



Examiner's Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level
In Arabic (WAA02)

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Introduction

Candidates are required to draw on and apply their knowledge of the Arabic language, grammar and lexis by selecting appropriate forms of words to complete sentences, as well as demonstrate an ability to manipulate the Arabic language in continuous writing.

Candidates will be expected to recognise and use Arabic in a variety of contexts and to the following general topic areas: youth culture and concerns, lifestyle, health and fitness, environment and travel, education and employment, technology in the Arabic-speaking world, society in the Arabic-speaking world, and ethics in the Arabic-speaking world.

Section A

Question 1

Question 1 WAA02 contains a passage of 200 words in English to translate into Arabic, most candidates were successful and achieved a good grade. Candidates generally performed well in response to the stimulus. Most learners provided an accurate translation of the meaning. However typically, the more challenging words targeting higher ability learners were often mistranslated or transliterated into Arabic from the English stimulus: 'gateway', 'destination', 'landmarks', 'studio', 'boasts', 'earning', 'north', 'established', 'movies sets', 'ranging', 'jewel', 'tomb statues', 'Biblical', 'within', 'exotic', 'oases', 'forts'. While many candidates translated the title, many forgot to do so. While most candidates were able to use the glossed words provided, some missed using these. The handwriting was mostly clear, and some candidates used very good sentence structure and grammar. Even poor translation was sometimes able to transfer the general meaning which could be understood by a native speaker.

Section B

In the discursive essay, candidates were required to write a story based on the events described in the given text which explores celebrating Arabic Language Day.

This series revealed an improved balance between those who chose (a) or (b) and this was a successful question for most learners. Lower-ability candidates lost marks due to the quality of the discursive essays produced which often largely copied the stimulus (even events and names). A key skill is to be able to produce discursive essays inspired by the given text but from the candidate's imagination.

Lower-ability responses typically are overly reliant on the stimulus to produce their answers. Higher-ability responses use the guidance to develop a creative or discursive answer targeted at the required audience or as a relevant and thoughtful story.

Question 2(a)

Many candidates demonstrated excellent writing ability with imaginative content relevant to the question. Good stories were about organising a celebration day for the Arabic Language. The prompt was clear and gave aimed guidance for a wide scope to test their writing skills and power of literary imagination and creativity.

Question 2(b)

The topic was a letter type that went with the same theme; however, very few followed a letter writing structure, e.g.: sender, recipient, introduction, greeting, ending, and signature. They wrote an article or a speech instead. These candidates scored low due to a lack of attention to the audience and the style required.

Section C

This section has a vast range of topics that serve all interests, abilities and skills, such as Arab Sciences, Arab Art and Architecture, Comedy in Arabic Cinema, Tragedy in Arabic Cinema, Arabic Poetry, and Arabic Literature.

It encouraged candidates to express their points of view on different topics and genres and stimulated their suggestions/points of view to be expressed, and to identify issues and lessons learnt.

Question 3(a)

In the first of two questions on Arab science, the candidates were instructed to discuss the achievements of Ibn Sina, together with some biographical details of the scientist's life and background.

Only some candidates answered this question, therefore it would be beneficial to the development and progress of candidates to be allowed to study specific Arab scientists, instead of limiting the scope of options for candidates to just Q5 and Q6 films. Those who answered this question provided some good quality responses about Ibn Sina, showing depth of knowledge and range.

Question 3(b)

The second question on Arab science gives candidates the flexibility to write an account about the life of a famous scientist who had an impact on medical and surgical development in Europe.

No relevant responses.

Question 4(a)

In the first of the two essay questions on Arab Architecture and Art, learners were asked to discuss the architecture of castles and forts in the Arab world and reflect on their cultural significance. Only a small number of candidates chose this question, and these were candidates with excellent knowledge of the heritage of castles and how their design features contribute to this; however, others did not answer the question correctly.

Question 4(b)

The second essay question on Arab Architecture and Art requires candidates to discuss Arab flags. Candidates were asked to choose five flags to discuss the colours, symbolism and representation of each nation. A small number of candidates chose this question, but many of them were of a very good quality and showed strong historical and geographical knowledge. Some responses lost significant marks because they spoke about Arab flags in general, rather than selecting 5 to discuss in detail.

Question 5(a)

In this section, Comedy in Arab Cinema: Candidates enjoyed answering this question for both (a) and (b).

A summary of the film will not score a high mark. The question will never ask for a summary of the film; instead, candidates are required to analyse themes, character development, symbolism, directing style, soundtracks, and/or cinematography.

