



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

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

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Introduction

The International GCSE qualification has been designed to accommodate a wide range of student profiles. This examination paper 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. It consists of three writing tasks, where candidates are asked to choose two questions out of three questions and 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:

Question 1 asked candidates about how to prepare yourself to become a sports champion. This was the most popular question in this series, because it relates to the ideal sports topic that candidates felt that they could express themselves well in. However, the majority of candidates wrote a general essay about steps to become a sports champion in third person, instead of first person's experience.

Many essays had the highest number of words written for each response; some of which exceeded the required word count. Many candidates showed good knowledge of the topic and used excellent subject related vocabulary. Others dedicated a big space of their essays to discuss/talk sport in general, giving too much detail about the types of sports that gyms provide for interested people. Consequently, leaving a smaller space to touch on the points required by the question. There were some good responses that could have scored full marks, had they used first person and put themselves as part of the process of how to become a distinctive sports champion.

About 20% of candidates, however, responded very well to this question, giving good information to support their opinion. They wrote by expanding their ideas about the distinguished sports and how one should prepare oneself to become a sports champion. They understood the question well and managed to score high grades. Their essays were brilliant in terms of content, structure and knowledge of language, which deservedly scored high marks.

Question 2:

Question 2 was the least popular question yet candidates who chose it provided excellent pieces of essays. The question was about occasions/celebrations that reflect people's heritage and culture. Most candidates found it straight forward and easy to write about; this was demonstrated in: the number of words that exceeded 300, as well as candidates' knowledge of the topic. Some candidates focused on the plural word أعياد (celebrations) and wrote about all types of celebrations/occasions that a particular country has, rather than choosing only one to talk about in detail, as the second part of the question demands them to do.

A number of candidates reviewed all the holidays; some did not adhere to the bullet points, others wrote about western occasions, such as Easter and Christmas.

In general, many candidates excelled answering this question, obtaining very high marks, where others wrote detailed description of relevant festivals. A number of candidates gave an excellent description of the two Muslim Eids, 'al-Fitr' and 'al-Adha', where a few of them mixed the two together. No mark deduction was for that.

Question 3:

Question 3 was about Unemployment and finding solutions for it. This was another popular question in which candidates wrote expressing their opinion about "Unemployment as a problem and an economic crisis in the Arab world". Although this is a topic that candidates are trained to write about by teachers, they showed less interest and knowledge when writing about this series. Candidates discussed this topic proposing the best solutions, taken mainly from the bullet points. Some responses however, provided long extensive analysis of illegal emigration and its consequences, instead of discussing emigration from the rural areas to the cities and its effect on unemployment.

Other candidates demonstrated a good level of maturity in dealing with certain problems and how to solve them. They mentioned projects such as how to promote vocational training centres, or schools that money should be spent on. It was great to see candidates' understanding of the importance of education and health as well as the cooperation with other neighbouring country to develop and create new jobs. In this question candidates demonstrated various good vocabularies related to the topic, and a fair grammatical level and accuracy.

Similarity to the last examination series, it was noticeable that candidates are focusing on the bullet points, expanding them into three large paragraphs instead of holistically answering the main question. Many candidates are under the impression that they have to cover bullet points to get a good mark. Many essays look the same with no creativity!

Application and accuracy of language:

- Candidates are using very long sentences without punctuation. A number of them lack knowledge of using punctuations correctly, which lead to some responses with no punctuation at all. Some even had problems with syntax and connecting sentences.
- Pre-learned set of phrases, terms and sayings were heavily and unnecessarily used without any rational.
- A high number of responses lacked organization in terms of structure, layout and paragraphing; some responses were just bullet points.
- Some responses lacked any coherence where candidates confused their audience with conflicting and contradicting ideas, which had been randomly put together in one paragraph.
- Some candidates struggled with maintaining consistency in using verb tenses, which were muddled up in the same sentence without justification.
- Again, the same grammar mistakes related to hamzat alwasl, hamzat alqat-aa are repeated this year. استخدام همزة الوصل وهمزة القطع
- Lack of using or misusing "Hamza" (هم أنسان) or Putting (Hamza) on Alef in أل (ال التعريف)
- There is a big concern about (نصب المفعول به) and (خير كان)
- Some students get confused in spelling words with the following letters (ك) and (ق), (ذ) and (ز)
- Mixing up letters such as (ك - ق - ض - د - ص - س)
- (الفرض = الفرد) (السحة = الصحة)
- There is an issue about idafa. Students add both (alif and lam) and idafa to define words. Example:

- ان الزواج الشاب من الشابة
- There are mistakes in conjugating in the third person masculine plural (يعملون) instead of (يعملوا) for example.
- There are lots of mistakes such as (يحتفلون الاولاد) instead of (يحتفل الاولاد)
- Problems with using 'Negation' لا - لم - لن with the correct form verb tense.
- Lack of awareness of gender agreement, where candidates struggled in using feminine/ masculine nouns, adjectives and their corresponding demonstrative and relative pronouns: --- التي --- الذي ()
عدم توافق أسماء الإشارة مع الفاعل هذا ---- هذه ()
- Misusing prepositions:
تؤدي الرياضة على آثار
النظام الغذائي يحتوي إلى
- Writing the diacritics at the end of words as letters (لهو = له - ألعبو = ألعِبْ)

Conclusion:

This paper provides candidates with three topics, and they are required to write about 300 words on any two of them. The chosen topics are derived from the specified areas of study outlined in the syllabus. Each topic is accompanied by three suggested bullet points for candidates to consider if they choose to address them. The areas of study for the topics this year 2406 series presented three topics centred around **Sports, Culture** and **Work**. Questions in both series were formulated in plain language and utilized straightforward vocabulary. The bullet points following each question were structured with simplicity and clarity, aiding candidates in understanding the tasks at hand.

The demands of the questions were similar to previous years. The option was to choose and answer two questions out of three allowed candidates to respond to tasks were more familiar with and well-prepared for. Candidates relied extensively on the bullet points. Candidates should be reminded that they are provided with bullet points as guidance, but they have to focus more on the question. Looking closely at the questions of this paper combined, this exam questions were well prepared and they worked as intended.

- Some responses were excellent in terms of content, language and accuracy scoring full marks or close to full marks.
- In the three questions, very high percentage of candidates seemed not only to share the same ideas about the topics but also followed almost identical stream of argument with similar choice of content and language.
- Pre-learned clichés, phrases, clauses and long sentences were unnecessarily used as they were in most cases redundant and out of place.
- Some introductions were more than 100 words of jargon and repetition.
- While some responses contained good use of quotations from the Quran, the Prophet's sayings or lines of Arabic poetry that added extra value, others were irrelevant and randomly inserted doing more harm than good to a lot of responses.

Advice to centres:

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

- More efforts should be made to direct candidates to write their two answers on separate answering spaces. Some candidates are still making the mistake of writing their two answers on the same answering space, which is wrong! Teachers should remind candidates to write their answers on two different answering pages.
- 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 was enough 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 more popular, yet many used third person instead of first person. Teachers need to make sure that candidates read well into the questions. This will better prepare candidates and help reflect candidates' ability.
- The use of English words should be avoided. Moreover, candidates are advised to avoid 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 that were unnecessarily used. A high number of responses lacked organization in terms of structure, layout and paragraphing; some responses were just bullet points.

