ARABIC

Paper 3180/01 **Composition**

Key messages

The overall performance for this series was very slightly better than the previous one. Many candidates understood the demands of the questions in both sections and used appropriate content, language, and structures. In fact, a good number of candidates demonstrated impressive performances, visible in the use of a good range of vocabulary, appropriate implementation of tenses, good use of a variety of connectors, different types of sentence lengths and structures, organised paragraphing, and correct use of punctuation marks.

Many candidates achieved high range of marks, and a good number achieved full marks, as their writing had hardly any errors, and their content and presentation were excellent.

Like in the previous series, it was observed that despite good content across all abilities, there remains the issues of common spelling mistakes (see below) and basic and major grammatical mistakes (see below) which had an impact on overall achievement. Weaker candidates addressed both sections well, but their writing was characterised, and in some cases overwhelmed, with spelling and grammatical errors.

As for word count, several candidates either exceeded the word count or wrote less than the required length. This was partly because of the use of unnecessary lengthy introductions and conclusions at the expense of addressing the main topic and its constituent elements, particularly for **Section A**. The other related issue was the use of learnt and lengthy clichés at the expense of content (see a sample below). These clichés were, in some cases, numerous and forced into candidates' writing, particularly in **Section B**.

It has also been observed that some candidates used extensive metaphors and similes, particularly in the descriptive essay, but this was sometimes at the expense of content.

General comments

The question paper is composed of two main sections, **1** and **2**. **Section 1** includes three questions (**1(a)**, **1(b)**, **1(c)**) from which candidates select one and write about 120 words. The mark is 15. **Section 2** consists of four questions (**2(a)**, **2(b)**, **2(c)**, **2(d)**); the candidates must select one and write about 200 words. The mark for this section is 30. The total mark for the paper is 45.

The exam in November 2023 tested different abilities. The prompts were varied in their challenges to stimulate responses from low, middle, and high ability candidates.

As mentioned above, overall performance ranged from good to very good, with some impressive performances for several candidates who achieved a range between 40–45 marks. The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability, but the majority achieved results that were good and in many cases the performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well structured.

Most candidates appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were several persistent elementary errors (see below).

It has also been observed that very few candidates wrote completely irrelevant essays or included irrelevant details.

Performance for **Section 1**, **1(b)** was the best, followed by very good performance for **1(c)**, and similarly very good performance for **1(a)**.

As for **Section 2**, the overall performance was very good, where **2(a)**, **2(b)** and **2(d)** had equal performance, followed by **2(c)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

(a)   This was the most common choice by candidates (84.9 per cent). Performance ranged from good to very good. Many candidates structured their letter well in the form of an introduction, presentation, and conclusion. The language was mostly accurate, and task was fulfilled with its constituent elements. As for weaker candidates, their content was reasonable, but their writing was characterised by lengthy introductions, conclusions, unnecessary clichés (mostly greetings) in addition to many spelling and grammatical errors. There were cases where candidates used the present tense instead of the past tense to describe 'how they looked after their younger brother in the absence of their mothers'. Also, very few candidates were confused between 'brother' and 'sister' which resulted in an incorrect use of verb conjugation and attached pronouns, i.e., at times referring to 'sister' and at others to 'brother':

كيف أعتني بأختي الصغير، كانت أختي يبكي طوال الوقت فأخذته إلى نادي الرياضة.

(b)   This was the least popular question (3.8 per cent of candidates). The performance was the best for this section. Candidates demonstrated good awareness of how to write a speech, with appropriate introductory and concluding paragraphs as well as interesting content, a good range of vocabulary and mostly accurate language.

(c)   This was the second most popular option (11.3 per cent of candidates). The overall performance was generally good. A few candidates demonstrated excellent awareness of writing a dialogue, with a very good and logical sequence of questions and answers. Other candidates focussed mainly on the work of the 'medical doctor' and missed to establish a good dialogue about the 'difficulties that doctors face in their work'. This may be the result of not reading the question carefully or not understanding the demands of the question.

