

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 1

Key messages

- Follow rubric correctly.
- Label question parts clearly.
- Write responses of suitable length, considering the space allocated in the answer booklet and the marks allocated to each question as the guide.
- Provide precise and clear answers, avoiding vague language, statements, or points that do not align with the question.
- Clearly indicate the question number and the component when using extra sheets.

General comments

The responses presented varied widely, ranging from highly detailed and accurate accounts, showcasing an exceptional level of specificity, depth and detail in **(a)** parts and demonstrating a profound understanding through precise arguments and analysis in **(b)** parts. There were also though, responses that were too brief and too vague. There were numerous instances of extremely concise answers yet well rewarded answers, comprising only one or two small paragraphs, offering a succinct overview of the events. Although AO2 questions generally resulted in stronger responses, there is room for improvement in knowledge-based answers, the quality of which can be enhanced by presenting thorough, detailed, and well-developed responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Good responses effectively maintained their concentration on the distinct themes present in the selected passages. In discussing passage (i), they talked about God's Oneness, His unique characteristics, and His power and grandeur. Likewise, for passage (ii), the focal point was God's Oneness and uniqueness. In the case of the third passage, candidates highlighted God's roles as the passionate Lord, the Guide and the Master of the day of Judgement. Conversely, some candidates were limited to paraphrasing the translation or providing general information about God, resulting in earning only mid-range marks.
- (b)** The responses which extended their answers to illustrate how the descriptions of God in the passages selected influenced the daily lives of Muslims demonstrated a more impactful approach. They explored aspects such as the themes enabling Muslims to steer clear of shirk, fostering reliance on God, encouraging seeking His approval and guidance, cultivating awe for His personality, and inspiring individuals to look up to Him and turn to Him in trials and tribulations. Notably, candidates earned higher marks when these points were connected to the specific themes of the chosen passages, along with the examples drawn from the real-life experiences of Muslims.

A common issue, however, is the tendency to repeat themes, often prefaced with phrases like 'these themes teach the Muslims that...'. Unfortunately, this approach lacks any real evaluation and limits responses to marks within level 1. Similarly, some candidates tend to offer some general suggestions about Muslims' duties to God which can only earn them mid-range marks.

Question 2

- (a) In general, this question was answered well. The most proficient responses included explicit references to the passages in the syllabus that address the themes of God's relationship with the created world. For each passage, these high-performing responses identified various points that signified the specific relationship, such as creation, provisions for sustenance, knowledge, and protection. Notably, these responses also talked about the expected behaviour of creation towards God.

The majority of answers presented a mix of specific and general themes. Those awarded lower marks though, struggled with the question, providing only a few lines about what God does for humanity, lacking the depth of analysis evident in more successful responses.

- (b) The responses generally provided commendable examples of how Muslims can demonstrate responsibility toward the environment. A noteworthy observation was that many candidates comprehended the environment not merely as the physical surroundings but also as encompassing responsibility toward others and God.

Better rewarded responses effectively referenced the passages in **part (a)** and derived rules of behaviour aligned with the content of the passages. However, there were instances where responses were limited to offering only general suggestions on caring for the environment.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular choice for optional questions and was effectively addressed by many responses which went into the description of intricate details of the Treaty of Hudaibiyya. They provided comprehensive coverage, including the event's background, the Muslims' journey to and arrival in Makkah, reconciliation efforts, the terms of the treaty, and the subsequent reactions of the Muslim community. Responses achieving the highest available marks demonstrated their proficiency by including several excerpts from historical accounts of the events.

Conversely, lower marks for this question were often attributed to responses lacking depth and details, along with a prevalence of inaccuracies.

- (b) Almost every candidate who attempted the question successfully identified a lesson that could be learned from the event. However, only a select few were able to explore the reasons why that particular lesson held the utmost significance, leading to higher scores.

Question 4

- (a) This was the most popular optional question. In general, candidates demonstrated a solid understanding of the key events surrounding the migration, including the Quraish response and the Muslims' articulation of their perspective in Negus' court. However, it was the most proficient responses which distinguished themselves by incorporating precise details such as specific numbers in both waves of migrations, names of noteworthy personalities, and excerpts from the speech delivered by Jaffar. This attention to finer points contributed to their ability to achieve higher marks.

