



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

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

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General Comments

The series of GCSE Arabic 2023/1AA0_2F was successful, with a lot of well conducted tests from the centres. Generally, a high standard of work was produced by students. Examiners reported that they heard many very good performances and listened to some interesting orals. There was evidence of the full range of abilities entered at each tier and performances reflected this throughout all three elements of the speaking examination.

Most students performed very well keeping up with the demands of the specification, especially with the number of tasks and length of exam. Most of the centres have prepared their students well; they have covered a wide range of topics for all parts of the test. Most students have given opinions fluently without hesitation with fully developed justification and elaboration.

Good administration was in practice by most centres except a few who have not included the new CS2 forms on LWA. Overall, most centres have submitted their candidates' work before the deadline and work was well presented in general.

It is vital that centres are given robust feedback about the conducting of the exams and candidates performances. This will enable some centres to provide training for some of their staff, so that in the future exams are conducted smoothly. The general performances in the higher tier was good however the standard of students' work varied enormously in the foundation tier. In some cases, the student performance was negatively affected because the teacher examiner did not follow the correct exam rules, especially in the role-plays and the picture base.

The standard of the Recordings was generally good, and examiners were able to understand the conversations clearly; occasionally however, there were some background noises. Some teachers should be provided with the advice on positioning of the recording equipment because some teacher-examiners were a lot louder than the students. The recording device needs to be closer to the student than the teacher in order for them to be heard clearly.

Role-plays

Student responses within the role-play do not need to be elaborate and best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes-contained material which caused communication to be less clear and therefore the candidates were not able to score full marks. It is important that students read the scenario carefully in order to understand what the role-play is about and in order to aid understanding before completing the task and providing answers that are relevant to the context. Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the wording of the role-play including where a student is required to ask a question. Teacher examiners should also keep to the register that is within the scenario and not change it to what they normally use during their teaching.

The unpredictable question was well done by more successful students; however, less successful students often offered no response or one which had no relevance to the situation of the role-play. There were many instances of poor intonation which occasionally led to some ambiguity and confusion as to whether the answer was a statement or a question.

Picture- based task

While this task requires extended responses to the bullet points, these should not be a long monologue. Best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes-contained material which caused communication to be ambiguous, leading to the clarity of communication being impaired and therefore candidates were not able to score full marks. There is, however, the need to develop responses, adapting language to describe, narrate and inform in response to the stimulus questions. Students must also give opinions that are fully justified to reach the higher mark bands. However, some students gave elaborate responses after a suitable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said.

Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than its length. There is no need to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence as the student is unable to give further information does not help the student. Some of the tasks were thus overlong; there is nothing to be gained by this and some candidates' performances deteriorated towards the end of the task which had an impact on the performance within the conversation as a whole.

At Foundation tier, less successful students often gave straightforward predictable opinions given with little or no reasons for these opinions and this prevented the student from getting the higher mark bands. Responses from these students were often quite brief and some questions required considerable prompting by the teacher-examiner, using the prompts given within the task.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the Picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. Unfortunately, there were instances where teacher-examiners reworded or rephrased questions which did not allow students to be credited for their responses. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these students who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

Conversation

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling students to achieve their best.

Centres are reminded that in the conversation task, there are two themes tested, the first chosen by the student and the second by Pearson according to the sequencing grid. Students may give a presentation of up to one minute on their chosen theme and each theme should be of roughly equal length. Examiners reported that there was a far greater proportion of time spent on the first chosen theme and insufficient time spent on the Pearson chosen theme by some centres. This may affect marks awarded as the conversation is marked globally and examiners take into consideration performances across both themes.

The presentation allows students to be confident with presenting some information and the follow-up discussion then allows them to explore this with the teacher examiner in more detail before moving to a second theme. It is therefore crucial to ensure that both themes are well represented and accomplished. In more than a few centres a carefully learnt topic within a theme was used for the presentation, but when it came to delivering answers in the rest of the conversation, some answers were not always understandable due to the errors made or questions were not understood, particularly with less successful students. Where this was successful, centres used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the student, to probe further about the subject, and allow the student to take part in spontaneous exchange.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow students to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions within both themes. In these cases, teacher-examiners did not take the opportunities offered by the student to explore in more detail what the student had said. In some cases, teacher-examiners had ignored what the student had said in the presentation and asked a question that had already been referred to and consequently led to confusion. Best practice is to respond to the answers of the students rather than having a pre-set list of questions which do not allow students the chance to take part in a truly spontaneous interaction, thus preventing them accessing the higher mark bands for Interaction and Spontaneity, particularly at the Higher tier.

There were occasions when teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions. Where a student was capable and clearly able to produce extended answers, this was not helpful and it was disappointing as the student, in a stressful situation, sometimes opted for a non-response rather than produce responses that would allow them to reach their full potential. Similarly, on occasions students were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased the questions or moved on to another question.

The Marking Scheme indicates clearly that there is a need for students to be able to produce developed responses and extended sequences of speech to reach the higher mark bands for Communication and Content. There should be evidence of using the language creatively to express thoughts, ideas and opinions which are appropriately justified with a range of vocabulary.

Areas for Improvement:

Most centre examiners did well with their examining tasks, but there were few centres in which teachers were not qualified to conduct the tests properly, which disadvantaged pupils' performance.

Given below are some tips to follow in next year's exam.

- Conduct the exam as expected, give introductions and instructions; be aware of how to conduct exam and what the targeted questions will be, specially picture based questioning techniques should be in line with assessment criteria. It should not be a speech but a conversation.
- Avoid using English vocabulary.
- Allow candidate to take initiative.
- Avoid additional questions in picture-based section, very long unnecessary detailed responses from candidates in role play and picture based section may affect the mark given.
- Give introduction for each card and task in all recordings.
- Avoid having the teacher very close to microphone and candidates far from it, which causes difficulty in listening to their recordings.
- Avoid noisy backgrounds, which makes the recording hard to understand.

Advice for centres:

Make sure pupils are fully aware of assessment criteria when they are preparing for tasks.

Roleplay

Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Role. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of 0 for Communication in that task.

Once the student completes an incorrect answer, a mark of 0 for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is given subsequently.

Students are required to ask questions at the end of role play. The teacher examiner must ask students e.g. Do you have any questions?

Photo card

Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any follow-up questions.

Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question in the three-minute maximum time, you may be better to interrupt an answer and ask the next one.

General conversation

- Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible.
- Opinions are the most obvious area to focus; so, encourage students to express them using a range of structures and a variety of adjectives at Foundation tier.
- Try to ask students questions that reflect interests.

Don't ask all students identical questions.