



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Arabic (1AA0)
Paper 2F: Speaking

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General comments:

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of centres and candidates who engaged with the speaking component of the Edexcel GCSE Arabic qualification this year. The majority of Teacher-Examiners demonstrated a sound understanding of the assessment requirements, adhering appropriately to the format by introducing candidate and centre details, correctly using the sequencing grid, and identifying the relevant themes during the general conversation. However, several administrative and procedural issues were noted which had a detrimental impact on candidate outcomes. A number of centres failed to submit the correct editable version of the Candidate Speaking form (CS2), continuing instead to upload non-editable PDF versions, which is no longer acceptable. Moreover, several CS2 forms were submitted incomplete, lacking critical information such as the Role Play card number or Picture-Based Task reference, making accurate moderation and standardisation more challenging. Of particular concern were entries from centres where Arabic is not taught as part of the curriculum. In these cases, candidates were entered for the qualification and then assessed by individuals who, although fluent Arabic speakers, lacked familiarity with the specification and formal requirements of the speaking assessment. As a result, the conduct of the examination in these centres was frequently inadequate: examiners deviated from the required script, failed to cover all necessary bullet points, mismanaged timings, or asked inappropriate or tier-incompatible questions during the general conversation. Such practices inevitably disadvantaged candidates, often resulting in a significant loss of marks. It is imperative that all centres ensure that the speaking component is conducted by a qualified teacher or examiner who is fully trained and well-versed in the expectations of the assessment and the content of the specification. In addition, issues with recording quality persisted in some centres, including excessive background noise (corridors, playgrounds, traffic) and poor microphone placement, which made candidate responses difficult to hear. Centres are strongly advised to review their procedures to ensure compliance with all assessment requirements so that all candidates are given a fair and equal opportunity to succeed.

TASK 1: THE ROLE PLAY

The Role Play task is assessed solely on the criterion of Communication, in contrast to the Picture-Based Task and the Conversation, which are marked across multiple criteria. To achieve full marks, concise and relevant responses are sufficient. However, a number of candidates provided lengthy and unnecessarily developed answers, often at the encouragement of their teachers. This approach is counterproductive, as additional material sometimes introduces ambiguity or inaccuracy, ultimately preventing candidates from achieving the full 2 marks. Extended answers do not attract additional credit; therefore, responses should remain focused and succinct. Centres are strongly advised to prioritise the revision of question words, as many candidates encountered difficulties when required to formulate questions.

On occasion, candidates failed to recognise the requirement to ask a question (indicated by a question mark) and instead made a statement, or they asked an entirely unrelated question. Regrettably, significant marks were lost where Teacher-Examiners deviated from the scripted questions—whether through paraphrasing, omissions, or by adding unscripted prompts. It is essential to note that any unscripted intervention that may support the candidate will immediately render the response invalid. In some instances, Teacher-Examiners did not announce the Role Play number or provide the scripted introduction, an omission that may affect the candidate's confidence and overall performance.

While many candidates at Foundation Tier approached the Role Play with confidence and responded appropriately, others struggled to express their ideas clearly and resorted to using English terms or colloquial Arabic. Native speaker candidates in

particular were sometimes prone to missing out key tasks or asking questions not aligned with the script.

Most Teacher-Examiners conducted the Role Play task in accordance with the guidance provided in the Teacher's Booklet. However, in a minority of cases, candidates lost marks as a result of teacher deviations—such as rephrasing scripted questions or repeating a question after an incorrect response had been given. In such instances, any subsequent correct answer from the candidate must be disregarded. There were also cases where teachers omitted to deliver the scripted introduction, or, more seriously, skipped one of the required questions altogether. Such omissions not only compromised the flow of the task but also led to confusion and a loss of marks for the candidate.

TASK 2: THE PICTURE-BASED TASK

As with the Role Plays, Teacher-Examiners must adhere strictly to the script without paraphrasing or inserting additional questions. Any unscripted prompts or deviations from the wording invalidate the candidate's response, which will not be credited.

Most candidates responded confidently to the first bullet point and were well-prepared with expressions such as: '...في الصورة أستطيع أن أرى...'; 'على يمين الصورة', which supported them in developing their ideas. There were frequent attempts to describe clothing, although word order was sometimes incorrect. The more able candidates described actions using the present continuous accurately. Unlike the Role Play, the Picture-Based Task rewards extended responses. Candidates aiming for higher marks provided at least three clauses, used a variety of verbs, and included justified opinions. However, some candidates gave fully developed responses to the picture description but gave much shorter and undeveloped answers to the follow-up questions.

It is therefore essential for teachers to use the scripted follow-up questions such as 'أي شيء آخر؟' or 'لماذا؟' to encourage development, particularly if a candidate's answer lacks detail. However, if a candidate has already given a full, fluent, and extended response, unnecessary repetition of these follow-ups can interrupt fluency and be counterproductive.

The third and fourth bullet points require reference to the past and future respectively. Occasionally, candidates used the infinitive instead of a tense, or mixed tenses within a single response, leading to ambiguity and loss of marks in both Communication and Language. That said, many candidates were able to refer appropriately to all three-time frames (past, present, and future), which is key to success in this task. Some Teacher-Examiners omitted one or more of the bullet points, which resulted in candidates being placed in a lower band for Communication and Content. Centres are reminded that any missed question will result in a one-band penalty on this strand.

Task 3: The Conversation

Candidates were required to participate in two conversations:

- **Conversation 1:** Prepared topic chosen by the candidate.
- **Conversation 2:** Unprepared topic selected by Pearson Edexcel.

Each conversation should be allocated equal time. For Foundation tier, the total time must be between **3½ and 4½ minutes**, and timing begins with the candidate's first utterance. A significant number of marks were lost due to an imbalance between the two conversations, particularly when the first conversation overran, leaving insufficient

time for the second. Since the examiner stops listening once the maximum time is reached, any content beyond that point is not assessed.

Candidates may speak for up to one minute to introduce their prepared topic. However, they must not exceed this limit. Teachers are expected to intervene with their first question if the candidate attempts to continue beyond the allocated time.

The first conversation, being prepared, tended to be more successful. However, some candidates relied heavily on rehearsed material, resulting in responses that sounded memorised, mechanical, or lacking in spontaneity. Intonation and pronunciation were also affected in these cases. Over-reliance on memorised content limited the candidates' ability to respond naturally and reduced the opportunity to demonstrate fluency.