- (b) Many insightful answers discussed the similarities and differences between contemporary migrations and the migration to Abyssinia. A prevalent line of argument highlighted the modern trend of migration being primarily driven by economic aspirations and a desire for an improved lifestyle, as opposed to religious motives. The most exceptional answers substantiated these claims with concrete examples from the present-day world.

Question 5

- (a) This question was attempted by very few candidates. Those responses which scored low marks could recall very few details about Khalid and often confused Zayd ibn Haritha with Zayd ibn Thabit. Better responses however, were able to cover most points in the mark scheme.

- (b) The majority of responses tended to be rather generic, providing broad statements about the general rules of conduct in Muslim family life. Only a small number of candidates demonstrated a focused approach to the specific question, addressing topics such as adoption and the importance of treating adopted children with kindness.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 1

Key messages

- Follow rubric correctly.
- Display proficiency in addressing command words and recognising the specific focus and context of each question.
- Write responses of suitable length, considering the space allocated in the answer booklet and the marks allocated to each question as the guide.
- Provide precise and clear answers, avoiding vague language, statements, or points that do not align with the question.
- Write in legible handwriting.
- Clearly indicate the question number and component when using extra sheets.

General comments

The overall performance on the paper demonstrated effective judgment. A considerable portion of responses understood the questions well, delivering accurate and relevant answers. Nevertheless, a noteworthy number either misinterpreted certain question requirements or presented responses lacking in detail and accuracy. Notably, poor handwriting emerged as a prominent challenge during the marking process. It is recommended that the centres emphasize clear instructions for responses to be written legibly. In cases where centres are aware that a candidate has severe issues around handwriting, they should seek permission to use a word processor.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Responses which excelled in this question demonstrated a keen ability to identify specific themes within the passages and conveyed them fluently. Noteworthy themes included God's omnipotence, His ability to create from the beginning, His singular and incomprehensible nature, His vast knowledge and powers, and the support extended to His prophets, along with the challenges the prophets encountered. On the other hand, a substantial number of responses merely paraphrased the translated text, while some others could only discuss generic Islamic principles.
- (b) In discussing the themes of **passage (i)**, standout responses emphasized how they evoke a deep appreciation among Muslims for God's grandeur and magnificence. This awareness fosters a sense of God-consciousness, increasing their Takwa (piety) and preventing any inclination towards shirk, including practices like astrology. For **passage (ii)**, top responses highlighted themes that instil humility and gratitude in Muslims. This, in turn, raises their awareness of God's supreme powers.

For the final passage, they pointed out how the themes clarify the concept of Jesus being a prophet of God and encourage Muslims to have faith in God's assistance during times of hardships and challenges.

A significant proportion of responses however, encountered challenges in **part (b)** wherein they only reiterated the themes, resulting in either minimal or no marks. The question is quite clear: responses are expected to explain the significance of the themes explored in **part (a)** within the daily lives of Muslims. The more successful responses fulfilled this requirement, the majority however, provided generic suggestions or merely replicated the identified themes or made some common suggestions about Muslims' duties towards God.

Question 2

- (a) This question was more challenging and tested responses' judgement. The strongest responses demonstrated a robust understanding of the nuanced aspects of the relationship between God and His prophets, specifically focusing on passages 2.30–37 and 6.75–79 from the syllabus. A significant portion of responses however, opted for a storytelling approach, essentially paraphrasing the translations of the passages.

Adam received more comprehensive coverage compared to Abraham, as many responses resorted to narratives of Abraham attempting to sacrifice his son in obedience to God or facing persecution from his own people, deviating from the question's intended focus.

The more well rewarded responses successfully explored diverse aspects of the relationship, such as that of a student and teacher, creator and creation, mentor and mentee. They supported their insights by quoting relevant phrases from the specified and other relevant passages.