Section 2 – Essay

(a)   This was the second most popular question (29.3 per cent of candidates). Many candidates performed very well and described 'the most beautiful seen' using a good range of vocabulary, with some excellent metaphors and similes. Weaker candidates' performance was characterised by simple structures as well as numerous spelling and grammatical errors. Some candidates dwelled too much on describing their trip to the place before describing it in detail.

(b)   This question came third in its popularity (20.2 per cent of candidates). Again, performance was very good overall, and many candidates were able to come up with interesting imaginary themes to complete the narrative. There were few candidates who confused قط with قطة and, as a result, they used incorrect verb conjugation and attached pronouns.

(c)   This question was the least popular (7.7 per cent of candidates). Performance was good overall, but not as good as the other questions. Again, several candidates dwelled too long on describing the 'preparation for the trip to the mountains' before starting to describe the adventure itself.

(d)   This question was the most popular choice by candidates (42.8 per cent). The topic about 'whether friendship is the most important relation in life' seems to have an appeal to many candidates since they can relate to it in many ways. Accordingly, performance was very good overall. However, there were instances where candidates did not include many ideas resulting in their writing being monotonous, and their ideas were repetitive in the introduction, presentation, and conclusion. Also, it is this question more than any other that has seen the use of many learnt clichés, compensating for the shortage of relevant ideas for the argument. It has also been observed that many candidates compared the theme of 'friendship' with the theme of 'family' and 'God'. And there was one occurrence where the candidate confused the word صداقة (friendship) with صدقة (charity), so the writing veered off the main topic.

Common Spelling mistakes

The following spelling mistakes are a sample that was observed in the writing of many candidates, particularly weaker ones:

Wrong use of Hamza with the letter ي:
شيء versus شيئ

Wrong use of 'hamza' at the beginning and middle of the word, or not using the 'hamza' at all. Also, confusing همزة القطع for همزة الوصل and vice versa: إكتشاف، أشتقت إليك

Omitting the ''alif' ا from the middle of the word:
اختباراتي versus اختبراتي
امتحاناتي versus امتحناتي

Adding 'alif' to: هذا، ذالك، لاكن

Using ذ instead of ز
الزهور versus الذهور

Using هـ instead of ة

Using ة instead of ت and vice versa

Using non-emphatic instead of emphatic letters and vice versa:
معذم versus معظم
يقضي versus يقدي
لقد versus لقض
يستطيع versus يصطيع

Using shortened 'alif ى instead of ي and vice versa.

Using 'taa' marbuTa' ة at the end of past tense verbs: أكلنة، ذهبنة

Using colloquial words/phrases: ماشي الحال، ضهرت من البيت، بس، مرقت، جمب

Adding ي at the end of attached pronouns with verbs and nouns: كيف حالكي، أريد أن أخبركي، عليكي

Confusing short vowels with long ones: يأكل for يأكلو and ذهبَ for ذهبا، قولتُ

Joining prepositions with nouns: فلرحلة، بلاختبارات

Replacing hamza with ق: أصدقاء السوق instead of أصدقاق السوق

Using ن instead of 'tanwin': جميلَن

Common grammatical errors

- Incorrect use of the accusative/genitive cases after 'كان وأخواتها': كنت خائف من البيت المهجور
- Verb-subject agreement: أنهم يقولوا
- Incorrect use of relative pronouns: أخذت أخي إلى الملعب التي

- Pluralising the verb before the plural subject: عندما ذهبوا الأولاد

- Plural form of verbs instead of the dual: كيف جدي وجدتي؟ هل هم بخير. أرجو أن يكونوا

- Incorrect implementation of tenses: using the present instead of the past (particularly with **1(a)**).

- Using the wrong irregular plural form of some adjectives: سعيدين instead of سعداء.

