

THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF PAKISTAN	
EXAMINERS' COMMENTS	
SUBJECT Functional English	SESSION Foundation Examination - Spring 2014

General:

The overall performance in this attempt was quite good. The passing percentage was around 46%. Those who could not obtain passing grades are strongly urged to read good books to enhance vocabulary and writing skills as well as to help improve creativity. Some students gave two answers for the same question. Such a practice is counter-productive and should be avoided.

Question 1(a)

In this question, a list containing eight words was given and the candidates were required to match the words with their antonyms in the other list. This question was mostly done well. Most of the students got 6 correct answers. Most of the errors were observed in parts (ii) and (iii).

Question 1(b)

In this question, the candidates were required to complete 6 sentences by inserting the appropriate clause from a list containing 8 clauses. Sentences 1, 2 and 6 were done correctly by most of the students but errors were commonly observed in sentences 3, 4 & 5.

Question 1(c)

In this part, three jumbled sentences were given and the candidates were required to put them in order. Most of the students got the first sentence correct, whereas only few could get the third sentence right. Candidates with all three correct answers were rare.

Question 2(a)

This question required punctuation of five sentences and the response was fairly good. The common mistakes were as follows:

- Very few students correctly inserted a semi-colon in sentence (ii) and a colon in sentence (iv).
- In (iii), the full stop at the end of the sentence was incorrectly placed after the closing quotation marks.
- In (v), many candidates put a question mark at the end instead of a full stop.

Question 2(b)

It consisted of two sentences each with three blank spaces which were to be filled by different forms of the words 'material' and 'difference'. This part was quite easy and most students were able to secure full marks.

Question 2(c)

In this part of the question the candidates were required to explain the differences between two simple sentences and most students could do it easily.

Question 3(a)

In this part, 10 sentences were given and the candidates were required to identify their correct tenses. Only sentences (ii) and (ix) posed some challenge; performance in all the others was quite good.

Question 3(b)

In this part the candidates were required to form two sentences using the word 'Environment' as a noun and as an adjective. Many candidates used the word as a noun correctly but failed to use it as an adjective. Surprisingly, some students did not even know the meaning of the word 'Environment'.

Question 3(c)

This question required insertion of the correct verb in six sentences. The result was just about average as many candidates made errors in sentences (ii), (iv) and (vi).

Question 4(a)

In this part there were six sentences and the candidates were required to fill in the blanks with pronouns. The overall performance in this part was good. There were some problems in dealing with parts (iii), (v) and (vi). In part (iii) a number of students wrote "who's" instead of whose. In part (iv) many candidates selected 'they' instead of 'it'.

Question 4(b)

In this part the candidates were required to fill in 4 blanks with conjunctions by choosing from four available choices. The overall performance was good except in case of part (iii).

Question 4(c)

Six blanks were required to be filled by selecting from a list of six collective nouns. There was some confusion between 'bench of judges' and 'panel of experts', the rest were attempted quite well.

Question 5

In this question six sentences were given. The candidates were required to change the sentences from direct speech into indirect speech and vice versa. Generally, the students had a good understanding of this area and the overall performance was good. However, there were a significant number of students who lacked understanding of even the very basic rules. Approximately 50 percent of the sentences were converted correctly by almost all candidates while sentences (i) and (iv) proved to be rather difficult.

Question 6

This question required writing a dialogue between two friends on the usefulness of distance learning programs. Most students got full marks for the format but generally the arguments were weak and not convincing.

Question 7

According to the situation given in this question, a candidate had been appointed in an organization but was unable to join on the specified date. The requirement was to write a letter on behalf of the candidate to Director HR requesting for a change in the date of joining.

Candidates gained marks for the format but lost marks due to the quality of the letters. Somehow, a number of students did not read the question carefully and could not understand that the letter was about the reporting date and not about submitting the report on time. Many candidates gave frivolous excuses like cousin's wedding as the reason for not reporting on time, whereas a number of students did not give any excuse at all.

Some of the other observations are as follows:

- Majority of the students copied the same words as were appearing in the question.
- The quality of the text was very poor in terms of grammar, spellings and sentence formation.
- Surprisingly, several students did not know the basic format of the letter.
- Many students changed the name of the sender from the one given in the question.

Question 8

In this question the candidates had to write the précis of a passage and answer seven questions based on the same passage. Almost a similar performance was witnessed as in the last attempt. Most students were able to get passing marks but only few could obtain high scores. In précis writing, word count was mostly missing. A number of students wrote lot more than 120 words. Many students did not use their own words and copied from the given passage.

Question 9

This question offered a choice of four topics for writing an essay and carried 15 marks. Very few students scored 10 or above. Most students lacked ideas and creativity. Many students did not understand the topics at all.

In the topic 'Justice delayed is justice denied' only injustice was explained though the emphasis should have been on delay of justice. In the essay on 'Aggressiveness in competitive sports' many students only explained competitiveness and did not discuss aggressiveness at all. While writing on the topic 'The need for a sound system of public transport' many students wrote on the disadvantages of sound systems installed in public transport.

(THE END)