

Getting Started Guide



A Level Persian

**Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Persian
(listening, reading and writing) (9PN0)**

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1 Introduction

Our A level qualifications are designed to be appealing and engaging to students, while preparing them for future study and work. We have developed inspiring and culturally relevant courses based on feedback from teachers, students, subject associations, academics and advisors.

The qualification has a clear structure, which will enable students to develop advanced-level, transferable language alongside a deeper cultural appreciation of the Persian-speaking world. There is an emphasis on promoting understanding of grammar to allow spontaneous, creative use of language to suit different purposes. The themes are engaging and relevant, combining familiar and new content. Popular texts and films have been chosen, both classical and contemporary.

Pearson is strongly committed to maintaining the availability of a wide range of language A levels. Although some awarding organisations are ceasing to offer those language A levels only taken by a limited number of students, we believe these qualifications make an important contribution to fostering diversity and community cohesion.

We are redeveloping A levels in:

- Arabic
- Greek
- Japanese
- Urdu

And we are developing the following A levels for the first time:

- Gujarati
- Persian
- Portuguese
- Turkish

Note that we have taken the decision not to develop AS qualifications in any of these languages.

This Getting Started Guide provides an overview of the new A level Persian specification, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment.

2 What's changed?

2.1 AS has not been redeveloped

Our discussions with schools and colleges have indicated that, under the new system in which AS results no longer count towards A level grades, take-up of AS level will be very limited. For this reason we have taken the decision only to offer the full linear A level in the languages being developed for first teaching in 2018.

2.2 Changes to A level qualifications

From September 2018, A level Persian will be a fully linear qualification. This means that all examinations must be sat at the end of the course. More information about the implications of the move to linear assessment is given on page 10.

Separate subject criteria have been developed for these languages with smaller cohorts. While the level of rigour and demand will be the same, there will be no requirement for students to demonstrate spoken language skills.

Aims and objectives

There is a new set of aims and objectives for this A level. As a result, students are now required to:

- study two works from a prescribed list
- summarise information from spoken and written sources in writing
- develop independent research skills
- undertake a task integrating the skills of listening, reading and writing
- translate from and into Persian.

Themes

The specification content is broken down into four themes relating to the target language culture. Two themes relate to 'society, past and present', and two themes relate to 'political and/or intellectual and/or artistic culture, past and present'.

Prescribed works

In the specification, we have specified a list of prescribed works in Persian, including literary texts and films. Students must study either one literary text and one film, or two literary texts. Knowledge and understanding of works will be assessed in Paper 2 (Translation into Persian and written response to works).

Summarising information

This is a new requirement testing students' ability to summarise information. Students should be able to:

- identify the main ideas
- summarise a line of argument and/or different points of view
- evaluate and draw conclusions.

Ability to summarise will be assessed in Paper 3 (Listening, reading and writing in Persian), question 5(c).

Independent research skills

Students will be required to develop as independent researchers through the study of language. Students are required to select one research subject from the four given in the specification and undertake independent research on all three aspects. Students will have to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research subject in Paper 1 (Translation into English, reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian).

Assessment Objectives

The A level languages Assessment Objectives have been revised.

There are two main changes to the Assessment Objectives:

- A new AO4 has been introduced. This requires knowledge and understanding of, and critical and analytical response to, cultural and social issues relating to countries where Persian is spoken.
- AO3 has a greater proportion of the marks than in the previous specification, and has a subtly changed emphasis – there is greater emphasis now on active application of grammar in generating new, independent language.

AO1 20%	Understand and respond in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources
AO2 30%	Understand and respond in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources
AO3 30%	Manipulate the language accurately, in written forms, using a range of lexis and structures
AO4 20%	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of the countries where the language is spoken

2.3 Specification overview

Assessment structure

Paper 1	Translation into English, reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian	2 hours 30 minutes	40%
Paper 2	Translation into Persian and written responses to works	2 hours 40 minutes	30%
Paper 3	Listening, reading and writing in Persian	2 hours 15 minutes	30%

Specification content

Specification content is now based around social, political and cultural themes, relating to the Persian language, culture and communities. This will enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the culture related to their language of study, and ensure smooth progression to further study.

Themes 1, 3 and 4 focus on aspects of the society of **Iran** only. Theme 2 focuses on the artistic culture and politics in **Iran and Afghanistan**.

