



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Arabic (1AA0)

Paper 3F: Reading and Understanding in Arabic

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## Introduction

- Reading and Understanding paper is structured so that questions set in the target language are in a separate section from those questions requiring responses in English.
- This paper is also structured so that questions are progressive in their level of demand with the most demanding question being at the end of the question paper.
- Translation task is progressive in its level of difficulty and is of appropriate demand at each tier.

## Themes

- The paper draws on vocabulary and structures across all themes and topics covered in this qualification specification. Candidates are assessed on their understanding of standard written Arabic texts based on 5 topics as follows:
  - 1) Identity and Culture
  - (2) Local area, holiday and travel
  - (3) School
  - (4) Future aspirations, study and work
  - (5) International and global dimension.

Each of these themes has a number of sub-topics (please refer to the specification page 9):

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Arabic/2017/specification-and-sample-assessments/specification-gcse2017-l12-arabic-issue5.pdf>

*N.B: All topics and themes must be studied in the context of both the students' home country and that of countries and communities where Arabic is spoken.*

## Question type

This Foundation Tier Reading and Understanding in Arabic exam paper is made up of 10 questions with a total marks of 50.

Candidates will respond to multiple choice questions (MCQ) and open response questions and will be required to translate a short text into English.

All themes and topics must be studied in the context of both the students' home country and that of countries and communities where Arabic is spoken.

In addition to **two literary texts (Q04 and Q06)** from a variety of sources, mainly novels and stories, there is a short text in Arabic for candidates to translate into English.

Four questions are common across both tiers which include the two target language questions too.

(N.B: Candidates should allow enough time for the translation question with the recommendation of allowing 10 minutes for this section).

## Sections

The paper is divided into **three sections**:

- Sections A: questions are **set in English and candidates are required to answer in English.**
- Section B: **questions are set in the Arabic Target Language and candidates are required to answer in Arabic.**
- Section C: **consists of 1 translation text from Arabic into English question.**

## Vocabulary list

The vocabulary list at Foundation Tier must be studied extensively to enable candidates to understand and express themselves with themes, reading and understanding authentic material.

**Teachers should present and exploit a range of vocabulary relevant to the themes and topics in the specification.**

*Note: in this series Non-Vocabulary words were **NOT** used in the question paper.*

## Grades distribution (per each question)

This Foundation Tier question paper targets grades 1 to 5:

- question 1: targets grade 1;
- questions 2 and 3(a): target grade 2;
- questions 3(b) and 4 : target grade 3;
- question 4 targets grades 4;
- questions 5 and 6: target grade 5;
- question 7: targets grades 3, 4 and 5;
- question 8: targets grade 4;
- question 9: targets grade 5;
- question 10: targets grades 1 to 5.
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**Questions 5,6, 8 and 9 are crossover questions with the Higher Tier question paper.**

## Profile of Cognitive Operations

The questions in this paper are set to test three cognitive operations: recall, processing and interpreting. The highest number of cognitive operations in this paper is for recalling, followed by processing and then interpreting. The latter is required for a very small number of questions.

- **Important note:**

The length and level of demand for each stimulus text -and its respective questions- are based on the targeted grade.

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**Below is a summary of how this series cohort performed per each question:**

### Section A

#### Candidates performance evaluation:

**Q01 (6 marks-Grade 1):** This question was about six people interests. The candidates' performance in this '**fill in the blanks**' question, in this series was generally very good performance. There was a good number of candidates who scored the 6 or 5 of the available marks, There were some lower scores which indicates, on the whole, that this question was, at various levels, accessible to the majority of candidates.

**Q02 (5 marks- Grade 2):** This question was about travel and transactions. This is a '**cloud with 12 option words**' question for candidates to choose from to fill in the missing word in the sentence.

There was a very good candidates' performance in this question was observed, this question seemed challenging to many candidates. However, there was a common mistake in (d) as a result of candidates used the distractor word: 'late' for their answer instead of the correct word: 'early'.

**Q03: 3(a)-Grade 2 & Q03(b)-Grade 3:** This question was about a girl role model in sports (karate).

It is an **open response question** divided into two parts with two connected texts.

Many candidates found this question challenging in this paper. Generally, candidates appear to have found the two parts below as challenging:

- Q03(a)(ii): candidates misread the phrases ستبدأ قريباً (will start soon) with the question's target phrase في مدينتها (in her city) and many

candidates answer for this part was (near her city). The phrase قريباً في مدينتها doesn't mean t (near her city).

- Q03 (b)(i): The question was: At what level did Yasmin compete when she was nineteen?

While the stimulus text mentions على مستوى بلدها (at her country level), many candidates gave 'black belt' as their answer.

**Q04 (5 marks-Grade 3):** This question is an extract of a literary text from a story about a visit of a friend of a child's father and the conversations between the guest and the boy.

