

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/11

Paper 1

General comments

These comments apply to Paper 2058/11 and 12.

Generally speaking, candidates were prepared for this examination in that they were able to answer the four required questions in the time allocated. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question.

Overall Examiners noted that the performance of the candidates was average for this session with there being very few candidates writing exceptional answers. Candidates seemed to have knowledge on the topics that came up in the questions, but the main issue picked out by Examiners was that the candidates did not use the knowledge they had to answer the questions being asked; they gave general answers that could apply to a number of questions that had been set in the past. Candidates need not only to remember facts and events, but to be able to adapt the information they have to answer the specific questions that have been set. This can often be done by a few selective words or phrases that will link the answer to the question.

Candidates should be as specific and detailed as possible in their answers. The mark scheme is written in general terms, as a guide to Examiners, but specific detail will be credited if relevant to the question.

It is important for candidates to read the question set as each year there will be subtle differences from the questions that have come up before. Candidates should then try to relate their answers back to the question as it is set.

Since this syllabus was revised, part **(b)** of **question 1** (this question is compulsory and has always been worded the same) has caused some confusion and so it has been agreed to amend this question. From June 2012 the question will be 'briefly explain the importance of these themes in a Muslim's life today', which refers to the themes stated in answer to part **(a)**. This change is intended to improve the question, to clear the confusion and to aid candidates in understanding and applying verses from the Qur'an in a modern day setting.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Some themes were identified in all suras. It does seem that candidates are not entirely clear as to how they should answer this question. Some candidates answered parts **(a)** and **(b)** together without differentiating them, and so did not follow the rubric, and some gave answers to all three suras. Many candidates repeated a lot of the same themes in their answer.

(a) For part **(a)** good answers would have been able to pick out key themes from two passages. Most candidates picked out the themes of God as creator and teacher, giving knowledge to humankind.

Few candidates linked this with God's power to control things in nature that benefit mankind, and few talked about His oneness (*tawhid*) with many candidates just mentioning it in passing.

Most candidates gave general answers to the two passages they had chosen. Candidates should try to pick out as many themes from the passage as possible and enhance their answers by giving a short explanation of that theme.

- (b) Here, good answers would have been able to say how these themes are presented specifically in these suras. Most answers for this part were average, with many candidates replicating what they had written in part (a).

Better answers were able to reflect on the passages and show the significance of God using these verses to highlight His oneness, power, knowledge or His link with humankind. These answers also quoted other suras that were similar but more importantly, were able to give details of why they were similar.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates did not answer this part of the question. Most candidates treated the question as the reason for the compilation of the Qur'an, and they focused their answers on the compilation during the time of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. The question is in fact asking candidates to write about how the Qur'an was developed into the form of a book, as it was not given to the Prophet in this form.

Some keys points are: the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet and preserved on bones and leaves, etc., and then later collated; the suras were put in the current order as told to the Prophet by Jibril; the original suhuf was a collection of loose sheets of paper; the compilation during 'Uthman's time (e.g. he had the Qur'an written in the Quraysh dialect and standardised into book format with the suras and chapters in order); the last part of the compilation which was the adding of the dots by Abul Aswad ad-Duali.

For this reason most answers did not achieve the higher levels, as most focused on giving information about the battle of Yamamah, 'Umar trying to persuade Abu Bakr, and Zaid's efforts to collect and collate the verses.

- (b) In part (b) most candidates wrote about the general significance of the Qur'an for a Muslim instead of writing of the significance of the Qur'an in the form of a book. For this reason there was not much evaluation offered as to the benefit of having the Qur'an in the form of a book. Candidates need to tailor their answers to the requirement of the question.

Question 3

- (a) This part was well answered by most candidates. Many candidates understood that they needed to write about the Prophet's character but from the viewpoint of the Quraysh. Many wrote about the major events before prophethood for e.g. the flooding of the Ka'ba and how the resolving of the dispute highlighted the Quraysh's respect for the Prophet's decision making. Many candidates also wrote that the relation altered after prophethood, detailing the persecution he faced and continued to highlight the nobility of the Prophet's character by mentioning he was still entrusted with the Quraysh's goods.

Some candidates were able to mention the events before and after prophethood, but without details. Some answers focused on the question being about persecution or the Prophet's character being *al-sadiq* or *al-amin*, which it was not. Some candidates narrated the childhood and life of the Prophet; others made general comments re the Prophet's interaction before the revelation of the Qur'an without reference to specific events.

- (b) Part (b) was generally well answered by candidates, with most being able to write about the main reasons the Quraysh rejected the Prophet's message; not wanting to renounce their religion, losing the economic benefit of Ka'ba as a house of polytheism, not being able to give up their un-Islamic way of life and not accepting power from one lower in status than them.

Good answers wrote and reflected upon these points.

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular one of the optional questions, but was not well answered. It was *not* to give an account of two battles, but rather to give an account of the *Prophet's conduct* in two battles. This difference was picked up by only a few candidates.

Many gave a thorough narrative of the whole battles (usually Badr and Uhud) but very few wrote about the Prophet's conduct as leader in detail. Candidates did write about the fact that the Prophet turned to God for help in the battle of Badr, and took opinions from others in the battle of Uhud but again not in detail. A few candidates wrote about the Prophet's treatment of captives.

Good candidates focused on the strategies the Prophet employed during the battles, e.g. having numerical inferiority but remaining strong and boosting comrades, emphasising the rules of engagement, always acting in defense never instigating the war, praying to God for help, consulting companions and accepting other viewpoints, and treating prisoners of war well.

- (b) Answers to this part varied. Very good answers included the lessons derived from the Prophet's conduct with other states and contemporized these lessons by, for example, linking it to the relations between Pakistan and India. Those candidates that offered evaluation gave good comparisons and examples.

