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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In Arabic (First Language) (4AR0) Paper 2

edexcel 

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## **General Introduction**

This paper required students to produce **two** pieces of continuous writing. Students were asked to choose **two** tasks from a choice of six. Students were advised to write about 300 words on each of their chosen topics. The six tasks included a range of writing styles. Each piece of writing was marked out of 30 marks according to the marking grid on pages 6-7 of the specification. The 30 marks were awarded for Content and Communication (18 marks), Application of Language (6 marks) and Accuracy of writing (6 marks).

This exam is designed to assess students' performance and writing ability, rather than choosing among pre-determined options, as in multiple choice questions. Students were expected to construct and produce a thorough piece of writing in response to question demands. As this exam allowed students to construct an original response, the examiners' task was to assess the cognitive thinking and reasoning skills and students' abilities to apply knowledge to solve realistic, meaningful problems in a well structured language style.

### **Question 1**

Students were asked to write a report about the views of their school mate regarding the importance of arts lessons in the school. All those who tried this question scored well, except for the few less able students whose responses were difficult to read and understand. This question was one of the least popular among the students. However, most of those who tried it managed to produce good responses in a well-written report form, covering various points as anticipated in the Mark Scheme.

### **Question 2**

Students were asked to write an article about the advantages and disadvantages of shopping on the internet. Examiners found that the topic of this question was one of the most interesting to students. Most students did well here and scored higher marks. A few students got carried away and went into writing about the development of technology; hence, they were awarded marks for the relevant points only. A few students also lost marks as they missed the main task by concentrating on the use of the internet without referring to shopping as required by the question.

### **Question 3**

Students were asked to write a letter to a friend, stating in it the qualities of a successful company director. Most of the students who chose this question were able to produce well-written responses in well-structured language. This was the third most popular question and most of those who selected it showed high levels of competence and ability in the target language.

#### **Question 4**

Students were asked to write about a popular personality they happened to read about and to show the impact of that personality on their life and on their society. Although the topic is very familiar to students, most of them preferred to respond to other popular questions. This question was not so popular among the students. However, most students who tried this question were able to write good pieces in a speech form, and were able to give a good detail account of their favourite personality.

#### **Question 5**

Students were asked to write an article about the reasons behind the movements of people from one country to another, and to point out the effect of such movements on the movers themselves and on the host countries. Almost all those who responded to this question were able to address the task well. The loss of marks appeared to be in responses which had many spelling and grammatical errors, which distorted meaning or caused ambiguity.

#### **Question 6**

Students were asked to write a story relevant to the provided picture. This question was not so popular in this series due to the popularity of other questions. However, most of the students who responded to this question were able to produce well-written responses that were relevant to the task, and were able to score good marks. A few students lost marks either because their responses were incomprehensible or irrelevant to the provided image.

## Samples of Students' Performance

According to the Mark Scheme, a high standard response is the one which shows that the student has clearly understood the task, and is able to narrate, expand, give full descriptions and express opinions as appropriate to the task, using appropriate vocabulary, idiom and complex sentence structures, with a high level of accuracy; furthermore, it has to be coherent as well as easy and pleasant to read.

The following two paragraphs are from high-level students who managed to score the highest marks. The response may not be faultless, but the student responded fully to the task in question 5, writing a well-structured essay with a high level of accuracy in grammar and spelling. The essay is coherent and pleasant to read.

إن الله تعالى خلقنا شعوباً وقبائل لنتعارف، وإن  
الإنسان بطبيعته وسجاياه التي خلقه الله عليها محباً للاكتشاف  
والتنقل والترحال، قد بدأت سفر الإنسان من مكان إلى الآخر  
لأسباب ~~من شتى~~، ولكن في نهاية المطاف، تكون بحثاً عن السعادة  
والاستقرار، وفي الآونة الأخيرة سهلت حركة الطائرات و  
القطارات وغيرهما من وسائل النقل الحديثة ~~حركة~~ السفرهما  
كان له مدى على المدى البعيد <sup>بالنفع</sup> ~~للأفراد~~ والمجتمعات.  
إننا نملك نفس العين، ولكننا لا نملك نفس النظرة،  
لذا تختلف أولوياتنا في الحياة، فمنها من يضع العمل و  
الدراسة هدفاً سامياً له، فيتخذ كل السبل التي يمكن أن  
يسلكها إلى العلم، فقد يعاً قالوا "أطلبوا العلم ولو في الصين"، وعلى  
هذا النهج يسافر الكثير، لإيجاد فرص تعليمية في جامعات أفضل من  
التي في بلادهم، ويسافر البعض الآخر بهدف إيجاد فرص عمل  
أفضل يدخل يحفظ له ماء وجهه في الحياة و يحقق له ذاته.

