

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Arabic (5AR03/01)
Paper 3: Reading and Understanding
in Arabic

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GCSE Arabic
Unit 3 Reading and Understanding
Examiners' Report

This question paper consisted of nine questions. Five marks were allocated to all the questions with the exception of question 9 which was marked out of a total of ten marks.

The questions are all differentiated and address all abilities (A*, A, B, C, D, E, F and G). The aim of the paper is to ensure that all abilities are catered for and the paper is accessible and fair to all candidates regardless of ability.

To ensure a greater degree of reliability and validity questions cover a variety of topics from different areas in the curriculum and the scheme of work for GCSE Arabic. All the questions are in English except for the relevant question material which was in Arabic. Candidates were asked to respond to a variety of question types by matching pictures to the correct letters as in question 1, and putting a cross in the correct box as in questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and answering questions about an Arabic text in English as in questions 5 and 9.

Candidates' knowledge of English is expected to be reasonable to enable them to understand tasks and respond to the questions according. This is particularly important in question 9 where candidates are expected to write longer responses in English. It is also worth noting that question 9 is out of ten points and weights heavily on the exam paper.

To avoid losing marks unnecessarily, candidates are advised to observe the following points:

- ✓ Some questions must be answered with a cross in a box. If candidates change their mind about an answer, they must put a line through the box as indicated by the information on the exam paper.
- ✓ In questions where candidates are expected to place crosses in front of correct items. Any extra crosses will result in loss of marks, and this is based on the number of extra crosses.
- ✓ Please remind your candidates that in questions where answers are required in English, no answers in Arabic will be accepted.
- ✓ Centres must ensure that candidates practice past exam papers to familiarise themselves with exam settings and expectations.
- ✓ Candidates should answer the questions in the spaces provided.

Question 1 Weather

Many candidates were successful in this fairly easy question designed as an easy opening and start to the exam paper. However, some candidates struggled with 1(iii) wind (ryaah). It is important that candidates are familiar with the specification's core vocabulary. The core vocabulary is available on the Edexcel Pearson website.

Question 2 At the supermarket

Food is a very popular topic and it came to no surprise to us that many candidates, across abilities, performed well in this question. Candidates

demonstrated good knowledge of simple food items. This is a credit to both teachers and students.

Question 3 My new home

This question was targeted at grade D candidates. Although house an area is a fairly popular topic, only around half of C/D candidates achieved the expected grade in this question. Teachers must ensure that learners are taught all themes and topics covered in Pearson Edexcel's core vocabulary book to get the most out of the exam paper.

Question 4 Theatre

Many candidates struggled with parts of this question. Many have failed to answer questions 4a, 4b and 4c. The question included many important linguistics structures and key GCSE topics. I.e. Time, numbers, months of the year, days of the week, adjectives and key language. These are all key language elements and should be taught carefully and methodically to ensure students' success in the exam.

Question 5 Family

Question five was targeted at B candidates. The question differentiated very well between B candidates and other candidates. Some B candidates found 5(a) and 5(b) quite difficult to attempt. This is because they did not know the meaning of the adjectives 'rich' and 'traditional'. However, in general candidates' performance in this question was good.

Question 6 Transport

A very popular question and most candidates, across abilities, performed well in this question. Our overall data suggests that over 92% of candidates achieved five out of five in this question. This is a credit to both teachers and students. In order for students to achieve similar successes in other questions equal attention should be given to other themes and topics in the schemes of work to better prepare candidates for the exam.

Question 7 Leisure activities

'Hobbies and activities' is a popular GCSE topic and many students faired very well in this question and performed well.

Question 8 Work experience

This question was targeted at A* candidates and it differentiated well between higher and lower grade candidates. Most candidates met our expectations in this question and managed to achieve results that truly reflected their ability.

The question incorporated important key language in the context of work and future career.

Question 9 A holiday abroad

Question 9 is an important question as it is out of ten points and it weights heavily on the exam paper. We are pleased to say that the question differentiated well between candidates of all abilities, and these findings are supported by our data. Many students found 9a and 9f very accessible. However, some candidates found questions 9c and 9d somewhat difficult.

A*/A candidates often find question 9 quite hard to attempt as most of them are native speakers of Arabic with basic knowledge of English. To attempt question 9 successfully and effectively candidates must demonstrate good understanding of the text in the target language by answering all question in good, coherent and comprehensible English. Please remember that any answers written in Arabic in question 9 will not be valid and will be awarded no marks. It is important that candidates practice few past exam papers to better prepare them for the final exam and ensure that they achieve grades and marks that truly reflect their ability.

Summary

This paper differentiated well between candidates of all abilities. The senior examiners' expectations and predications of candidate's performance, in all questions at all levels, have been met. The paper was fair to candidates regardless of ability.

Centres should ensure that all candidates, at all levels and ability, are acquainted with the Pearson Edexcel core vocabulary. The core vocabulary book can be downloaded from the Edexcel website and should play a key part in the teaching of Arabic in class.

Candidates, especially native speakers, should be given more opportunities to practice answering higher level questions in English. They need to build and have the necessary English language skills that would enable them to attempt questions such as question 9 successfully.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>