Students will study four themes:

- Theme 1: Changes in contemporary society
- Theme 2: Media and culture
- Theme 3: Aspects of Persian-speaking society
- Theme 4: Political and artistic influences on society past and present

There are a number of sub-themes, which can be found on pages 6–7. The questions in the question papers are set within the context of these themes.

Students are also required to undertake independent research based on one of the four research subjects listed in the specification. Students must research all three aspects within the research subject. Research subjects and aspects are as follows:

- Work opportunities for young people
Transition from traditional to new careers; move from rural to urban working and its impacts; problem of unemployment
- Development of social and online media
Representation of Western values; impact of social and online media on lifestyles; increased spread of information and sharing of news
- Expectations of women in society
Access to education; the drive for equality; contribution to the arts
- Aspects of contemporary Iranian art
Works and influence of Mohammed Ghaffari (Kamal-ol-Molk); works and significance of the Saqqa-Kana School of Art (1950s–1970s); influence of European art

Comparison of the reformed and legacy specifications

Reformed specification		Legacy specification
Theme 1	<p>Changes in contemporary society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in family structures Changing attitudes toward marriage and relationships; role of older generations; gender roles • Education Secondary school streams; the growth in private and fee-based higher education; the graduate brain drain 	<p>Aspects of daily life sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family: different structures and relationships
Theme 2	<p>Media and culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Traditional music and instruments; popular culture and music; influence of other cultures • Festivals and customs National and seasonal festivals; traditional customs; changing attitudes to festival and customs 	<p>Education and training sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and school life: individual experiences; local and national concerns <p>Culture sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage and history: influence and impacts of heritage <p>Leisure and entertainment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure activities: aspects of cultural life, e.g. film, theatre; the arts as part of leisure time

Theme 3	<p>Aspects of Persian-speaking society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with environmental issues Changing attitudes towards environmental issues; embracing of different types of energy; pollution and its impact on Iranian society • Tourism and its impact on society Cultural and natural tourist attractions; sites registered by UNESCO and importance of preserving them; impact of tourism on society 	<p>The Environment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual and the environment • Energy management: alternative energy sources; changing use of fossil fuels; nuclear energy; changing energy demands • Pollution: causes; consequences; solutions <p>Leisure and entertainment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism and related themes: tourism as a changing phenomenon
Theme 4	<p>Political and artistic influences on society past and present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iran-Iraq War 1980–88 Impact on society and individuals; representation in literature and film; the aftermath of the war • Arts and crafts Modern and traditional handicrafts; influence of Islamic Art; developments in modern architecture 	
Literary works	<p>Prescribed list of works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aadat Mikonim</i>, Zoya Pirzad, 2004 (novel) • <i>Khanevadeh Nikakhtar</i>, Iraj Pezeshkzad, 2001 (play) • <i>Kart Postal</i>, R. Sharifian, 2008 (novel) <p>Students are expected to produce responses that relate to features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form and technique • key themes, concepts and issues • characterisation • plot structure • social and cultural setting 	Study of literary works not required.

Films	<p>Prescribed list of films:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Separation</i>, Asghar Farhadi, 2011 • <i>Offside</i>, Jafar Panahi, 2006 • <i>Superstar</i>, Tahmineh Milani, 2009 <p>Students are expected to produce responses that relate to features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form and technique • key themes, concepts and issues • characterisation • plot structure • social and cultural setting 	Study of film not required.
Independent research	<p>Must be based on one of the four research subjects listed in the specification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work opportunities for young people • Development of social and online media • Expectations of women in society • Aspects of contemporary Iranian art <p>Students must research all three aspects of their chosen research subject</p>	Independent research not required.
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Aspects of daily life sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family: living conditions (housing, shopping and patterns of daily life) • Food, drink, health, obsessions and addictions • Transport: patterns of use (for the individual and at local and national levels)
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Leisure and entertainment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport (including national sporting concerns and traditions)
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Communication and Media sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication technology: patterns and changes to communication in daily life • Media, e.g. written press; radio; television (roles and influences)

N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Society sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration and exclusion: age; gender; race; religion; equality of opportunity • Law and order: trends of crime and punishment; civil unrest; policing
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>The Environment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy management: alternative energy sources; changing use of fossil fuels; nuclear energy; changing energy demands
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Science and technology: impact and issues sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical progress: development and change – impacts on health care, life styles, ethics and beliefs • Scientific advances: change and innovation – impacts and issues on society, knowledge and education • Technological developments: change and development – impacts on lifestyles, habits, work and education
N/A	No equivalent in new specification	<p>Culture sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature and the arts: trends, changes, influences and impacts on individuals and society • Political issues: changes at local and national level; impacts on the individual and society

3 Planning

3.1 Planning a linear A level course

The key difference with a linear A level is that all exams are taken at the end of the (usually) two-year course. As a result, it is not possible to retake individual exams – rather, if you wish to retake, you must retake the entire qualification.

