strong evidence of the descriptors and the examiner had been considering the band above, the highest of the three marks would be awarded. If there is just enough evidence and the examiner had been considering the band below, then the lowest mark in the band would be awarded.

13-15 marks

- Students provide a **fully relevant** and **detailed** response with **almost all** information conveyed **clearly** and **developed**.
- They must offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and at least two of them must be explained or justified.
- The piece should have a well organised structure, ie a sound ordering of ideas but **not** necessarily a formal essay structure or an introduction, conclusion, etc.

10-12 marks

- The response will be **mostly** relevant and **a lot** of information will still be provided and conveyed **clearly** and will **generally** be developed.
- There is a requirement to give **and explain** ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2)

7-9 marks

- The response will be **generally** relevant with **quite a lot** of information conveyed **clearly**.
- There will still be evidence of an ability to **develop** ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions / points of view (minimum 2).

4-6 marks

- The response is **limited** but **some** relevant information will be conveyed.
- There will be **some development** of basic ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2). These could be very simple, eg: 'I like French. I like Spanish. France is good.' = 3 simple opinions.

1-3 marks

- The response is **very limited** with **little** relevant information conveyed.
- There will be **no real structure**.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated in a coherent fashion. If zero is awarded for Content, zero must also be awarded for Range of Language and Accuracy.

(b) Range of Language

- The immediate future (ie *main jaon ga*, etc) counts as a future tense. A present tense verb with a future time marker (eg *main kal ja raha hun...*) does not.

9-10 marks

- A variety of **tenses** must be used **successfully**. This means two or more tenses and a minimum of one instance of a tense use which is other than the default tense used. The tenses could come from the same time frame (for example the preterite and the imperfect) but a greater range of tenses will add to the complexity of the language used.

An overall judgement needs to be made as to whether “verb tenses are used successfully.” There needs to be evidence that the student can communicate messages successfully in more than one tense. There may be minor spelling errors but provided they do not prevent communication they can be credited.

- The use of different tenses is not a ‘passport’ to the 9-10 band.
- There must be evidence of **successful use of complex sentences**. This could be:
 - use of subordinating conjunctions (but this is not an absolute requirement)
 - use of adverbial phrases (*aahistah say, tayzi say*, etc).
 - use of conjunctions and connectives (*eg awr, yaa, laykin, magar etc.*)
- There needs to be a **wide range of vocabulary**. This means that students will not be too repetitive in the words they use.

7-8 marks

- **Mainly successful** use of complex sentences. The note above about what constitutes complexity for the 9-10 band will also apply here.
- No specific requirement to use more than one tense but the use of different tenses may constitute evidence of ‘more complex sentences.’
- There must be a **good range** of vocabulary, so students in this band will again be trying to avoid repetition of the more common words.

5-6 marks

- There will be some attempts made at longer sentences using appropriate linking words. At this level this will often mean repeated dependence on simple connectives such as ‘and’ / ‘but’ , though ‘because’ will also be found fairly frequently when students attempt to explain ideas and points of view. Use of other forms of complex sentences will often not be wholly successful.
- There should be **some variety** of vocabulary, though students will generally be using a more basic range of vocabulary than in the higher bands and there may be more repetition.

3-4 marks

- Language will be basic, with **short, simple sentences**. Attempts at longer sentences and more difficult constructions will usually not be successful.
- Vocabulary will generally be appropriate to the basic needs of the task but will be **limited**, with a lot of repetition and overuse of a few common verbs such as *to be, to have, to like, to go*.

1-2 marks

- Little understanding of language structure shown with just the occasional short phrase which is correctly used.
- Vocabulary will be very **basic**, with only isolated words correctly used. Vocabulary will often be anglicised.

(c) ACCURACY

For ACCURACY, is there an implicit requirement for different tenses to be in evidence?

No. Range of tenses is assessed under RANGE OF LANGUAGE. The range of tenses is not considered when assessing Accuracy.

There are 5 marks available to cover the whole range of ability (i.e. 8 grades). This means the mark awarded could represent quite different performances. Moreover, a mark of 5 will not be used only to represent an A* performance.

5 marks

- **Largely accurate.**
- Major errors only usually appear in complex structures.
- There may be some minor errors (eg gender).
- Verbs and tenses are **secure**.

4 marks

- Errors occur but the piece is **generally accurate**. Mistakes made will not generally impede communication.
- Verbs and tenses are **usually correct**.

3 marks

- **More accurate than inaccurate**, though there will often be fairly frequent errors.
- The intended **meaning is clear**.
- Verbs and tenses are **sometimes unsuccessful**.
-

2 marks

- **Many errors**.
- Mistakes **often impede communication**.
- Verbs are **rarely accurate**.

1 mark

- **Frequent errors**.
- Mistakes **regularly impede communication**.
- **Limited understanding** of basic linguistic structures.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.