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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

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

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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 (the foundation 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 Arabic. Word counts are specified for each question. Candidates must answer all questions.

In the foundation tier, there are three open-response questions and one translation question into Arabic.

Question (1) This is a Picture based question, where candidates were asked to describe a picture and give their opinion. Candidates were assessed on their ability to write, to describe and to express opinions.

Most candidates' performances were very good. So, this question worked as intended and candidates found it straightforward to describe the picture and give their opinions. High achievers described learning the Arabic language as important, so one can travel to the Arab countries, for Arabic origin speakers, to speak your mother tongue, to read their holy book and to help them with their future. One candidate wrote, *اللغة العربية مهمة للسفر إلى البلاد العربية*. Others who were less successful, only described the picture and could not go beyond, because of lack of enough vocabulary. As an example, wrote, *في الصورة إثنان نساء وواحد رجال*

The least successful candidates just recopied the rubrics, which might indicate that they had not practiced similar exercises before. Unconfident writers simply copied the question, while very few did not provide an answer and others struggled to join letters. A handful even answered in English.

Question (2) had two options (a) or (b) from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to note down key points and convey information

Question 2(a) This was the most popular question chosen by candidates. The question asks candidates to write an official letter to the director of the Oriental Music Festival in Beirut, asking them to attend, with their parents. This question worked very well for many, however, finding vocabulary to answer it was somehow challenging for several other candidates. Many showed a satisfactory level of understanding the question and expressed their opinion well. They managed to elaborate on all bullet points. For example:

أرغب في حضور مهرجان الشرق للموسيقى هذه السنة لأنه ممتع وفيه الكثير من الفنانين

while others found it hard to follow them and very few candidates gave irrelevant answers, for example:

أنا و الصديقتي نهبت كبير للموسيقى.

Question 2(b) behaved as intended, yet it was less popular than 2(a). Candidates were asked to write an official letter to the town hall manager, so that they can participate in an art exhibition. Most candidates who answered it, did not know how to fully tackle all the bullet points. They went on about mentioning about their own experience in different exhibitions. A respectable number of candidates wrote a clear letter to the town hall manager of the exhibition to express their interest in attending the exhibition, by using extended sentences and clear essays. This question turned out to be the least popular in the paper. A good example, هل يمكنني أن أشارك بعض من صور المعرض أنا وأصدقائي على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي؟
Not a very successful example, أزيد كسب المالي في انجل ترا

Question (3) This question had two options (a) or (b) from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to convey information, narrate, express opinions, interest, and convince the reader about a certain point. Candidates had to use the informal register. This question was common to the Higher tier.

Question 3(a) This was the most popular question amongst candidates of all levels. It was about 'Inviting a friend to visit and spend Eid holidays with you and your family'. Eid is one of the candidates' favourites' topics. Therefore, many candidates scored within the Level 3 category. Their communication was relevant to the task most of the time. They developed their guiding points well. Their adaptation of language was effective, and they gave convincing opinions. There were several candidates who were Level 4 by expanding their bullet points well. They used complex sentences, structures to express their thoughts and

they wrote excellent essays. Even non-Arabic speakers managed to write at least one bullet point, managed to score Level 2 marks, and indicating by that they had practised their vocabulary. Marks were not awarded due to limited vocabulary being used.

More successful example: ستقوم أُمي بتحضير الكعك و الحلويات في صباح العيد التي تقدمها للضيوف وهذه من العادات

Less successful example: تو نجيب اكل لديدان جدان وانواع كثير ولديد.

Question 3(b) As for question 3(b), it was less popular than 3(a). It was about a healthy and balanced diet that a candidate should discuss on their Facebook page. Most of the candidates who answered this question, found it easy. They covered all bullet points as well as generally discussing healthy eating. A few Arabic speakers answered the question with accurate language achieving by that very high score. Examples of successful example:

الأكل الصحي يساعد الجسم في الحصول على البروتينات والفيتامينات التي تساعد على نمو الجسم بشكل صحيح

Example of a lesser successful candidate: الصحا كثير مهم ولازم نكل أكل ال صحي عشان ال جسم يكون صحي

Question (4) This was the translation question. Candidates were required to translate five sentences from English to Arabic. The sentences were ordered by increasing level of difficulty. Translation was a very decisive item here, where candidates proved to either excel or just provide a minimal number of words. There were some excellent candidate performances with a noticeable number of candidates scoring almost full marks. Many others were able to translate the sentences provided into a reasonably comprehensive one in Arabic language. But typical to the translation question, some candidates' ability to express themselves well in Arabic writing hindered their performance.

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.

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.
- Teachers and candidates must ensure that they are using the correct answer space dedicated for each question. Teachers need to prevent candidates from writing their answers on the wrong space as there is a chance of it being overlooked by examiners and hence unscored. Candidates must know that they may lose marks, if they write

their answers in the wrong answer space. There are several candidates who are doing this, and this needs to be corrected for the benefit of the candidates.

- To prevent candidates from doing it, teachers should instruct candidates to follow the numbers on the pages and not continue to answer a question on the previous page number.
- 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, using past papers exam questions and frequently revise of key vocabulary and complete translation practice tasks.
- Candidates should leave enough time to check their work carefully at the end of the exam.