- (b) The responses to this question were generally satisfactory. Responses successfully identified various ways of engaging with the Quran and proceeded to illustrate how each approach contributes to forging a close connection with God. For instance, some highlighted the significance of reading about God's qualities in the Quran, fostering awe and wonder. Others emphasized the importance of studying and implementing the teachings found in the Quran, asserting that such actions draw Muslims nearer to their Creator.

Those who performed less effectively presented generic ideas related to following Islam and adhering to its principles, without explicitly linking these concepts to the Quran and its impact on the Muslim's relationship with God. Some respondents veered into discussing the general significance of the Quran itself, resulting in lower marks.

Question 3

- (a) More proficient responses were able to narrate the primary reason for the visit and the key events with significant detail. However, those excelling further demonstrated a comprehensive understanding by initially identifying multiple reasons why the Prophet (pbuh) was compelled to seek support outside Makkah for the spread of Islam. These responses presented precise details about the Prophet's meeting with the three main chiefs, including an accurate recounting of their names and excerpts of their dialogue with the Prophet. Similarly, they provided in-depth accounts of his encounter with the slave of Utba and Sheeba. Outstanding answers also gave details about protection sought by the Prophet (pbuh) upon his return to Makkah.

Conversely, responses which earned lower marks tended to confuse different events or presented details that were either too brief or contained numerous inaccuracies.

- (b) The question explicitly sought the most significant lesson derived from the Prophet's example at Ta'if. However, only a handful of responses adhered to this instruction, as the majority compiled lists of potential lessons. Providing one lesson accompanied by an explanation of why it was deemed the most significant would have allowed responses to secure higher marks.

Question 4

- (a) The response required the narration of the hardships and persecution faced by early Muslims. Strong answers provided a concise introduction, establishing the connection between the commencement of open preaching and the onset of persecution without going into unnecessary details. These responses maintained a focused narrative on the actual events, recounting numerous incidents of oppression and coercion experienced by early converts, slaves, and notable figures of the Quraysh.

Those which scored in the mid-range sometimes missed significant details or occasionally confused names or events. Lower scores were attributed to unnecessary emphasis on irrelevant details, writing extensive notes on the persecution the Prophet (pbuh) underwent, or providing names without contextualising the challenges these personalities had to endure.

- (b) Better responses were able to deduce multiple lessons from the way early Muslims responded to the persecutions they faced. They provided various points on how Muslims can emulate this

behaviour, and the stronger responses went further by offering practical examples to illustrate the application of these behavioural principles. On the other hand, there were many responses which could only provide straightforward suggestions, such as advising Muslims to be patient or encouraging them to have strong faith in God, without offering any further explanation or providing concrete examples.

Question 5

- (a) Exceptional responses to this question demonstrated a methodical approach by chronologically recounting the life events of Ali. They began with his birth, traced his journey to accepting Islam, and detailed his migration. Additionally, commendable attention was given to Ali's military career during the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh), with the inclusion of several quotes to authenticate the information.

However, some responses confused 'Ali ibn Abi Talib's with Abu Talib and provided extensive notes on the life of the Prophet's uncles, which, unfortunately, could not be credited.

Responses in the mid-range contained some relevant information but missed out on certain details or had several inaccuracies.

- (b) More well rewarded responses comprehended the question's demand and specifically addressed the lessons that young people can derive from Ali's life. These responses discussed qualities such as bravery, standing up for what is right, and supporting just causes. On the other hand, a considerable number of responses only provided generic lessons from Ali's life, resulting in mid-range scores.

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Paper 0493/21
Paper 21

Key messages

Before writing answers to all questions, candidates must carefully read the question, making sure their answers respond to the specific requirements of that question. Relevant detail and development in answers enables the responses to get the higher levels and marks.

General comments

On the whole this Paper was well attempted. It is important that key terms such as 'set Hadiths' are ones which are taught thoroughly prior to the exam. The term 'set Hadiths' used in **Question 2** in this year's examination and many responses seemed to be unfamiliar with what was meant by set Hadiths.