The following response shows a good understanding of the task in question 4, but as the response is too short the student could not score highly.

أيها الجمع الطيب ،  
أنا ليسعدني أن أقف بين أيديكم اليوم متحدثاً  
عن شخصيه اثرت فيني شخصياً وغيرت حياتي.  
وان هذه الشخصية هي النبي محمد صلى الله عليه  
وسلم. وان هذه الشخصية مهمة للغاية لكثير من  
البشر لان النبي محمد هو آخر رسول بعث  
من الله وهو الذي وصل الاسلام ونشره. يقندي  
به الكثير من المسلمين لمواقفه وكميته. أثره  
على المجتمع واضح لان ~~المسلمين~~ المسلمون يتبعون  
سننه وطريقة عيشه. من مواقفه التي اثرت فيني  
هي أن عندما ذهب الى الطائف ليدعو الناس  
الى الاسلام استقبلوه برمي الحجارة عليه حتى  
سأل الدم من يبيع اجزاء جسده الطاهر فساله  
الله: لعل اطيق عليهم الا تشيبين واقتلهم ببيعاً.  
فكان رد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حكيم فقال: لا  
فقد يبيع احداً منهم مسلم فانصدمو اهل الطائف  
واسلموا ببيعاً من هذا الموقف. ان الرسول لم  
يعرف القراءة ولا الكتابة واسلم على يده ملايين  
من البشر. وأثر في حياة المسلمين الآن لانهم لم  
يروه ولكن آمنوا به. تم تعذيب الرسول صلى  
الله عليه وسلم على يد الكفار والمشركين لانه كان  
يريد نشر الاسلام.

## Advice to Students:

Students should:

- Make sure that each point of view is referred to and clearly stated in one paragraph.
- It is important to link your paragraphs together by reading what you have written before.
- It is better to be clear than too smart when you write your ideas.
- Write about what you know, and what you believe in. Examiners assess your language ability rather than your point of view.
- If you feel under pressure in the exam, focus as much on examples as explanations when you write. Make sure that your examples are relevant to the main idea.
- Do not write too much. It is easier to read/grade a 300 word essay than a 400 word essay! The more you write, the more likely you are to make language mistakes, or to go off topic.
- See the whole essay in your head before you start writing. If you do not do that, you may lose significant marks for both coherence and task response.
- Focus on the backbone of your essay. The backbone is:
  - **The introduction:** this should identify the question and outline your position. Don't rush it, as it is the first thing the examiner will read. First impressions count.
  - **The first/topic sentences of each paragraph:** these should be clear and to the point. They should identify exactly what that paragraph is about and show how it relates to the rest of the essay. Start off general and then build towards the specific.
  - **The conclusion:** this is the easiest part of the essay normally. Most often, all you need to do is go back to the introduction and rephrase it.
- Before you write each paragraph of your response, refer back to the question to remind yourself about what you are meant to write about.
- Enrich your general knowledge by reading different styles of writing from books, magazines, newspapers and the internet, as well as acquiring knowledge from other media sources.
- Read and understand previous International GCSE exam material which normally carries valuable information that can be very helpful when answering future exams.
- Read the model sample answers of previous exams.
- Familiarise yourselves with the format of the question paper.
- Adhere to writing on the designated lined pages in the answer book.

- Clearly mark the question of your choice and answer it in the specified area (lined pages) ensuring that there isn't any answer of any other question in the same area.
- Ask for extra lined paper from invigilators should the specified area not be big enough for your responses.
- Underline the important words or phrases that refer to the required task, when answering a question, to ensure that you respond to the entire task.

### **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>