



Examiner's Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Arabic (4AA1) Paper 02

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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. Candidates 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 Modern Standard Arabic, where they 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 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 very good standard and most of the questions proved accessible for a considerable number of candidates.

Question 1:

Unlike previous years, question 1 was the least popular. It asked candidates to explain whether postgraduate studies are of great importance in securing a prosperous future for young people. The bullet points that candidates were presented with to help them answer the question were as follows:

- Postgraduate studies are one of the factors measuring the cultural development in a country.
- The contribution of postgraduate studies to providing better job opportunities for young people.
- The role of postgraduate students in moving the wheel of scientific research.

Although there were some good attempts to highlight the importance of higher education in both people's lives and the countries development, some students wrote about education in general, not specifically postgraduate education. This was because many candidates misunderstood the word "الدراسات العليا" 'Postgraduate'. Those who did understand it, showed answers with shallow analysis. Most students covered all the three bullet points. Finally, they spoke about their personal experience of using these programs.

Question 2:

This question was the most popular answered by candidates. It asked candidates to discuss why do people love to live in cities, even though cities are polluted and crowded. It asked them to state their opinion on this statement with the possibility of using three bullet points as needed. These were:

- Services provided that attract people who to live in the city.
- Cons of city life.
- Your impression of the area in which you reside.

Candidates compared between living in big cities and rural areas and how big cities provide lots more amenities and services than small villages. Many candidates wrote about the disadvantages of living in big cities, such as the pollution and the expensive lifestyle. While others went into too many details about the environment and therefore diverted from the main topic! Most student described their local areas and listed some pros and cons regarding living there.

Bullet points were given as a guideline to help candidates to write a good essay. Most candidates as usual used these bullet points as a point of focus, so they covered all of them, resulting in many very good, focused essays. They were able to write in detail giving enough ideas about their essays. Several candidates however, missed out on writing about living in the cities. Instead, they addressed how to preserve the environment. This did not dramatically affect their mark unless there was clear evidence of ambiguity. Very few candidates were impeded from expressing their opinions which had minimal response and not easy to read.

Many responses were excellent in terms of content, language, and accuracy, scoring full marks or close to full marks.

Question 3:

As expected, question 3 was also a popular choice for teenagers to write about. Candidates were asked to write an article about the idea of marriage immediately after completing the study, stating their opinion with the possibility of using the following:

- The urgency in getting married and the challenges and difficulties that it may entail.
- Economic and social factors and their impact on the initiation of marriage.
- Your own opinion in drawing your future in this field.

Many candidates disagreed with marriage at an early age/straight after completing education, especially for women. Most of the candidates' essays described their awareness about the need of economic sustainability before getting marriage.

This topic reflects some of the cultural traditions in the Arab world, particularly for women living in rural areas. Very few students only, wrote about getting married straight after their education.

Many candidates who answered this question did very well.

In general Candidates wrote excellent essays about the topic in a very convincing manner. Some candidates were over-ambiguous in their response.

Knowledge and accuracy of language:

All questions presented a good level of communication and a moderate level of accuracy. Most candidates managed to use a variety of lexis and structures. All three questions were popular; however, some candidates keep making the same grammatical mistakes, despite it being a first language paper. There are still some linguistics problems related to phonics, sentence's structure, spelling mistakes and delicts hinder communication. Some examples are mentioned in Arabic below:

دخم = ضخم

الدودا = الضوضاء مدررة = مضرة مستكرة = مستقرة فرس = المادي = الماضي بقضرتها = بقدرتها

- The same grammatical mistakes made related to hamzat alwasl, hamzat alqat-aa are repeated this year.
- There is a big concern about (نصب المفعول به)
- Some students get confused in spelling words with letters like (ذ, ز), (س, ص), (ت, ط), (ق, ك), (ث, س)
- There is an issue about idafa. Students add both (alif and lam) and idafa to define words. Example: ان الزواج الشاب من الشابة
- Conjugating verbs and choosing the correct tense to use.

Students still using very long sentences without punctuation. There are still problems with syntax and lack of appropriate sentence connectors.

Many candidates used different writing styles, narrative, descriptive and conversational, which showed significantly good ability to use the right modern standard Arabic.

They were written in high modern standard Arabic language, where a good number struggled and used different Arabic dialects. Some candidates used dialects partially, while others used it throughout their essay.

Conclusion:

In this paper many candidates provided very good answers. They answered the question and used the suggested bullet points in their introductory paragraphs, repeating them exactly as they are. Some responses were excellent in terms of content, language and accuracy scoring close to full marks.

Others focused on answering the bullet points and covering them in large paragraphs instead of answering the core of the question. They think that they must cover them to get a good mark.

Pre-learned clichés, phrases, clauses, or popular sayings were unnecessarily used by some less successful candidates, as they were in most cases redundant, random, and out of place. When the less successful candidates seemed to run out of ideas, they often resorted to repeat themselves, use irrelevant quotations from the Quran, or Arabic poetry.

Advice to centres:

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

- More effort should be made to train candidates not to use dialect in writing their essays. Any use of dialect writing, whether partially or fully is expected to influence the rating of candidates' performance.
- Some candidates had problems with grammar and structure of sentences and spelling, which were all reasons for candidates scoring less in the Quality of Language. In general Centres should be clearly informed that they should work on improving candidates understanding of Arabic grammar and application of language.
- 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. For example, question 1 was not popular and some of the students misunderstood the word 'Postgraduate' " الدراسات العليا "

Teachers need to make sure that all topics are covered. This will better prepare candidates and help to achieve grades that truly reflect candidates' ability.

- 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. Centres are asked to prepare candidates to read more into the question requirement, before looking into the bullet points or using pre-learned clichés, phrases, clauses, or popular sayings were unnecessarily used.

