

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
Arabic (4AR0) Paper 1

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General

The paper was well organised and the questions matched the syllabus with no specific difficulty in comparison to last series. The paper consists of three sections designed to test candidates' reading comprehension, writing and knowledge of grammar.

Section 1: Reading comprehension

The main theme of the reading comprehension was in relation to the topic إدمان التواصل الاجتماعي 'the addiction to the use of the social network'. The length of the passage was suitable for candidates with different reading speeds and comprehension skills with the text being designed to test candidates' reading comprehension through six questions requiring candidates to respond using their own words and writing style, based on specific information found in the text.

For Q1a most candidates understood the question and responded accordingly. However, there were some candidates who misunderstood the purpose of the question and gave an opinion as to whether or not people were happier before the introduction of the World Wide Web, which was not an acceptable response.

For Q1c and Q1d, many candidates responded well to these questions although some candidates misunderstood the definition of certain vital words that were stated, such as مسببات و أعراض, and, therefore, they were not able to provide a suitable response. Similar to Q1a, some candidates included their own opinions, which was not a requirement, or at all irrelevant to the questions.

Q1f had a reasonable amount of good responses from most candidates; however, very few managed to mention the return of the role of the Arab family as one of the answers. This did not prevent candidates from achieving full marks as there were seven possible answers to this question.

The overall performance and response to the questions in the reading comprehension were good, with responses to the question being varied; some were able to answer all questions and give justification to their answers while others went off target. The problem was mainly due to the inability of some candidates to identify whether the question was asking them to give their opinion or to infer the writer's opinion. The expectation of the question was clearly indicated in the heading that the latter was the required response.

Section 2: Comprehension and Writing

Part One

Section two of the assessment الرياضة عبر التاريخ 'sport history' was divided into two parts. The first part required candidates to read a text and summarise the main points for a maximum of 10 marks. The task is designed to test candidates' reading comprehension.

Most candidates presented an accurate summary of the text that included all the main points. However, a fair number of candidates only mentioned the points relating to the Arabs' interest in sport in the past and ignored the introductory part about how people today enjoy and practise sports. Only a few candidates misunderstood the expectation of this question and wrote their own opinions about the importance of playing sport, rather than summarising the text.

Part Two

This part consisted of requiring a much more thorough understanding of the text from Part One. Candidates were required to produce a piece of writing based on the theme of the text. The more successful candidates were those who managed to write an article for a school magazine on the importance of sport, and how they could persuade the Head Teacher to increase the number sports lessons in the timetable. Candidates who were less successful were unable to produce a piece of writing based on the theme of the text. Consequently, they were unable to access the full range of the marking criteria for this task.

Section 3: Grammatical usage

This section mainly concentrated on the candidates' understanding and knowledge of Arabic grammar. Section 3 consisted of four questions with a maximum, overall mark of 20. This section covered a wide range of grammatical concepts and it was encouraging to note that the overall candidate performance in this section showed great improvement from the last series.

The majority of candidates gave accurate answers to Q6; however, some candidates lost marks for being over ambitious with their answers by giving full responses. This resulted in them losing whole marks due to the inability to respond with the required answer to the question. Generally, candidates were able to answer all questions correctly and provided information in regards to the most common grammatical topics, hence achieving full marks in this section.

General advice to candidates

It is important to remind candidate that they should write their answers in the allocated space for each question in the question paper. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, candidates must write outside the allocated space, they should indicate where they have written their answer next to the relevant question, for example, whether on an additional sheet or on a different page in the question paper.

Candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully, and to ensure that their responses are appropriate to the expectation of the question. Answers for the questions in Section 1 should always be based on the information provided in the text.

Candidates should avoid writing the response for two answers in the answer space allocated for one question. For example, writing the answers for question 2a and 2b in the area allocated for question 2b.

Candidates should prepare for this examination by familiarising themselves with the generic requirements of the question paper by practicing with examination papers for previous series.

Should candidates require crossing out an answer and replacing it with another, they should write the new answer below the crossed out version, (if there is enough room in the allocated space) or request an additional answer sheet, and indicate in the question booklet where the question has been answered.

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