All three optional questions were accessible and there was no particular favourite.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Hadiths 19 and 11 were the popular choices in this examination. **Part (a)** their answers must focus on the teachings given in the selected Hadith and **Part (b)** asks for the implementation of the teachings written about in **Part (a)**. The distinction between the knowledge part of the answer and the understanding of that knowledge is what needs to be reflected in both parts.

- (a) The teaching of the world being temporary and the need to strive for the eternal reward of Paradise by living according to the laws of their faith, was the key message in Hadith 19. When making comparisons to this world being a prison for Muslims, responses need to bring out the essence of the comparison and not simply paraphrase the given translation of the Hadith.

Hadith 5 is one Hadith in which responses tended to paraphrase, something that ought to be avoided. Responses should aim for accuracy at all times.

Hadith 4 teaches about not just fulfilling the Pillars of Islam but also about staying away from all unlawful actions in order to attain Paradise. Both aspects of this Hadiths teaching should have been written about when answering this Hadith.

As mentioned above, Hadith 11 was a popular choice and well attempted.

- (b) For **Part (b)** responses must be mindful of not repeating what the Hadith teaches Muslims but instead focus the answer, as the question asks them on how Muslims can put the teachings they wrote about in **Part (a)** into action. Practical examples are needed for this part answer either from the life of the Prophet (pbuh), the Companions or from Muslim lives past and present.

Question 2

Many did not seem to understand the term 'set Hadiths' in **Part (a)** and restricted their response to the teachings given in Hadiths listed for **Question 1**.

- (a) In this Question responses needed to refer to Hadiths that guide Muslims in their everyday lives. Responses could have selected any of the set Hadiths from the 20 given in the syllabus, either

about personal conduct, communal benefits, or both. Responses, after indicating which Hadith they were referring to, could have shown their knowledge about how the teachings given in the Hadith guides Muslims and how by acting upon them, several benefits are achieved in this world and the next on a personal and communal level.

At least three Hadiths needed to be referred to to attain L3 marks. The mark within the lever being dependant on the quality of the answer.

- (b) In this part, responses had to give a view on how easy it was to follow the Prophet's Hadiths. There was no right or wrong answer. Responses had to simply back their view with supporting evidence as to why they thought it was easy to follow the guidance given in Hadiths, or why they felt it was hard to do so.

Some responses talked about the benefits of Hadiths. This was not an answer which specifically tackled the question at hand, responses must simply be a pre-prepared answer.

Question 3

This was a straightforward question and had two parts that needed to be covered: The period of administration during 'Uthman's caliphate and his military achievements.

- (a) A good number of responses which attempted this question wrote about 'Uthman's administrative policies, reforms, his military successes in expanding the empire and setting up the first Muslim naval fleet. A few answered one part of the question and not the other and a small majority focused the answer on his election which was not what was being asked for. Once again, it is worth noting that responses must be focused in order to get marks. A paragraph of relevant content can earn better marks than a page of correct but irrelevant content.
- (b) For this part, answer responses needed to select which of 'Uthman's acts as caliph was the greatest in their opinion and say why they had chosen that act. Many wrote about the compilation of the Qur'an as his greatest act and supported their answer with a discussion of what may have happened had the compilation in his caliphate had not been made.

Others wrote about him sacrificing his life so as not to shed Muslim blood as his greatest act as caliph. Whichever act was chosen and supported with relevant reasons marks were credited.

Question 4

A very straightforward question in which responses needed to choose one of the battles from the two given in the question and give an account of it.

- (a) Good responses were seen for this question and answers showed knowledge giving details of who the battle was fought against and why. Dates, names of commanders, size of armies, events and outcome were written about by many attempting this question. Most responses knew how to tackle a battle question and structure it. Well done to teachers, who have evidently taken time to teach structure as well as content.
- (b) Responses had the option of choosing either battle and saying which, in their opinion, was more significant. They did not necessarily have to choose the battle they had written about in **Part (a)** and not all did. Good understanding was seen in this part's answer.

Question 5

This question asked for responses about the benefits of both fasting and almsgiving to Muslims. Benefits of two Pillars were being asked for, and as such responses did not need to write in great detail about benefits of any one Pillar but a good account of both.