In terms of language learning, this is a logical and positive development because students must retain and build on everything they learn in order to master a language effectively.

Course planning needs to cover:

- four themes
- either two literary texts, or a literary text and a film
- sufficient practice in listening, reading, writing and translation
- a broad range of grammar and opportunities to use this to generate language independently
- independent research of selected research subject
- development of critical and analytical thinking.

Here is just one way in which you might structure a two-year course:

		Grammar	Skills	Research
Year 1	Theme 1	Revision/ development	Transferable listening, reading, writing, translation, thinking	Develop skills/research all aspects of chosen research subject
	Theme 2			
	Literary work/Film			
Year 2	Theme 3			
	Theme 4			
	Literary work/Film			
	Revision			

3.2 Suggested resources

Our free **online support** for A level Persian, which can be accessed on our website, includes guides on:

- [teaching literature](#)
- [teaching film](#)
- [how to analyse a text or film](#)
- [how to develop research skills](#).

Other useful resources include:

Grammar

- The following resources:

<http://www.roshd.ir/Roshd/Default.aspx?tabid=543&SSOReturnPage=Check&Rand=0>

- دستور زبان دکتر حسن انوری
- دستور زبان فارسی دکتر تقی وحیدیان کامیارها
- درس فارسی برای فارسی آموزان خارجی تألیف دکتر تقی پورنامداریان
- مجموعه کتاب های زبان فارسی دوره ی دبیرستان

- Persian online

http://sites.la.utexas.edu/persian_online_resources/

Literature

- Link to download *Aadat mikonim*
http://www.adabestanekave.com/book/Adat_Miekoniem.pdf
- Link to download *Khanevadeh Nickakhtar*
<https://www.scribd.com/document/144237775/Pezeshkzad-Khanevadeye-Nik-Akhtar-pdf>
- Link to buy *Kart Postal*
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Postcard-Cart-Postal-Ruhangiz-Sharifian-x/dp/1780832893/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1494364882&sr=1-2&keywords=sharifian

Films

- Link to download *Separation*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAp90iOeE90>
- Link to download *Offside*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QgkbDabn0>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3loX9nVQ_4
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnIAeb8a5Xg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qH8bNjCAkx4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jopQ8qvp928>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lk4aHoQdZPg>
- Link to download *Superstar*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_1BpZKobXM

Newspapers, television and radio

- Any Persian TV, Series, Newspaper, Radio

4 Content guidance

The themes and sub-themes identified below are vehicles for the development of linguistic and cognitive skills, as well as cross-cultural awareness. Assessment is predominantly related to the ability to use the target language. Papers 1, 2 and 3 will be based on content from the four themes. Students will need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critical and analytical response to, the target language community and culture.

4.1 Themes and sub-themes

In **Theme 1**, 'Changes in contemporary society', the sub-themes of 'changes in family structure' and 'education' give students the opportunity to examine specific social issues and trends, including how they have emerged and are evolving over time. The optional research subject 'work opportunities for young people' allows students to engage with a subject important in Iran with its growing younger population.

In **Theme 2**, 'Media and culture', the sub-themes 'music' and 'festival and customs' encourage students to expand their cultural knowledge by learning about artistic culture in Iran and Afghanistan. The optional research subject focuses on the 'development of social and online media', which requires engagement with contemporary issues which impact greatly in Iran and Afghanistan.

In **Theme 3**, 'Aspects of Persian-speaking society', the sub-themes 'engagement with environmental issues' and 'tourism and its impact on society' cover important aspects of Iranian society, past and present, and look at changing attitudes over time and their impact on the country. The optional research subject 'expectations of women in society' requires students to study a significant aspect of society and consider the struggles and achievements of women, past and present.

