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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Arabic (1AA0) Paper 3F: Reading and
Understanding in Arabic

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Introduction

This exam series paper is a return to pre-pandemic- since 2019 summer series- with the exceptions of providing a glossary for the non-vocabulary words to help students with their understanding of the stimulus text and their respective questions.

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

This exam for this Foundation Tier is 50 minutes long.

Candidates will respond to multiple choice response and open response questions and translate a short text into English, all based on various texts that cover the following five themes: (1) Identity and culture (2) Local area, Holiday and travel (3) School (4) Future aspirations, study and work (5) International and global dimension.

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.

The paper draws on vocabulary and structures across all the themes and topics covered in this qualification specification. Candidates are assessed on their understanding of standard written Arabic texts based on the aforementioned topics/themes. In addition to two literary texts (Q04 and Q06) from a variety of sources mainly novels and stories and a short text in Arabic for candidates to translate into English.

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

- Section A consists of six questions with instructions and texts set in Arabic **and candidates in this section are required to respond in English.**
- Section B consists of 3 questions set in Arabic and candidates are **required to answer in Arabic.**
- Section C consists of 1 translation question. Candidates should allow enough time for the translation question (10 minutes are recommended).

Note for Section C: it consists of 1 translation of a short text from Arabic into English. Candidates should allow enough time for the translation question (10 minutes are recommended).

The vocabulary list at the Foundation level 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: a glossary of non-vocabulary words to help students with their understanding the stimulus text was provided.

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.

Important note:

- The stimulus texts and their respective questions vary in level based on the grade.
 - The length of the stimulus text per question is also related to the grade the question is targeting.
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Below is a summary of how this series cohort performed per each question:

Section A

Q01 (6 marks-Grade 1): The candidates' performance in this 'fill in the blanks' question, can be described as a good performance. There was a significant number of candidates who scored the 6 or 5 of the available marks, There were the odd 0 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 is a question with a 'cloud with 12 option words' for candidates to choose from to fill in the missing word in the sentence.

Some excellent candidates' performance in this question, a good number scoring either the full 5 available marks or 4 or 3 out the 5 marks.

There was a common mistake in (a) as a result of candidates used the distractor word: 'town' instead of the correct word: 'suburb-ضاحية', The word 'town' is not mentioned in the stimulus text.

Also, in (c) the word: 'two colours-اللونين' (المثنى) for the word colour, indicates that some candidates were not familiar with dual-المثنى which led candidates to give some wrong/guess answers.

In part (d), some candidates gave the distractor: 'restaurants' instead of 'places' as their answer. Again the word restaurants- مطاعم wasn't mentioned in the stimulus Text at all.

Candidates should be aware of not using words which are not in the stimulus text.

Q03(a)- Grade 2 & Q03(b)-Grade 3 (Total: 5 marks): This is an open response question divided into two parts with two connected texts. Generally, candidates found this question the most challenging in this paper. Generally, candidates appears to have found Q03(a) as the most challenging part. Similarly, there was a noticeable number of candidates who struggled to understand the phrase: طوال شهر مايو -the whole of the month of May. Examples of candidates' answers for Q03(a)ii were: 'year' or '20 days', but managed well by giving the correct answer for 3a: help million people, donate, charity, etc and appears that this part was the most accessible in the question. Regarding Q03(b), many candidates struggled with answering both questions in this part of the Q03 and many scripts were left blank.

Q04 (5 marks-Grade 3): The overall candidates' performance in this multiple choice 'literary text' question was acceptable and the candidates' scores varied with very few scoring the full available 5 marks. However, a noticeable number of candidates scored 2 or 3 marks out of the 5 available marks and others totally misunderstood the stimulus text and gave answers that were not matching/irrelevant to the questions or crossing randomly.

Q05- crossover with 3H (3 marks-Grade 4): Candidates found this open response question quite challenging. While, a very small number of them managed to answer all three questions correctly, the majority of the candidates struggled with this question with a significant number got Q05b correct. It appears that Q05c was the most challenging part for candidates, as it is one of the processing questions in this paper. Furthermore, many candidates' responses were left blank.

Q06 crossover with 3H (5 marks-Grade 5): In this open response 'literary text' question, candidates performance varied from one part to another. For example, in (a) and (b) there was a good performance, while in (c) candidates didn't do as well. There was a misunderstanding or unfamiliarity with the key words: 'أندھش' -surprised' in part (c) and: 'نساھت' -forgotten/lost' in part (d). This resulted in poor performance of a noticeable number of candidates. However, it is worth noting that there was- albeit a small number- an excellent performance by some candidates who scored the full available 4 marks or 3 marks.

Section B **Target Language Section**

Q07 (5 marks- Grades 3, 4, 5): It was clear that this cohort candidates found this target language question very challenging. Only a very small number of candidates scored the full 5 marks, 4 marks or 3 marks. A significant number of candidates submitted blank response. However, there were scores of 1, 2 marks too. It wasn't easy to evaluate the candidates responses to each part of the question as it was inconsistent and possible guess work has been a factor for this. Unfortunately, candidates selected words from the 'cloud' randomly to fill gaps in the sentences. Candidates must be able to check whether the sentence makes sense or not.

Example of a candidate's incorrect choice of the word to complete the sentence:

تمثل ماريا عندما لا.. العرب الطلاب الواجب المطلوب منهم.

Unfortunately, this sentence doesn't make sense as the required word is يفهم and not العرب.

Furthermore, all the words 'in the cloud' are in the vocabulary list, and those in the text too. This is a good example of the importance of studying the vocabulary list extensively to enable candidates to improve their performance in target language questions such as this one, is emphasised again.

Q08- crossover with 3H (5 marks-Grade 4): In this multiple choice target language question, there was some guess work and some candidates selected options which were distractors and/or of statement that doesn't have any relation/reference to it in the stimulus text.

A common incorrect answer was for Q07i, where candidates chose B instead of A, possibly due unfamiliarity with the word: 'معظم-most'. Also in Q07iii, many candidates didn't differentiate between the gender of the members of the team of engineers, which were 3 females and one male (ثلاث فتيات وشاب). All these words are in the vocabulary list and students should have made themselves familiar with them.

Q09- crossover with 3H (5 marks-Grade 5): This is a 'fill the blanks' target language question. Candidates' performance in this question is similar to Q07 & Q08, with similar trends of submitting blank responses or randomly selecting the name to the corresponding statement resulting in 0 score. A very small number of candidates scored 3 or 4 marks out of the 5 available, with a small minority scoring the full mark.

It is important for candidates to be given the opportunities 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.**

Example of a candidate answer for Q09a:

برنامج...مؤعد...جاهز للاستخدام في كل الأوقات.

Unfortunately, the word مؤعد doesn't fit in the sentence and the candidates are instructed in the rubric is to select one of the names listed and in this instance it is فرح.

Q10- translation (7marks):

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.
- Candidates should be **very** familiar with the vocabulary list (foundation tier only) as all questions would contain these words in them, sometimes these words will act as the 'key word' and will help

the candidate in understanding the question and subsequently with the answer too.

- As expected, candidates performed better in multiple choice 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. crossing only the number of answers/boxes they were asked to give (not to cross less and not more).
- It seems that this cohort struggled with the three target language questions, which leads to a feeling that the preparation for this type of questions was insufficient.
- Candidates need to have structured 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 grade they will be awarded.
- **It is very important for candidates to be very familiar with the structure of the question paper, this can be achieved through practising past papers.**
- **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 teacher.**
- **Candidates should be made aware that there are literary text based questions (Q04 and Q06). These literary texts are from published literary sources, such as novels, stories etc.**