- (a) It was surprising to read answers which dealt only with how the fast was kept, or to whom zakat is payable, when the question was clearly asking for the benefits of both Pillars. Responses could have cited individual and communal benefits and earned the marks but failed to do so in many cases as they focused their answer on the Pillar itself rather than its benefits.

- (b) This question was linked to the Pillars but was not directly related to either fasting or almsgiving. Some notably good responses for this part of the question stated how performance of *hajj* led to the forgiveness of sins or brought about equality.

When a question asks for the 'most important benefit', responses must choose one benefit and then focus on reasons for why their choice was made rather than discussing the one main benefit and getting side tracked to list others.

Conclusion

The critical message is to read, understand and answer what is being asked and not put forward a prepared answer on the topic.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 2

Key messages

This November session's results were not as strong as those of the last few years. This was due to the fact that, in many cases, the questions were misinterpreted and so responses did not address what was being asked. It is of critical importance that candidates take time to read and understand what is being asked by the questions.

General comments

Understanding of Hadiths was poor in many cases, as such, responses did not express the teachings given in the Hadiths well. Also, there is a clear difference in the requirement of the two parts of **Question 1**. Answers given to each part must reflect this difference and speak of the teachings given in **Part (a)** exclusively and how those teachings can be put into action in **Part (b)**.

Practice answering questions in the classroom which target the requirement of the question. Whilst answering the **Part (b)** questions, responses were often unfocused.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In **Question 1** for **Part (a)** responses needed to show their knowledge by giving the teachings of the Hadiths selected and in **Part (b)** they need to show the application of the teachings given in **Part (a)**. Responses could be developed by using examples from the life of the Prophet (pbuh), the Companions or from present times. The distinction between teachings and actions must be brought out in both part answers and quite a few responses struggled to clearly make this distinction in their answers.

- (a) Many responses tended to paraphrase the translation of the Hadiths given in the question paper and failed to show the wider knowledge of the teaching given in the selected Hadith, e.g., the main teaching of Hadith 18 is to believe in God's Oneness and to remain humble and grateful to Him as even a small amount of faith can save a person from hell.

Hadith 12 carries an important teaching for those in authority to be kind and gentle... Hadith 3 referred to three kinds of action the teaching was that every good action stems from one's belief in God and Muslim belief in accountability to Him. Hadith 6 teaches Muslims about brotherhood. A significant set of responses misunderstood this Hadith and wrote about how if your eye sees evil it will corrupt your body and if you think evil then your brain will get sick. Such responses to Hadith 6 have never been seen before and reflect that this group was perhaps taught an unusual interpretation of this Hadith.

- (b) It is to be expected that if the teachings are not understood then their implementation would not be effectively written about. Wherever the responses wrote about how Muslims could put the teaching of the selected Hadith into action, they were given the higher mark. There were well written responses which gave good and relevant responses to **both Parts of Question 1** and were given marks that they deserved. A simple and clear understanding of the Hadiths is a good starting point for all responses to this question.

Question 2

This is a compulsory Question and candidates should attempt an answer even if they feel they are not prepared for it. It is always possible to get at least a basic mark for an attempt if there is some relevance in the content of the answer and that mark or two could prove to be a grade changer. Some scripts were submitted with no attempt made at all for this compulsory question.

- (a) The Question was a specific one about Hadith compilation in the period of the Successors of the Successors. A further clue in the question stated that this period was referred to as the golden age of Hadith compilation.

Despite the specific time period this question clearly referred to, some responses started their answer on Hadith compilation from the Prophet's time and moved on to the time of the Companions. It was though, only possible to credit that part of the answer which referred to the stated time period.

The answer was written and developed in various interesting ways by the well rewarded responses. Many candidates wrote about the famous six compilers of the period and details of their compilations. Others focused the answer on the importance of *isnad* and *matn* in Hadith compilations. Some answers also gave the names of the famous Shia compilers and their works. There was a small number of answers which gave a balanced answer covering all the important aspects of the question.