In **Theme 4**, 'Political and artistic influences on society past and present', the first sub-theme 'Iran-Iraq war' gives students the opportunity to study this significant episode in the history of Iran which has had long-term impacts on society. The second sub-theme, 'art and crafts' allows focus on society through a very different lens. The optional research subject 'aspects of contemporary Iranian art' gives the opportunity to engage with important artists, artistic movements and influences from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

4.2 Prescribed works

Literary works	<i>Aadat Mikonim</i> , Zoya Pirzad, 2004 (novel) <i>Khanevadeh Nikakhtar</i> , Iraj Pezeshkzad, 2001 (play) <i>Kart Postal</i> , R. Sharifian, 2008 (novel)
Films	<i>Separation</i> , Asghar Farhadi, 2011 <i>Offside</i> , Jafar Panahi, 2006 <i>Superstar</i> , Tahmineh Milani, 2009

For each of the prescribed literary works and films, students need to consider:

- Author/Director
- Relevant background
- Plot
- Main character(s)
- Themes
- Important quotations/dialogue and scenes
- Reference materials and extended reading

For further guidance, download our [guide to analysing text or film](#).

5 Assessment guidance

5.1 Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

The breakdown of Assessment Objectives by paper will be as follows:

Paper	A01 %	A02 %	A03 %	A04 %	Total
Paper 1: Translation into English, reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian	-	25	5	10	40%
Paper 2: Translation into Persian and written response to works	-	-	20	10	30%
Paper 3: Listening, reading and writing in Persian	20	5	5	-	30%
Total	20	30	30	20	100%

5.2 Assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel A level in Persian comprises three externally-examined papers that assess listening, reading and writing skills.

Paper 1: Translation into English, reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian 2 hours 30 minutes (80 marks)
Section A: Translation into English (20 marks) We recommend students spend 20 minutes on Section A. Students must translate one unseen passage from Persian into English. Section A draws on vocabulary and structures from any one of the sub-themes within the four themes.
Section B: Reading comprehension (20 marks) We recommend students spend 45 minutes on Section B. Students must respond to a series of comprehension questions based on a variety of text types and genres. Section B draws on vocabulary and structures across all sub-themes within the four themes.
Section C: Writing (research question) (40 marks) We recommend students spend 1 hour 25 minutes on Section C. Students must read one unseen text in Persian and then answer a question, incorporating information and ideas from both the unseen text and their research findings. Section C draws on a student's independent research of their chosen research subject.

<p>Paper 2: Translation into Persian and written response to works 2 hours 40 minutes, 110 marks</p>
<p>Section A: Translation into Persian (20 marks) We recommend students spend 30 minutes on Section A. Students must translate one unseen passage from English into Persian. Section A draws on vocabulary and structures from any one of the sub-themes within the four themes.</p>
<p>Section B: Written response to works (literary texts) (45 marks) We recommend students spend 1 hour 5 minutes on each response in Sections B and C. Students must write an extended response on either one or two of the literary texts listed in the specification. Students choose one question from a choice of two for each of their chosen literary texts. If a student answers questions on two literary texts, then they do not complete Section C.</p>
<p>Section C: Written response to works (films) (45 marks) We recommend students spend 1 hour 5 minutes on each response in Sections B and C. Students must write an extended response on one of the films listed in the specification (if they only answered one question in Section B). Students choose one question from a choice of two for their chosen film.</p>

<p>Paper 3: Listening, reading and writing in Persian 2 hours 15 minutes, 60 marks</p>
<p>Section A: Listening comprehension (30 marks) We recommend students spend 45 minutes on Section A. Students must respond to comprehension questions based on a variety of contexts and sources. Section A draws on vocabulary and structures across all sub-themes within the four themes.</p>
<p>Section B: Listening, reading and writing (30 marks) We recommend students spend 1 hour 30 minutes on Section B. Students must summarise a listening source and a text, both of which are based on the same sub-theme. Students must then evaluate the points of view in both sources, stating which views they agree with and why. Section B draws on vocabulary and structures from any one of the sub-themes within the four themes.</p>

5.3 Understanding how to apply the mark grids

Paper 1: Translation into English, reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian

Section A: Translation into English

The translation into English is marked using a points-based mark scheme (Sample Assessment Materials, page 23). The translation is divided into 20 'chunks', and there is one mark available for the correct translation of each chunk.

The mark scheme gives acceptable answers for each chunk but these are indicative only and variants will be accepted by the examiner if they convey the same intended meaning.

Misspellings are tolerated as long as they don't lead to ambiguity. For example, 'drought' misspelled as 'drowght' would be acceptable, but misspelled as 'draught' would be unacceptable as this is a real word with a different meaning (leading to ambiguity).

