



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Arabic (1AA0)

Paper 3H: Reading and Understanding in Arabic

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Introduction

- Reading and Understanding paper (and listening 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 the final question in the 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>

Question type

This Higher 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 (Q02 and Q04)** 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 includes the two target language questions).

(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 as follows**:

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

The vocabulary list

For the higher paper the vocabulary for both Foundation and Higher tiers must be studied extensively to enable candidates to understand and express themselves with 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 and whole paper):

This Higher Tier question paper targets grades 4 to 9:

- question 1: targets grade 4.
- question 2: targets grade 5.
- question 3 and 4: target grades 6 and 7.
- question 5 targets grades 7 and 8.
- questions 6: targets grade 9.
- question 7: targets grades 4.
- question 8: targets grade 5.
- question 9: targets grades 8 and 9.
- question 10: targets grades 6 to 9.

- **Grade profile of papers & rough equivalents to new grading system**

- **Targets across grades 4 to 9**

- Grade 6 = 17% of paper

- Grades 7 to 9 = 50% of paper

- Crossover (four questions)

- Grades 4 and 5 = 33% of paper

- **Equivalence to old grades:**

4=C

5=C+/B-

6 = B

7=A

8= A*

9=A**

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 processing, followed by interpreting and then recall. 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/comments on how this series cohort performed per each question:

Section A

Candidates required to respond in English

Q01- (3 marks) crossover with 3F: 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 to educate people about healthy farming. **In this crossover with 3F question, the level of demand/ context is suitable for this higher level of candidates targeting grade 4.**

This is an **open response** question.

Part (a) of this question was the most challenging. Firstly due to text theme/topic relating to environment. Secondly it is an inference question. A noticeable number of candidates gave 'Lebanon' as their answer, which is incorrect. The last sentence in paragraph 1 states: "وبعد عودته، تابع يعقوب عمله كمزارع". The keyword which leads to the correct answer is "تابع" (continued), this *infers* that Yacoub was working as a farmer before returning to Lebanon.

However, part (b) has seen excellent candidates responses and a significant number gave the right answer.

In part (c), there was variation in the responses. While good number gave the right answer, others overlooked the keyword: رئيسي (main), firstly in the stimulus text and then in the question: 'main focus'.

Q02- (4 marks) *crossover with 3F*: This question is an extract of a literary text from a story about an young woman who has started her first first ever job.

It is an **open response question**.

Candidates performance evaluation:

There was a good number of candidates performed well scoring the full 5 available marks or 4 marks. Very few candidates didn't perform well in part (c), due to misunderstanding what the question is asking for and overlooked the keyword 'skills needed' and their answer targeted the task required which is: to write 100 words on a cartoon character, when it should be either 'writing' or translation'.

Q03 (Total: 5 marks): This question is about a number of young people's interests/thoughts of the music nowadays.

This is an **open response** question.

Candidates performance evaluation:

Overall, we could say that the candidates' performance was good in some parts of this question, including some excellent responses from candidates performing at grade 6 or 7 which this question targets.

On the other hand, many candidates performing at below grade 6 or 7 found, especially, 3(a) & 3(d) challenging.

This type of question requires certain level of processing and inferencing cognitive operations skills.

So, while linking the person's name to the right statement is a straightforward step, but the questions require the use of processing and/or inferencing skills. These skills requires a regular and good level of practice to develop the right cognitive operation skills.

Generally, the candidates' performance in this question was good and much better than last summer's series performance.

Q04 (5 marks): This question is about a lady who converted her shop into an art exhibition with a café inside it.

This **multiple choice** 'literary text' question.

Candidates performance evaluation:

The question has seen some excellent candidates' performance with a noticeable number of candidates scoring the full available 5 marks. It is typical when candidates face some difficulty in fully understanding the stimulus text, this results in candidates resorting to 'guess work' in some of their answers.

This was noticeable with answering 4(i) when candidates selected (A) A sold her shop to a famous artist, instead of the right answer (C): opened a different type of business, which actually is the distractor in this question.

This applies to 4(iv) too, when some candidates selected (A) "eats" as their answer (this answer is the distractor) instead of the right answer (C) "likes". However, there no mention of food in the text but coffee. (This is an inference question).

Q05- (6 marks): This question is about challenges parents face with changes of education not being free anymore, which lead children leave education early.

This question is a mixture of '**fill in the blanks**' (Q05a-d) and **open response** (Q05e-f) question.

Candidates performance evaluation:

Although this question appears to be a challenging one for some candidates, especially in 5(d) & 5(f), the performance of a good number of candidates' was really good.

Only few were able to answer 5(c) correctly, perhaps due to the way the question was phrased. Many candidates left it blank. Only few gave the correct answer 'researched'. On the other hand there were answer such as: solved, support, recalled..etc.

