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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Arabic
Unit 4AA1_02

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Paper 2: Writing (4AA1_02)

Introduction

This examination paper has been designed to accommodate a wide range of student profiles. The International GCSE qualification will be 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. The paper consists of three writing tasks. They are asked to choose two questions out of a choice of the three and they are required to write a minimum of 300 words in each answer. Both tasks require writing in Arabic where candidates have one hour and 30 minutes to complete this paper. This paper carries a maximum of 50 marks.

The questions may relate to any of the following prescribed themes:

- Youth Matters
- Education
- Media
- Culture
- Sport & Leisure
- Travel & Tourism
- Business, work & Development
- Environment
- Health
- Technology

Each task is assessed for Content and Communication (15 marks) and Knowledge and Application of Language (10 marks) only. The maximum mark for this task is 25 for each question.

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. In general, the performance of the candidates was of a high standard. Most of the questions proved accessible for a considerable number of candidates.

Question 1:

Question one asked candidates to discuss how seeking knowledge and work through travelling outside the Arab countries has its benefits and challenges. This was the most popular question in this examination series, where students presented bright ideas and reflected their knowledge about the importance of seeking knowledge and work abroad has its benefits and challenges. Candidates were excellent in providing good essays and giving examples from the Arab as well as the western world. It was easy for candidates to come up with examples of successful stories about members of their own families or some iconic personalities from their country.

Some, however, were highly depended on the bullet points. Therefore, these few essays were less creative. Another portion of students did not adhere to the directions of the question and wrote around half the words that was requested. Most candidates were able to create passable paragraphs, with some students making spelling and punctuation issues. Most candidates were able to cover all the question requirements.

Question 2:

This was the second popular question. It asked candidates to mention and describe the best book they have read in their life and whether they would advise others to read it. Many candidates have answered it well. They had shown good understanding of the question and therefore their answers were very relevant.

Some students spoke about reading Arabic literature for joy or as a hobby. Very few of the answers avoided talking about a real literature book, where they were giving advice of the importance of reading and others were making it up. Others tried to avoid mentioning the name of the book, which was a question requirement and were satisfied only with their book's description. Those were not penalised as a result.

Question 3:

This was the least popular question yet most candidates who answered it did very well. Question three asks' candidates to imagine that they have obtained a patent for a device that serves young people and want them to explain their experience in detail. Candidates who answered this question managed to provide good pieces of essays, even though it was the least popular question. These students were very creative in what they wrote. There was a mixture of good and weak essays.

Summary:

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

- More effort should be done to train candidates to expect these questions, in line with similar questions.
- It is obvious that some candidates sat the exam without any preparation and that could be because they do not belong to any centres, or that they depend on home learning! Therefore, they must receive at least the guidelines and specifications a year ahead before the exam.
- 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.

- Candidates seemed to be more at ease with the questions when provided with bullet points, which helps them to focus on the main points required by the questions. It gave them areas to write about, extend their descriptive ideas, and added reasons for each point they wrote about.
- Although bullet points help candidates to focus in answering the questions, centres should make sure that students are reminded to read well into the questions 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 or literal translations.
- The essays that scored the highest marks were characterised by a clear and defined structure, clarity of thought, well supported ideas, good presentation, and use of an appropriate style.

