

ZUEB SSC A – English Language

Paper 1: Reading and Writing Exam

Total 60 Marks

Duration: 2 Hours

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Do not start this paper until you are told to do so.
- Write your answer to each question in the space provided.
- You must ask any questions now as you cannot speak during the Test.
- Answer ALL questions.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

Question 1

Read the article about public libraries in Pakistan and then answer the following questions.

More Than Just Books: The Changing Role of Libraries in Pakistan

For most people in Pakistan, the word 'library' brings to mind a quiet room filled with old books and stern signs asking for silence. That image, however, is becoming less and less accurate. Across the country, a small but growing number of public libraries are changing the way they work – and in doing so, they are changing the lives of the communities around them.

The Khizra Community Library in Lahore's Shahdara neighbourhood is one example. When it reopened in 2021 after a major renovation, its managers decided to move away from the traditional model. Instead of simply lending books, the library now offers free computer classes for adults, a reading programme for children under ten, and a weekly career advice session run by volunteers from local businesses. Membership has grown from 340 to over 2,100 people in just three years.

Not everyone has welcomed these changes, though. Dr. Tahir Mehmood, a professor of library science at the University of the Punjab, argues that libraries are losing their core purpose. In his view, turning a library into a community centre risks pushing out serious readers and researchers who rely on quiet, well-organised collections of books and academic journals. He has written that without proper investment in acquiring new books, even the most popular library will eventually run out of things worth reading.

Funding remains the biggest problem facing public libraries across Pakistan. A 2022 report by the Pakistan Library Association found that most public libraries receive less than half the funding they need to run properly. Many have not bought new books in over five years. Staff numbers are low, and in some cases a single employee is responsible for running an entire branch. The situation is particularly difficult in smaller cities and rural areas, where libraries often share buildings with other government offices and have no dedicated space.

Technology is offering some solutions. Several libraries in Karachi have introduced digital lending – a system that allows registered members to borrow e-books and audio books through a mobile app. The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation launched its digital library service in 2023 with a collection of 8,000 titles. Within six months, it had registered 15,000 users, the majority of whom were students between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two.

What these examples show is that libraries in Pakistan are not dying – they are adapting. The challenge for those running them is to find the right balance between keeping up with what communities need today and preserving what made libraries valuable in the first place. That balance will not look the same in every city or every neighbourhood, but the effort to find it is clearly worth making.

Answer the questions below.

1. What is the main idea of the passage? Write one full sentence.

[2]

2. What is the name of the library mentioned in Lahore?

[1]

3. By how much did membership at the Khizra Community Library grow after it reopened?

[1]

4. What is Dr. Tahir Mehmood's main concern about the changes happening in libraries? Write one full sentence.

[2]

5. (a) What did the 2022 report by the Pakistan Library Association find about library funding?

[1]

(b) Why is the situation particularly difficult in smaller cities and rural areas? Write one full sentence.

[2]

6. In which city was the digital library service launched in 2023?

[1]

7. What does the final paragraph suggest is the main challenge for libraries in Pakistan? Write one full sentence.

[2]

12 marks

Question 2

The text below about Pakistan's textile industry has six paragraphs labelled A–F. Read the text, then answer questions (i) to (xii). Write ONE LETTER ONLY for each answer.

Thread and Trade: Inside Pakistan's Textile Industry

A Pakistan is one of the largest producers of cotton and cotton-based textiles in the world. The textile sector employs approximately 40 percent of the country's industrial workforce and contributes around 60 percent of Pakistan's total export earnings each year. From the spinning mills of Faisalabad to the weaving factories on the outskirts of Karachi, the industry touches almost every corner of the national economy. Without it, Pakistan's trade balance would look very different indeed.

B The roots of Pakistan's textile tradition go back well before independence. The city of Multan was known across the Mughal empire for the quality of its hand-woven cotton and silk fabrics. Craftsmen passed their skills down from father to son over many generations, and the distinctive patterns of Multani cloth became recognised as far away as Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. Although machine production has replaced most handwork today, a small number of artisans in Multan and Lahore continue to practise traditional weaving techniques and sell their work to collectors and export buyers.

C Despite its size and history, the industry faces serious problems. Water and electricity shortages regularly force factories to reduce production or shut down for days at a time. The cost of imported machinery and chemicals has risen sharply in recent years, squeezing profit margins for medium and small producers. Perhaps most damaging is the competition from countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam, which can produce similar goods at lower cost due to cheaper labour and more reliable infrastructure.

D Environmental concerns are also growing. Textile dyeing and finishing processes use large quantities of water and release chemical waste that has polluted rivers and groundwater in several industrial areas. In 2019, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency issued warnings to 47 textile factories in Punjab for failing to meet wastewater standards. The government has introduced new regulations requiring factories to install treatment plants, but enforcement has been slow and many smaller businesses have struggled to afford the necessary upgrades.