For 5(f), although a number of candidates provide the correct answer: 'future genrtaiion', fee answers such: the country, companies in the future, the adults...etc.

Generally, the candidates performance in this question is good.

Q06 (5 marks): This question is about tourism in Oman.

This question is a grade 9 in its entirety. It is divided into two parts: a **multiple choice** part for 3 marks and an **open response** part for 2 marks.

Candidates performance evaluation:

The candidates' performance in 6(a), which is a Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) varied, however a noticeable number of candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the stimulus text to respond to this part of the question and scored the full 3 available marks by selecting A, B and F. Candidates who score 2 marks selected G: It is always very expensive to visit the capital of Oman. Which is an incorrect answer, as the stimulus mentions with careful selection of hotels the holiday can be cheap.

In the **open response** part, candidates' performance was very good too and the majority provided the correct answer for Q06b (sea/marine animals).

A small number of candidates gave the incorrect answer for (b), such as: desert, animals (without identifying it as sea animals) etc.

We also can see the candidates' performance in (c) is a very good too. The majority provided the (watch the sky full of stars/enjoy the exciting, beautiful atmosphere)

Section B

Q07- crossover with 3F (5 marks): This question is about online shopping in Libya.

This is a **Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)**.

Candidates performance evaluation:

It was clear that this cohort candidates performed very well in this target language multiple choice question.

A good number of candidates scored the full 5 available marks and many others scored 4 marks.

The common incorrect answers were for:

Q07i. some candidates' selected (i): A رخيصة (cheap) which is the distractor, and the correct answer is. C غالية الثمن (expensive)

Q07ii. In the stimulus text states: يقوم بعض الليبيين بالتسوق عبر الانترنت بسبب (some Libyans shop online due to . The correct answer is (A): الحاجة (need), while few candidates selected التسلية (fun), which is incorrect as the text mentions buying for need.

Q08- crossover with 3F (5 marks): This question is about advice and suggestions given by teachers to parents about helping their children to succeed.

This question 'fill in the blanks' Target Language question,

Candidates performance evaluation:

As in previous series, a good number of candidates managed to score the full 5 available marks or 4 marks. However, on the other hand, there was a number of candidates who didn't perform as well, with less scores. A very small number of candidates submitted blank response.

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 to fill the blank with random words from the text.**

Q09 (5 marks): This question is about a Egyptian role model lady, who was the first Arab female to gain pilot licence.

This is an **open response** Target Language question.

Candidates performance evaluation:

There is an impressive candidates' performance in this question with very good attempts by candidates.

A large number of candidates answered all parts correctly and scored the full 5 available marks.

A noticeable number of candidates answered (a) correctly by referring to (التقاليد - traditions).

For (b), a number of candidates answers were القاهرة (Cairo) when the correct answer American or German women pilots as the role model for Loutefya.

In (c), a very good number answered this part correctly (increasing the popularity of the sponsor), with a small number refer to Loutefya couldn't find some one to help her.

In (d), the common incorrect answer refers to Loutefya being only female in the training course as one of her achievements. Also, several candidates gave incomplete answer, as Loutefya was the second women fly a plane 'solo' after Amelia Earhart. Those candidates missed mentioning 'solo' as this a factual piece of information because there were many other women who flew plans supported.

Section C

Q10- translation (7marks): This translation question is about a passion for cooking.

The candidates' performance in this translation question continues to be consistent, with scores of a noticeable number of candidates scoring the full 7 marks, 6 marks or 5 marks. However, there was a number of candidates continue to struggled with the demand of this task. Their translation of the

Arabic text into English was either incomplete, full of gaps, or blank responses.

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. As per last series, it was noticed that candidates need to be more familiar with Theme 5: the Environment issues topic.
- Candidates should be **very** familiar with the vocabulary list (for both foundation and higher tiers) as all questions would contain these words in them, sometimes these words will 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 inferencing. As explained above, processing is the highest followed by inferencing and then recall are the cognitive operations required to answer the questions.
- As expected, candidates performed better in multiple questions compared to open response questions. More emphasis should be put on practising and familiarising candidates with working with open response type of questions.
- To avoid losing marks, candidates should be made aware of the techniques of answering the multiple choice questions, i.e. cross only the number of answers they were asked to give (not to cross less nor more). This especially applies to Q06a.
- This cohort has done well in the three target language questions (Q07, Q08 & Q09), which leads to a feeling that the candidates are making progress with their preparation for this type of questions but work/support is needed to continue for future candidates .
- **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.**
- **Candidates should be made aware that there are two literary texts based questions (Q02 and Q04). These literary texts are from published literary sources, such as novels, stories etc.**

- 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.