

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Arabic (4AR0_01) Paper 1

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The following points were noted by examiners:

General:

Generally speaking, the three sections of this paper covered all the topic areas of the specification (reading, writing and grammar) and candidates responded well to all questions with a good structure in their answers but some were hindered in their performance due to their lack of knowledge mostly of specific grammar terms. The responses of the candidates were pleasing to see specifically in question 1, which expressed comprehension. The passages set throughout the paper were related to topics of current interest to candidates. The time allocated for the paper was sufficient for the average candidate that had studied the areas in the specification with evidence showing that the candidates were able to cope well with the allocated time.

Candidates’ performance:

Particularly in this series, I have noticed an improvement that reflected in the responses of the candidates with them showing a better understanding of the tasks. A majority of candidates had showed a greater depth in knowledge in this paper compared to the last which was evident in them achieving higher marks. In questions 4 and 6 of the grammar section, it was clear to see that they were more challenging in comparison to last year’s paper. Overall, the candidates’ responses were good and maintained a good standard.

Section 1(comprehension question):

فن المقابلة الصحفية (The art of the interview) was a popular topic among the candidates with the scoring of marks here being higher than that of previous years. The benefit of previous exam papers must have contributed to the performance in this section, as it seems that many of the answers of the candidates had shown reading and understanding of texts from previous papers. This was evident in the sense that many of them were able to answer questions accurately using bullet points to match the number of marks for that question.

Overall, the question was very clear and well set up with it being challenging as shown in question 1e and question 1f respectively:

ماهي الخطوات التي يجب اتخاذها قبل إجراء المقابلة الصحفية وفقاً للكاتب نسيم خوري؟ (What are the steps that must be taken prior to the interview, according to the writer Nassim Khoury?)

ماذا يقصد الكاتب بالعبارة " حلبة صراع بين خصمين " . عزز إجابتك بمعلومات من النص (What did the writer mean by the saying "circuit conflict between the rivals." Write in your own words your answer with information from the text to answer the question.)

Section 2(reading and writing):

Generally, candidates were able to answer well with most of the marks being awarded between questions 5 and 9. In part 2b, candidates had not answered in regards to respect and values of the elderly, but rather wrote responses that related to part 2a.

Section 3 (grammar):

Responses were varied in questions 3, 4 and 5 with them being straightforward. Question 4 was answered well by students which asked them to produce sentences relating to the syllabus. Question 6 was a challenging question in which students were losing marks due to not completing the answers correctly. Generally in this section, questions were clear and concise in their requests from the candidates, with no ambiguity and responses being of good standard.

Additional Advice:

1. Exploring previous papers for IGCSE passages will help to prepare students for the questions that may arise and giving them an understanding of what they should expect in the exam. Furthermore, the mark schemes would help carry valuable information that can provide a basis in which they can use when answering writing questions.
2. Model sample answers of previous years' writing questions are valued revision techniques that could help in performing in the exam and are located in the official Edexcel International GCSE Arabic First Language student book (Published in June 2011). Centres are advised to use past

papers, mark schemes and examiner's reports to help give the candidates a better insight into the way the exam is marked and paying attention to Rubric is highly recommended.

3. The same issue of language quality always arises, despite having had relative improvement this year. Illegibility of candidates is furthermore another issue that candidates may not think is much of a problem, but having very small, messy or even faint hand writing can cause a reduction in marks due to the examiner not being able to understand the candidate's response. This is specifically problematic with the use of ePEN as most papers are scanned and is difficult to make use of the writing. Centres are advised to inform their candidates to use black ink and to ensure their writing is clear with any crossing out of writing done neatly.
4. Avoid writing on pages where it says 'blank page'. Or write a notice that you did write on blank page as you can lose marks if you had written valuable information, as some examiners may not check the blank pages for obvious reasons.

Grade Boundaries

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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