



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Arabic (1AA0)
Paper 4F Writing in Arabic

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Introduction

This examination paper has been designed to accommodate a wide range of candidates' profiles. The GCSE qualification is graded and certificated on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1, using the total subject mark where 9 is the highest grade and 1 is the lowest. Questions across all four language skills are set in common contexts, addressing a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. They are organised into five themes, each broken down into topics and sub-topics.

The five themes are:

1. Identity and culture
2. Local area, holiday, travel
3. School
4. Future aspirations, study, and work
5. International and global dimension.

Each task is assessed using criteria given in two-mark grids:

- communication and content
- linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

The questions in this examination paper were carefully selected to give candidates a wide choice of tasks through which they can express their knowledge of the Arabic language. Candidates are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Arabic for different purposes and audiences. They are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Arabic.

The instructions to candidates as well as word counts required are specified for each question. Candidates must answer all questions.

In the foundation tier, there are three open-response questions (Q1,2 & 3) and one translation question (Q4) into Arabic.

Question (1) This is a Picture based question, where candidates are asked to describe a picture and give their opinion. Describing a picture and giving an opinion about tourism in 20 to 40 words was managed by most candidates. Answers were roughly two to four lines, which candidates were able to produce. This question gave an opportunity for candidates with lesser writing ability to gain some marks. The question behaved as it was intended:

Descriptions by candidates ranged from a girl next to a historical building in a sunny day, to more sophisticated descriptions talking about monuments and cultural heritage of the Arab world. Many managed to provide their opinion in their description. Some candidates described the picture as if they were part of it. This was accepted by the mark scheme.

On the other hand, some candidates simply copied the question and did not provide an answer, while a few others struggled to join letters or write any meaningful words. A handful even answered in English. No marks are appointed for these candidates unfortunately.

Question (2) Presents two options, (a) and (b), from which candidates are required to choose one. This question assesses candidates on their ability to note down key points and convey information. 2(a) and 2(b) were reasonably well understood for most candidates. The majority who chose either part of question 2, did well as far as communication and quality of a language is concerned. However, 2(a) was more popular.

2(a) was a very popular question answered by 83% of candidates. This is because celebrating a birthday party in a restaurant is a familiar theme to candidates. The presence of the bullet points was very useful to candidates to organise their writing. Some candidates however, overlooked providing part of the information of the first bullet point. They stated the day only, when the bullet point asked for the date and time of the celebration.

Upon evaluating the candidates' responses, it was observed that the final bullet point (how to pay the bill) presented the greatest challenge. Nevertheless, candidates provided robust answers, including payment will be made in cash, through a bank, by card, or in a designated currency. In general, the standard of candidates has improved over the years.

2(b) A less popular choice where 21% candidates chose this question. They were asked to write a formal letter to a charity manager, asking them for permission to take part in an exhibition. Bullet point 4 offered some freedom to candidates to choose what goods they are free to exhibit in the event. Answers ranged from selling goods, such as food, drinks, clothing and conducting charitable activities. There were some creative answers. However, some candidates found this last bullet point a challenge and forgot to mention what products will be on display.

Similar to question 2(a), some candidates focused on mentioning the date and ignored the time in the first bullet point. This is an area that Arabic teachers should work on to maximise the marks candidates can get. Adding the time is easy; candidates just overlooked it.

Question (3) In this question candidates choose option (a) or (b). It assesses candidates' ability to convey information, narrate, express opinion, interest, and convince the reader about a certain point. Candidates must use the informal register. This question is a crossover to the Higher tier.

As for question 3, the distribution of choice was as follows: 79% candidates answered question 3(a) and 21% of the candidates chose question 3(b). There were many good answers produced by candidates who chose to answer question 2(a).

This was another popular question. It was about going to the movie with a friend, where most candidates may have experienced in their real lives. Candidates were creative in answering this question, where some wrote about the latest movies "Mission Impossible" and others chose to write about classic movies such as "Schrek" and "Titanic".

All bullet points were manageable and well interpreted. Some candidates went the extra mile to write more details about the story of the film and the characters. Bullet point three had different interpretations. The expected one was justifying the candidate's love of the cinema in general by mentioning aspects such as the comfort, the quality and the special experience that Cinemas can offer to the customers, however some candidates focused on writing about how great the movie is and how they were keen to watch it.

3(b) Although this was less popular, candidates managed to produce excellent results by using the bullet points provided by the question. They clearly explained why they love their dogs and consider them their best friends. It was clear that candidates were well prepared and trained in Arabic this semester.

Their communication was relevant to the task most of the time, they developed their guiding points reasonably well. Their adaptation of language was effective, and they gave convincing opinions. There were quite a few students who were Level 4 by expanding their bullet points well, they used complex sentence structures to express their thoughts and wrote a significant amount. Even non-Arabic speakers managed to develop at least one bullet point, and managed to score Level 2 marks, indicating that they had practised their vocabulary.

Question (4) This is the translation question where candidates are required to translate five sentences from English to Arabic. The sentences ordered by increasing level of difficulty. Translation is usually a decisive item, where candidates prove to either excel or just provide a minimal number of words. This year, everyone managed to attempt translating at least one sentence. 4a was the easiest to translate and 4e was the most challenging. Words that candidates found challenging to translate were 'Sports fields', 'decided', 'building', 'therefore', and surprisingly 'headteacher'.

The translation questions usually present difficulty for a number of candidates. There were several blank spaces in some scripts. In other scripts, candidates provided individual words instead of full translated sentences. One can conclude that these questions stood out as being challenging in this examination series.

Overall, the question wasn't difficult for many students to grasp. The vocabulary was within their reach, and the topic was one that students should have found manageable. Unfortunately, some students struggled with some words, because their vocabulary level and learning were low. Nevertheless, all questions performed comparably and as intended, including question 4.

Conclusion and advice to centres:

In general, the performance of the candidates was of a high standard. Most of the questions proved accessible for a considerable number of candidates. The performance of most candidates this series showed an improvement and this was expected. It is clear that candidates were well prepared and trained in Arabic much longer than two years, especially now, after Covid. They chose the questions that they felt they would do better in. Their performance is expected to improve, not stay the same, over time.

Paper 4F was very well prepared, where some specific types of questions were challenging for the Foundation level. There is sufficient evidence of preparation of candidates by the teachers according to the specification. The marking was well achieved. Teachers are expected to even more train their candidates on how to focus on reading into the questions, especially not to miss out on bullet points.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates and teachers are offered the following advice:

- Some questions in this year's examination paper were more popular than others and were consequently answered better than other topics with better candidate results. Teachers need to make sure that all topics are covered. This will better prepare candidates and help to achieve grades that truly reflect their ability.
- The majority of candidate wrote their answers on the correct answer space, however, very few students are still making the mistake of writing their answers on the wrong side of the answer space provided. This might cause them to lose marks! Therefore, Teachers should remind candidates to write their answers on the correct answering space.
- As mentioned in the introduction, the exam paper will cover all topics/themes in the specification. This means that it is important for teachers to train candidates on the topics/themes, with more attention given for the less familiar topics.
- Candidates should work on making themselves more familiar with the topics, to improve their performance.
- Candidates should do more familiarising with the vocabulary list to secure a better score.
- Centres should make sure that candidates are reminded to read well into the questions, including the bullet points, before answering, so that they do not lose any of the question requirement(s).
- The use of English words should be avoided. Candidates are advised to avoid writing English words, except for transliteration.

- Candidates should practice exam-style questions, use past papers exam questions and frequently revise of key vocabulary and complete translation practice tasks.
- Candidates should leave enough time at the end, to revise their answers.

