

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
in Arabic (5AR01/01)  
Paper 1: Listening and Understanding  
in Arabic

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**GCSE Arabic**  
**Paper 1 Listening and Understanding in Arabic**  
**Examiner Report**

The topics which this year's Listening paper comprises are highly relevant and suitable to the purposes and levels of this test. The themes provide a wide spectrum of interests which young people in the Arab world and learners of Arabic all over the world try to master as a first step to comprehending and speaking/writing the Arabic language. The themes and the questions based on them in the paper provide a range of oral activities that appeal to native Arab speakers, as well as to foreign learners from around the world.

In answering the question paper, candidates of all levels generally did as expected with some successes and discrepancies highlighted. These will be mentioned below. Here are some comments on each of the questions:

**Question 1 Hobbies**

This question was accessible to a vast majority of candidates, with no noticeable exceptions or anomalies. An average percentage of 98% did this question correctly.

**Question 2 At the Travel Agents**

A considerable number of candidates found question 2 challenging, even some higher level candidates. This is probably due to the high level language used in adverts of this kind and the fact that the candidates had to write their answers in English.

**2a Answer: 'Middle East'.**

Many candidates used the Arabic words for the 'Middle East' e.g. 'Alshark Alawsat' for this question. Some even wrote the answer using Arabic script as الشرق الاوسط, which was unacceptable as all answers must be in English.

**2b Answers: 'rooms' and 'flats'.**

A lot of candidates got the answers right for this question. Some candidates gave wrong guesses for example 'hotels, houses'.

**2c Answer: 'an employee'.**

Many candidates gave the answer 'worker' and 'staff'; these were treated as correct. Answers such as 'man' or 'manager' were not accepted.

## **2d Answer: bank/finance.**

Some possible items to do with banking were accepted; e.g. 'money' or 'exchange'.

## **Question 3 My Family and I**

A great number of candidates found this question accessible. The majority scored 4 out of the 5 marks available. The main answer that was a problem for a considerable number of candidates was 3iv (Tariq goes swimming at...). The correct answer was 'the university club'. However, because the distractor 'the city sports centre' could also be used for swimming, many candidates erroneously gave this as a possible answer.

Question 3v also caused confusion for some candidates. The question is 'The family are going to Jordan to .....' and the correct answer is 'to visit relatives'. However, some candidates gave the erroneous answer 'to visit ancient cities and sites' as a possible correct answer.

## **Question 4 Work Experience**

This question was popular with the majority of candidates. This is probably due to the format of the question and the pausing time given in the recording after each question, which allows for the candidate to pick the correct answer. More than 90% of candidates overall got this question right.

## **Question 5 At the Pyramids**

Again, a great number of candidates (85%+) found this question accessible, first, because of the format of the question and the pausing time in the recording allowing enough time for candidates to think of the correct answer. Another possible explanation for the popularity of the question is its theme of the 'Pyramids', which is a popular theme across all four units of the Specification.

## **Question 6 Shopping for Clothes**

Again, like question 5, a great number of candidates (85%+) found this question accessible, because of the format of the question and the pausing time in the recording allowing enough time for candidates to think of the correct answer. The only part of the question that proved more challenging than the rest was question 6ii. It seems that the distinction between '**a pair of socks**', '**a pair of trousers**' and '**a pair of gloves**' was rather difficult to make. Only 68% of candidates managed to understand this distinction correctly.

### **Question 7 School Subjects**

Like question 3 above, a great number of candidates found this question accessible and interesting. It seems to be a typical Grade D question and the theme of 'School Subjects' is also popular to candidates of all levels. As expected, over 80% of candidates achieved the full 5 marks, with no exception to report on.

### **Question 8 The Price of Victory**

A typical Grade A\* question. 39% of candidates gave 4 out of 5 possible answers, which is as expected and showed the question to be well differentiated, even for candidates at a low level of linguistic ability. It seems that the theme of sports and football in particular added to the popularity of the question.

### **Question 9 Job Interview**

Question type: Answering questions in English.

This is quite an interesting question to comment on. Many of the questions within this question were accessible to candidates across levels (e.g. 9a, b and c). However, there were some questions, particularly Q9c, d, e, h, and i, that generated a large number of possible correct answers that could not be considered wrong just because they differed from the original Marking Scheme.

Over 50% of candidates responded with 7 correct answers out of 10, which showed the question to be well-differentiated and accessible to candidates across levels. The two exceptions were 9b and 9f (see the analysis below). The candidates who could not answer correctly, may include those who find writing answers in English demanding.

Here are some comments on the performance of candidates for each question.

#### **9a Answer: Mr Aziz is from Jordan.**

Some candidates chose 'Alexandria' rather than 'Jordan', because Mr Aziz said 'I am originally from Jordan, but I live in Alexandria'.

#### **9b Answer: Have you read the details of the job you have applied to?**

Many candidates gave different wordings as an answer which was accepted if the answer was close to that in the Mark Scheme.

#### **9c Answer: Headteacher.** Quite accessible.

**9di Answer: 'He has long experience', and 9dii Answer 'He is hard working',** were quite accessible to a good number of candidates.

**9e Answer: Degree in Arabic language teaching** (accepted answers including Diploma/Degree/Certificate). This question was answered correctly by nearly 62% candidates.

**9f Answer: 'Researcher'**. Candidates found this question challenging, because of the high level item used, i.e. 'researcher'. A grade A or A\* candidate, however, should be able to find the correct answer.

**9g Answer: 'He wants to save some money' or 'He wants to buy a flat'**. 50% found the answer correctly with this question. Quite accessible.

**9h Answer: 'He wants to know how much the salary is for the post'** Any similar wording to do with 'payment' or 'wages' was accepted.

**9i Answer: 'He has to wait a week before knowing the outcome'**. Quite a popular question with more than 50% correct answers.

In conclusion, the results show that a great percentage of candidates sitting this paper managed to do well when answering it. It seems that the paper contained mixed and balanced elements that differentiated well, challenging the most able candidates and providing a way for the lower ability candidates to achieve success.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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