E The industry has been making efforts to modernise. The Textile Policy of 2020 set targets for increasing exports from 13 billion dollars to 26 billion dollars by 2025. Several large companies have invested in energy-efficient machinery and explored the use of solar power to reduce their dependence on the national electricity grid. A number of Pakistani brands have also begun marketing their products directly to international consumers online, cutting out the middlemen who previously took a large share of the profits.

F Young people entering the industry today face a very different landscape from what their parents experienced. Many factories now require workers to operate computerised looms and quality-control systems that were unheard of a generation ago. Vocational training centres in cities like Faisalabad and Sialkot have introduced new courses to prepare students for these roles. Nadia Iqbal, a 24-year-old graduate of one such programme, now supervises a team of twenty workers at a fabric export

company. She told a reporter recently that the industry offers real opportunities for young people who are willing to train and adapt.

Which paragraph, A–F, contains the following? Write ONE LETTER ONLY.

(i) The percentage of Pakistan's export earnings that come from textiles
[1]

(ii) A reference to traditional weaving being practised in Pakistan today
[1]

(iii) The name of a young person working in the textile industry
[1]

(iv) Information about a government export target
[1]

(v) Details about pollution caused by the textile industry
[1]

(vi) A mention of countries that compete with Pakistan in textile production
[1]

(vii) The historical origins of textile production in Pakistan
[1]

(viii) An example of how companies are reducing their energy costs
[1]

(ix) The number of factories warned about wastewater standards
[1]

(x) Information about how many people the textile industry employs
[1]

(xi) A reference to new training courses for young people entering the industry
[1]

(xii) A mention of problems caused by shortages of water and electricity
[1]

12 marks

Question 3

Read the article below about mobile phone use among young people in Pakistan. Then write a précis of the passage.

Always Online: Young Pakistanis and Their Mobile Phones

Walk into any classroom, café, or bus in a Pakistani city and the scene is almost always the same: young people with their heads down and their eyes fixed on a small screen. Mobile phone use among teenagers and young adults in Pakistan has grown dramatically over the past ten years, and it is now shaping the way they learn, communicate, and spend their time in ways that were impossible to predict a decade ago.

The benefits are real and easy to see. Students in cities and towns that once had limited access to good teachers can now watch lectures by top educators on YouTube and access study materials through free apps. Young entrepreneurs are using social media to build businesses that reach customers across the country without needing a physical shop. For young women in particular, mobile phones have opened up opportunities for education and income that were previously difficult to access.

The problems, however, are just as real. Research carried out by the Institute of Professional Psychology in Karachi found that young people in Pakistan spend an average of six hours a day on their phones, with much of that time devoted to entertainment rather than education or work. Sleep patterns are being disrupted, and a growing number of students report finding it hard to concentrate in class because of the urge to check messages and notifications. There are also concerns about the spread of false information, as young people often share news stories without checking whether they are true.

Parents and teachers are struggling to respond. Many schools have introduced rules banning phones during lessons, but these are difficult to enforce and are often resented by students who feel they are being treated unfairly. Some families have tried setting time limits on phone use at home, but without consistent rules and honest conversations, these attempts rarely last long.

Experts argue that the answer is not to ban phones but to teach young people how to use them wisely. Digital literacy – the ability to evaluate information, manage screen time, and understand online risks – should become a regular part of school education. If young people learn these skills early, they are better placed to benefit from technology without being harmed by it. The phone itself is not the problem; what matters is how it is used.

Your précis should be about 110 words long (and no more than 120 words). Use your own words and keep the tone and meaning of the original. You will receive up to 7 marks for content and up to 5 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

Write your précis below:

12 marks

Question 4

Write an article for your school magazine about whether the amount of homework students receive should be reduced.

Background: Many students in Pakistan feel they are given too much homework, leaving them with little time for rest, physical activity, or family life. However, teachers and parents often feel that regular homework is essential for learning.

Here are some viewpoints to consider:

- Too much homework causes stress and affects students' health and wellbeing
- Regular practice at home helps students remember what they have learned in class
- Students need free time to develop other interests and social skills
- Without homework, weaker students may fall behind more quickly

Write an article expressing your views on this topic. You should acknowledge different perspectives but clearly state your own opinion.

Your article should be between 140 and 180 words.

12 marks

Question 5

Write an email to a friend.

Background: Your school recently organised a three-day trip to a historical site in Pakistan. You have just returned and want to tell a friend who could not come about your experience.

In your email, you should:

- Say where you went and how you travelled there
- Describe the most interesting thing you saw or did
- Explain how you felt during the trip
- Say whether you would recommend the trip to your friend and why

Your email should be between 140 and 180 words.

12 marks