In 5(a), only a few could analyse and provide their own opinion directly on the question for the Arabic Comedy film, "Soft Hands", which tells the story of two political phases that Egypt went through in the last century. Few could explain about the film for the length and depth required in their answers and most could not make meaningful analysis of the director's style – which was the focus of the question.

Higher-ability learners produce balanced essays that directly address the question, and lower-ability learners almost always start producing essays that generally summarise the film but do not answer the question. This is the most common difference between learners. Writing a summary of the film does not answer the question and candidates must be trained to understand this in order for them to gain higher marks.

Question 5(b)

A summary of the film will not score a high mark. The question will never ask for a summary of the film, instead, candidates are required to analyse themes, character development, symbolism, directing style, soundtracks, or cinematography.

In (5b), less popular than 5a, only a few students could produce a good evaluation of the film which addressed the family's economic/social conditions and situations and a critical analysis for two of the marriages. Students wrote generally about the soundtrack that accompanied the film.

Question 6(a)

A summary of the film will not score a high mark. The question will never ask for a summary of the film, instead, candidates are required to analyse themes, character development, symbolism, directing style, soundtracks, or cinematography.

In this section, Tragedy in Arabic Cinema, candidates were required to explain the reasons for the wife's suffering after years of psychological, emotional and mental oppression in the film, 'I want a solution'. The question encouraged students to write their own points of view about the film's frustrating ending which later prompted huge changes in the Egyptian Civil Law, specifically in the area of divorce.

Lower-ability candidates typically only managed to narrate the film by summarising and did not apply any critical analysis, which is often missing in every marking series. Higher-ability candidates responded to the focus of the question to form their essays.

Question 6(b)

A summary of the film will not score a high mark. The question will never ask for a summary of the film, instead, candidates are required to analyse themes, character development, symbolism, directing style, soundtracks, or cinematography.

Most candidates mostly wrote only the events of the film 'The Land', commenting briefly on the fateful ending of Abu Salem. Very few were able to analyse two characters from the film and concentrated only on Abu Salem.

Lower-ability candidates typically only managed to narrate the film by summarising and did not apply any critical analysis, which is often missing in every marking series. Higher-ability candidates responded to the focus of the question to form their essays.

Question 7(a)

No learners answered this question. Each series, including this series, Q7a and Q7b are the least popular questions to be chosen. This series no learner chose the question. This question is rarely chosen each year.

Question 7(b)

No relevant responses. For this question, it is a teacher's responsibility to expose candidates to literature and poetry as part of their Arabic International A level, they should understand the influence of 1500 years of poetry on Arabic as a language and shared culture of 22 nations.

Question 8(a)

Higher-ability learners answered the literature question with the best approaches, making references to the text of the Bamboo Stalk and substantiating their opinions with authentic evidence.

Question 8(b)

This question focused on the Arabic literary novel, 'The Call of the Nightingale'. This was a popular question, often with good quality analysis in candidates' responses which were supported by references to the events, characters and writing style used by Taha Hussein.

Unfortunately, some candidates lost many marks because they were analysing the film, which differs significantly from the novel. Candidates must read the actual novel, and not rely on film adaptations to be successful to analyse the influence on Amna.

Paper Summary

General candidate performance was good, with similar translation skills and creativity as the last series.

Long-standing errors still occur, which are due to a lack of exam technique. Some learners still answer questions on films and novels with generalised summaries of the storylines and completely bypass the actual questions, which results in scoring low to no marks. Learners need to be given plenty of opportunities to gain experience with essay questions and practise techniques to understand the question's requirements and to plan responses.

Questions on films, especially comedy and tragedy, continue to prove popular year on year. Few candidates choose to answer questions on poetry, which suggests some candidates may not be covering the full specification.

Principal Examiner's Advice

- Candidates should practice more on writing different types of essays. They should be able to differentiate between story-writing and an article, for example.
- Candidates should be encouraged to write a plan on the blank page.
- Candidates are encouraged to underline the keywords in the question to focus on what they were asked to write about, instead of producing a random piece of writing without any focus on the question.
- When answering Q2(a&b), candidates must not copy from the stimulus; this will reduce the level that can be awarded as it will be considered irrelevant to the question's task.
- Candidates should be encouraged to do more practice in translation from authentic, up-to-date articles from sources like the news or magazine articles to enrich their vocabulary. Candidates should also avoid summarising/skipping words in the text. Candidates should translate the text title as well.
- Candidates are encouraged to practice grammar so they can use correct tenses.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the novels rather than watch their film adaptations for Q8 (a&b) as these could have different details or endings which may limit or change the focus of a candidate's analysis.