It is a 'multiple choice' question.

The overall candidates' performance in this multiple choice 'literary text' question was acceptable and the candidates' scores varied with few scoring the full available 5 marks. However, a noticeable number of candidates scored 2 or 3 marks out of the 5 available marks.

4(iv) was a question that posed some difficulty for this grade, it relied on the inference cognitive skill.

**Q05- crossover with 3H (3 marks-Grade 4):** This question is about using unhealthy material in farming. A man was living and working in farming abroad and tried after returning to his country educate people about healthy farming.

Part (a) of this question was the most challenging. Firstly due to text theme/topic relating to environment. Secondly it is an inference question.

Part (b) seen very good answers, while part (c) varied as candidates overlooked the term 'focus' (رئيسي) in both text and question.

**Q06 crossover with 3H (5 marks-Grade 5):** This question is an extract of a literary text from a story about an young woman who has started her first ever job.

It is an **open response question**.

It is an open response 'literary text' question, and a good number of candidates performed well scoring the full 5 available marks or 4 marks, while few didn't fully understand the questions. Example in part (c), some candidates misunderstood what the question is asking for and missed the key word 'skills needed' and their answer was: write 100 words on a cartoon character, when it should be either 'writing' or translation'.

## Section B

### Target Language Section

**Q07** (5 marks- Grades 3, 4, 5): The question is about the increase of music bands in the Arab Gulf area.

This is a **'cloud with 12 option words' question** for candidates to choose from to fill in the gap by selecting the right word that fits the sentence.

In this series, some candidates did reasonably well, however, it seems that generally, candidates find the target language questions challenging. Some candidates selected words from the cloud randomly. Candidates need to practise this type of questions, especially improve the skill of reading the sentence after selecting the word to fill in gap and check if it makes sense.

**Q08- crossover with 3H** (5 marks-Grade 4): This question is about online shopping in Libya.

In this **multiple choice target language question**, there were only a few good responses, with good scores 3 or 4 marks. However, many candidates 'guessed' which indicates they didn't fully understand the stimulus text. The candidates' performance varied with no specific observation of which part was challenging. Candidates need to practise and improve their reading and understanding skills of texts in Arabic.

**Q09- crossover with 3H** (5 marks-Grade 5): This question is about advice and suggestions given by teachers to parents about helping their children to succeed.

This is a **'fill the blanks' target language question**. A very small number of candidates scored 3 or 4 marks out of the 5 available, with a very small minority scoring the full mark.

It is important for candidates to be given the opportunity to practise this type of questions, where a matching of the statement to a name is a skill which can be developed through practising. **It is important for candidates not to randomly select the name which usually results in a 0 score. Also, to understand that they need to select one of the names and not fill the blank with random words from the text.**

**Q10- translation (7marks):** This translation from target language to English question is about interest in drawing.

There was a good performance by very few candidates of this cohort, with scores of full 7 marks and others scoring 6 marks or 5 marks. However, there was a large number of candidates who struggled with the translation into English and their responses were incomplete, full of gaps, a totally different content to what is in the stimulus, or blank, which led to getting a 0 score in the latter two scenarios .

### Conclusion and advice:

- As mentioned in the introduction, the exam paper will cover all topics and this means it is very important for candidates to familiarise themselves with all the topics and themes of this qualification specification. It was noticed that candidates need to be more familiar with Theme 5: the Environment issues topic.
- **It is very important for candidates to be very familiar with the structure of the question paper, this can be achieved through practising the bank of past papers available on Pearson website.**
- Candidates should be **very** familiar with the vocabulary list (foundation tier only) as all questions would contain these words in them, it is very likely for these words to act as the 'keyword' and will help the candidate with understanding the question and subsequently with the answer too.
- Candidates need to be able to employ the three cognitive operations: recall, processing and inference. As explained above, 'recalling', followed by 'processing', then 'inference' are the highest cognitive operations required to answer the questions.
- As expected, candidates performed better in multiple choice questions (MCQ) compared to open response questions. More emphasis should be put on practising and familiarising candidates by working on open response type of questions.
- **Candidates should be made aware that there are two literary texts based questions (Q04 and Q06). These literary texts are from published literary sources, such as novels, stories etc.**
- It seems that the three target language questions (Q07, Q08 & Q09) continue to be the most challenging in the paper, which leads to a feeling that the preparation for this type of questions was insufficient.
- **Candidates need to be sitting mock tests well ahead of the formal exam. This is strongly advisable to establish strengths and weaknesses/gaps and work on those with their teachers in good time. This should include the different way of answering each question and NOT to answer the Section A questions in Arabic language and MUST be answered in English.**



- Q010: Candidates need to have **structured/timed tuition** on translating short Arabic texts into English. Candidates have 7 marks available for the translation question, which would make a big difference to the final grade a candidate would be awarded.