Question 5

- (a) This question, about the life of Aisha, required details about Aisha and the key events in her life.

Some candidates mentioned major events e.g. when she lost her necklace and the subsequent Qur'anic verse that was revealed to prove her innocence, and that she was proficient at learning and narrated thousands of hadiths, with many scholars learning from her. Other candidates knew a little about the life of Aisha; the fact that she was pious and well learned; that she married the Prophet at an early age and the Prophet died in her lap. Many answers mentioned details that were irrelevant to the question, such as the stipend given to her by 'Umar and her participation at the battle of the camel. Most of the information given about her life was without substance or examples.

Overall responses to this question were generally undeveloped.

- (b) The answer to this part was very general. There was mention that she was a good wife, a very pious lady and Muslims should all copy her in those aspects. There was limited discussion and evaluation, but some candidates did reflect upon the life of Aisha and related how it could be relevant to Muslims now, e.g. she was more learned than many men of her time and so it should inspire Muslims to educate their daughters/women.

Key messages

Candidates should read the question carefully.

Reading one or two words, e.g. write about two battles, may lead candidates to answer the question incorrectly. Candidates should learn to read the whole question to determine its purpose.

Candidates should refer back to the question after answering it to ensure they have linked the question with the answer.

The length of an answer does not determine a high/low level, but rather it is the quality and detail of an answer, as well as how well it answers the question, that determines the level. Candidates, therefore, should develop the main points they wish to make.

If candidates are quoting Qur'anic passages they should ensure that they are relevant to the question.

Part (b) answers should be thoughtful and evaluative so candidates should try to think about expanding on their answers to offer a wider perspective on the matter.

ISLAMIYAT

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ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/21

Paper 2

General Comments

The performance of the candidates in the November session was satisfactory. The Examiners found that the Part (b) questions, where evaluation was needed, were answered in a descriptive way and that there was repetition of the information given in the Part (a). Candidates need to spend a little time before starting the examination to read and understand the questions in order to answer accurately and effectively.

Question 1

Candidates selected from all four of the given Hadiths, though Hadiths (i), (iii) and (iv) were the more popular ones. A large number of the candidates got to a satisfactory level. They simply wrote about, for example for Hadith (i), the importance of caring for widows and orphans. The Hadith mentions widows and poor people specifically but an understanding of the Hadith should have brought out the element that Islam teaches Muslims the importance of looking after the needs of others, especially the vulnerable in society, and that there is a wider meaning to worship that is as important as fulfilling the pillars of Islam. When answering Hadith (iv) many wrote that 'this Hadith teaches us to believe in Allah and the last day...' Belief in Allah and the last day is a requisite of being a Muslim, as is being considerate to others an expression of faith. Candidates need to express the teaching of the Hadiths as they understand it in their own words and not simply reword the Hadiths.

In answering Part (b), candidates tended to give the teaching again in different words. Part (b) deals with how the teaching of the Hadith can be put into action. For Hadith (ii) they could have written that both men and women should dress in a way that does not reveal their bodies or that both men and women should lower their gaze in the presence of each other; that Muslims should be humble as modesty is a state of mental piety. The example of the Prophet entering Makka at the time of its conquest could have been given or examples from the candidates' own experience could have been cited. For Hadith (iv) candidates could have discussed not only how Muslims should be generous and hospitable towards others but also that they must refrain from idle talk. A harmful outcome from gossiping could have been given. The answers can be simple but they must meet the requirement of the question which for Part (a) is what is the teaching given in the Hadith and for Part (b) is how can that teaching be put into action.

Question 2

This question was asking candidates to outline the main teachings of the Hadiths in the syllabus regarding the conduct and responsibilities of individual Muslims. Here the candidates needed to give a range of teachings, with Hadiths to support them to reach the higher levels. There were many general responses stating that Muslims must, for example, practice the pillars of Islam and look after the widows and orphans and they achieved a satisfactory level. Some used the Hadiths given in **Question 1** only and discussed the responsibilities of individual Muslims and where these answers were relevant credit was given. For the highest levels more comprehensive answers were needed. Those who referred to a range of Hadiths from the set ones achieved the higher levels. A few answers dealt with how Hadiths were collected and how they are categorised but this was not relevant to the question.

In Part (b) some candidates made a direct link between a Qur'anic verse and the Hadith that clarified it and helped in working out an Islamic law. A few answers offered a good evaluative response.

Question 3

Most candidates chose to write about Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. When writing about 'Umar it was important to include the administrative reforms brought in by him. It was also important not to mix up events between the three.

In Part **(b)** some candidates wrote about the speech Abu Bakr made when the Prophet passed away but the speech was made before his election and so was not relevant. However, if candidates wrote about him unifying the Muslims then that was relevant. For this question candidates needed to choose one task and state **why** it was important, **what** would have happened if it had not been dealt with and **what** benefit came of it, not just write a list of the tasks.

Question 4

This question needed a balanced approach in the answers, although the level given was based on the quality of the answer, not that the same amount was written about fasting and almsgiving (some candidates gave more details about one of them). It was important to read the question as it was about how these things were done, not why. On the whole this was a popular question.

Part **(b)**, in many answers, was a repetition of Part **(a)**. To gain the higher levels in this part of questions candidates need to offer evaluation.

Question 5

This was a popular question and many candidates included all aspects concerning prophets. It was important to cover the three main aspects of who they were, why they were chosen and who they were sent to, they were sent to specific communities and their message was for guidance. Reference to Prophet Muhammad was clearly given and was relevant to the question.

In Part **(b)** it was important to state that the message in the revealed books had become distorted and thus needed to be given again. Some answers conveyed this point well.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/22

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