Section B: Reading comprehension

The questions in this section are marked using a points-based mark scheme (Sample Assessment Materials, pages 26-28)

There is extensive guidance on the marking principles that will be applied to the questions in this section on pages 24–25 of the Sample Assessment Materials. The key things to remember are:

- Students don't have to respond in full sentences to open-response questions.
- Students can use words from the reading extract in their answer, but must not copy whole sections where the question requires them to manipulate the language in order to give an accurate response.
- There are no marks for quality of language in this section so spelling and grammar mistakes will be tolerated as long as they do not introduce ambiguity.
- For a one-mark answer, the candidate's first response is taken as the answer, even if this response is incorrect and the correct information follows later. Where two marks are available, apply the same rule, i.e. the first two responses are taken as the answer even if they are incorrect and the correct information follows later.
- Students must answer in Persian – correct answers in the wrong language will not be awarded marks.

Section C: Writing (research question)

This question is marked using three levels-based mark grids:

- Knowledge and understanding of society and culture (AO4)
- Understand and respond to written language in writing (AO2)
- Accuracy and range of language (AO3)

In their response, students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of society and culture through their ideas, arguments and conclusions, supported by information, references and examples from their research. Students must also refer to information in the text that supports their ideas, arguments and conclusions (thereby showing understanding of the text).

There are more marks available for AO4 (20 marks) than AO2 (10 marks), so students are expected to place more emphasis on knowledge and understanding of society and culture (AO4) than on the text (understand and respond in writing to written language – AO2).

Students can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of society and culture by providing relevant ideas, information, references and examples related to aspects such as:

- lifestyle/customs/events, both current and historical
- important figures, both current and historical
- public opinion, feelings, reaction and behaviour.

Note this list is not exhaustive.

Answers will be marked according to the guidance on pages 30–34 of the Sample Assessment Materials.

Paper 2: Translation into Persian and written response to works

Section A: Translation into Persian

The translation into Persian is marked using a points-based mark scheme (Sample Assessment Materials, pages 55–57). The translation is divided into 20 'chunks', and there is one mark available for the correct translation of each chunk.

The mark scheme gives acceptable answers for each chunk but these are indicative only and variants will be accepted by the examiner if they convey the same intended meaning.

The mark scheme for Paper 2 states:

- Spelling: non-grammatical misspellings are tolerated, for example موسیقی rather than موسیقی, as long as they are not ambiguous (for example محاسبه rather than مصاحبه) or in the wrong language.
- Verb endings must be correct, as they are grammatical errors, and will not be classed as spelling errors.
- Grammatical points:
 - tenses should be used correctly
 - the verb should be placed at the end of the sentence
 - plural and singular nouns must be used correctly
 - singular nouns should be used after numbers or words related to numbers like چند
 - the passive voice should be used accurately when appropriate
 - the subject and verb ending must match.
- Vocabulary: if there is an appropriate Persian word to use then these should be used, rather than a foreign word. If candidates write both the Persian and foreign word then this is acceptable, for example ممنون and مرسی. Specific scientific or mathematical words can be expressed in English
- Accept any appropriate alternatives that do not already appear in the 'Acceptable answers' column.

Sections B and C: Written response to works

Each individual essay is marked using three levels-based mark grids:

- Critical and analytical response (AO4)
- Range of grammatical structures and vocabulary (AO3)
- Accuracy of language (AO3)

Answers will be marked according to the guidance on pages 59–62 of the Sample Assessment Materials.

The indicative content given in the mark scheme is not exhaustive, and you will be rewarded for any valid response and may draw on any relevant examples from the work.

Paper 3: Listening, reading and writing in Persian

Section A: Listening comprehension

The questions in this section are marked using a points-based mark scheme (Sample Assessment Materials, pages 101–104).

Section B: Listening, reading and writing

Questions 5(a) and 5(b) are marked using a points-based mark scheme (Sample Assessment Materials, page 105).

Question 5(c) is marked using three levels-based mark grids:

- Understand and respond to spoken language (AO1)
- Understand and respond to written language (AO2)
- Accuracy and range of language (AO3)

Answers will be marked according to the guidance on pages 107–109 of the Sample Assessment Materials.

6 Subject advisor support

Your subject advisor for languages is Alistair Drewery, and you can contact him with any questions you have about A level Persian.

Alistair Drewery

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