- (b) **Part (b)** was not asking candidates to simply write about the benefits of Hadith compilations but how that helped Islam to **develop**. Many responses simply gave a list of benefits. They needed to link the benefit by saying how it helped Islam as a faith to develop, showing their understanding of the importance of Hadith compilation, e.g.,
'it could have been said that preservation of Hadiths helped the secondary sources in formulating law as the Hadiths provide essential details and so made sharia laws progressive.'
Added examples demonstrated the point. The benefit written about had to be linked back to the question for the higher mark.

Question 3

This was the least popular question. It was asking for three things:

- Why the Battle of Nahrawan was fought.
- The main events of the battle.
- The Fall of Egypt.

- (a) Some responses confused the Battle of Nihawand and Nahrawan. A few others started their answer from the Battle of Camel and went on from there giving a general account of the battles 'Ali had to fight' which was not what was asked by the question. Detail and development are rewarded in levels marking but need to be relevant to the answer.

A few responses focused the last part of the answer fall of Egypt to Umar's conquest of Egypt with no reference to how Mu'awiya came to control it after the Battle of Nahrawan. Others wrote about Mu'awiya sending Amr ibn al' As to defeat Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr and establishing his control over Egypt'. Marks were awarded even if they wrote only about 'Umar's conquest of Egypt'.

- (b) Again, only a list of reasons were offered by most and in such answers the mark could not go beyond a 2. It is important candidates read the question carefully and write according to the instruction given. In this question, a successful answer needed to select only one event and discuss why in their opinion it was the most significant in weakening 'Ali's position and leading to his martyrdom.

Question 4

A straightforward two-part question asking candidates to give an account of the *adhan* and steps of prayer. Many though failed to understand what was being asked for the second part of the question and went into details of conditions of prayer and gave detailed accounts of the different types of ablution.

- (a) In **Part (a)** of this question candidates were required to write about the *adhan*, and they did this in a range of ways and all relevant answers were credited. For example, a majority of responses gave an account of how the *adhan* was chosen to be the way to call Muslims to prayer, for which they were given marks. Other responses wrote about how the *adhan* is called before the five prayers and named the prayers, this was read as development and credited. Others wrote about how the *adhan* proclaims the *Shahada* and went on to give the words of the *adhan*. The additional line in the *Fajr adhan* was cited by some and was credited.

The steps of prayer required the candidate to write about how prayer is read and what is read in the prayer e.g. *Sana, Ta'awwuz, Tasmiya, Fatiha* accompanied by another passage in the first two *rakat, Takbir, Tasbih of Ruku, Qiyam, Tasbih of Sujood, Tahiyya/Tashahhud* with *Durud* followed by *Du'a* and *Salaam*. Detail and development of the terms took answers up the level or got an answer better marks within a level.

- (b) As said above many did not read the question carefully this session. This **Part (b)** question was not simply asking about the benefits of prayer but the benefits and importance of praying regularly, i.e., five times a day. So, while benefit needed to be written about, it had to be written about in the specific context of the question – saying how praying five times a day benefitted both the individual and the community, without this link, responses were not be fully credited.

Question 5

This was another straightforward Question which asked candidates to write about Muslim belief in angels and also asked candidates to include in their answer examples of angels meeting prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

- (a) This was the most popular question, and one in which a good account of Muslim belief in angels was given. Responses named the angels and went on to write about the tasks they performed. Most could cite several examples of the Prophet (pbuh) meeting with the angel/s. Some struggled to give an example of prophet Ibrahim meeting an angel. A few wrote that prophet Ibrahim met with the angel of death/angels at the time of his death. This was taken as a relevant example. Overall good responses were seen for this question.
- (b) The answer had to be supported by reasons. To get to a high mark, responses needed to say why belief in angels is important in Islam, e.g., if a response said belief in angels is an Article of Faith and hence important in Islam, then it needed to qualify this, perhaps by saying that by not believing in this Article takes a person out of the fold of Islam.

Conclusion

The quality of answers was not as strong as we have seen in the past few years. Candidates could benefit by going over past question papers to see how questions have been worded, compare this to publicly available mark schemes and discuss in the classroom the sort of responses that are needed to effectively answer them. Understanding the requirement of the question is paramount in being able to write a good answer.