



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2025

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

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Summer 2025

Publications Code 1AA0_4H_2506_ER

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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 are in English, except for the last question (the translation question), the instructions are in Arabic. Word counts are specified for each question. In the higher tier, there are two questions that are crossover questions to the foundation tier and one translation question from English into Arabic. Candidates must answer all questions.

Question 1

Questions 1(a) and 1(b) worked as intended. 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. Candidates were expected to improve over time, not remain stagnant. They chose the questions that they felt they would do better in. These questions had the theme of Identity and Culture and the topic of Daily life. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of a movie 1(a) and looking after a pet 1(b). This question had to be answered using present, past and future time frames.

1(a) – Going to the cinema

This question was more popular chosen by 89% of candidates. The topic is familiar to candidates and frequently practised in classrooms. Candidates generally responded with confidence and clarity. Many answers demonstrated the following:

- A good range of vocabulary related to media and entertainment.
- Accurate use of time markers and tenses, especially past tense for recounting and future tense for expressing plans.
- Strong personal opinions and justifications, often supported with relevant examples.

The task also allowed candidates to inject personality and creativity into their responses. Some wrote about favourite films in great detail, showing both cultural awareness and language control.

1(b) - Looking after a Pet

This was a less popular choice, where 23% of candidates chose this question. Candidates were asked to write an informal email to a neighbour asking them to look after their dog, which is an activity that could relate to candidates' lives. Those who chose this question, displayed real interest and creative writing. The responses were more varied in quality and challenges, which included:

- Many excellent responses.
- Some less structured responses, possibly due to lack of preparation on this theme.
- A limited cultural or personal experience with the idea of owning pets, particularly dogs.

That said, a number of candidates still produced heartfelt accounts, showing enthusiasm and emotional connection with the topic. Candidates were able to communicate all four bullet points effectively, elaborating on all four bullet points.

Question 2

This was another question that worked extremely well. There was a clear preference for 2(a), which was a sports question. It was answered by 88% of candidates and only 21% answered 2(b), which was on applying for a job. This is maybe because of the popularity of the sports topic amongst candidates. Teachers also spend a considerable time training candidates on sports topics, as well as hobbies of candidates in general. Topics of sports and hobbies are more commonly taught in centres compared to jobs.

2(a) – Sport in School

This question was more popular than 2(b) and generally produced detailed responses. However, a good number of candidates interpreted the task broadly, writing about **sport and healthy lifestyles in general**, rather than focusing specifically on **sport within the school context**. This led to partial relevance and loss of focus in some responses.

Stronger responses:

- Addressed the value of school sports and extra-curricular activities.
- Used appropriate formal register and structured their writing effectively.
- Included examples related to school settings such as PE lessons, school teams, and organised competitions.

Weaker responses:

- Drifted into discussing fitness routines, gym culture, or diet trends with little or no reference to school.

- Lacked clarity in addressing the specific prompt, which affected Task Fulfilment marks.
- Sometimes included informal phrases or generalised arguments not anchored in the context of school life.

Going forward, this question type would benefit from further classroom practice in distinguishing **broad themes** from **task-specific contexts**, especially in formal writing formats.

2(b) – applying for a job

The theme of this question was Further education, study and work, and the topic was jobs. Similar to other questions, candidates were given four bullet points within the context of writing a formal letter to a company asking for employment. Most students managed to answer all the four bullet points. However, the points were of moderate difficulty, with some students slightly misunderstanding the first bullet point about the qualification. Some other candidates who attempted this question struggled to develop their points fully. This is not one of candidates' favourites topics. Therefore, candidates do not usually expand much in their writing, as much as they do in sports. Nevertheless, those who chose this question, managed to produce well planned pieces of writing. There were some very high scores from candidates. That said, the question worked as intended and it reflected candidates' writing as they were able to creatively express their ideas. Perhaps not as excessively, because the topic of hobbies is more commonly taught in centres, compared to jobs.

Question 3 – Translation (English into Arabic)

The topic of translation question was about tourism. This is usually a topic that teachers make sure candidates are well trained to answer. It is only that some candidates find hard. Many students scored between Levels 2 and 3, while a number of them translated the full passage. A common difficulty across responses was with vocabulary relating to seasons. Some students were unable to distinguish between seasons e.g. 'spring' (ربيع) and other seasons and struggled with terms such as "holiday destination" and "tourist attractions."

These words distinguished well with band 4 students from the rest of the students. There were some excellent answers produced by a number of candidates. The wording of the question targeted the correct grades. Although it posed a moderate challenge for some candidates, it was evident that candidates had been well prepared for the translation task and had practised a variety of sentence types and topics.

Conclusion and advice to centres:

On the whole students answered questions with relatively well communicated answers. Generally, the test was appropriate for its purpose. Knowledge of present past and future tense was generally sound. There was a high level of language used in most answers with the occasional idiom. In the less good attempts, there were basic mistakes in tenses, and complex language was inaccurate. There are some students who used dialect; however, this didn't hinder communication and content.

There is sufficient evidence of preparation of candidates by the teachers according to the specification. The marking was well achieved. Teachers, however, should make sure to more train their candidates on how to focus and answer 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.
- This examination series, the majority of candidate wrote their answers on the correct answer space, however, some 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.