- Using the human plural attached pronoun instead of singular form with non-human plural: البيوت هم مخيفين instead of البيوت هي مخيفة.

- Missing the plural ن in verbs: سوف يأكلو

- Incorrect preposition with some verbs: أردت بالذهاب، ذهبنا على الشاطئ، اتصلت على ...

Examples of strong structures and good connectors

- أسرعنا إلى خيمنا الدافئة لنرتاح بعد العناء الطويل، وأخذنا نتبادل أحاديث السمر ونضحك حتى بدأ الكرى يداعب أجفاننا، وغصنا في بحر نوم عميق.

- وبالطبع، كنت أصطحبه إلى التمارين الرياضية مثل السباحة وكرة القدم للحفاظ على لياقته البدنية.

- كما أن الصديق الحقيقي هو السند والعتبة التي تتلاشى عليها أحزانك، لأنه دائماً معك في السراء والضراء.

- مر الوقت بسرعة البرق، كأنه فهد يسابق الريح، وبدأت الشمس الذهبية بالغروب لتعطي السماء لوناً برتقالياً جذاباً، ولوحت لي بيدها قائلة: غداً لنا لقاء جديد.

- لم أترك أخي وحده أبداً لصغر سنه وأبعدت عنه كل شيء يؤذيه كالألعاب الصغيرة والأشياء الحادّة.

- ختاماً، في الجهة المقابلة، من الجدير بالذكر، على النقيض من ذلك، أخيراً وليس آخراً، مما لا شك فيه، علاوة على ذلك، لأزيدك بيتاً من الشعر بيتاً.

Examples of learnt clichés

- 'أبعث إليك هذه الرسالة بكل تحياتي وتقديري وأشواقي داعياً الله أن تكوني في أسعد حال وأهنأ بال ومتمنياً منه أن يلبسك رداء الصحة والعافية وأن ينعم عليك بموفور من السعادة والرضا'.

- 'متّعك الله بالسعادة وجنبك مزالق الحياة وعصمك من الزلل وجعلك عضواً نافعاً لنفسك لائقاً بإنسانيتك'.

- 'خلق الله الكون وجعله مليئاً بالتوازنات التي تبدو متناقضات فكما جعل الظل جعل الحرور، وكما جعل الظلمات جعل النور، وكما خلق الأرض يابساً، خلق فيها البحور، وهكذا الناس مختلفون في كل الأمور'.

- 'لو جاز لكل شخص أن يقتل من يخالفه الرأي لأقفرت الأمم من ساكنيها'.

- 'وفي النهاية الحقيقة أثبت من الوشم لا يمكن طمسها وهي ترتفع فوق الكذب كما يرتفع الزيت فوق الماء'.

ARABIC

Paper 3180/02
Translation and Reading
Comprehension

Key messages

In this paper candidates should:

- Expand their range of vocabulary by reading a rich variety of materials and learn more descriptive structures.
- Learn correct conjugation of verbs, the use of هم with verbs in the present tense.
- Practise the use of verbs correctly, particularly the jussive and the subjunctive cases.
- Practise the application of the definite article with 'idafa phrases'.

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates this year was very good. The great majority of candidates attempted all questions, and a high percentage of them scored well. Excellent translation skills were displayed, with a good knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Translation

Question 1

Translate into English

The translation of this section is overall very good this year with many candidates achieving high marks. A large number of candidates successfully displayed a good knowledge of Arabic/English vocabulary using the correct grammatical structures. Certain words proved to be challenging to some candidates, namely 'Popular' in 'Popular stories', 'reflect', 'revolve', 'wisdom, 'symbolic', 'competition' and 'document'.

The majority of candidates attempted translating the text in full, unlike last year where some gaps were left. However, this year some candidates gave more than one translation to certain words using strokes/slashes in between. This is not recommended as some of the meanings can be contradictory and could disadvantage the candidate. It can also reflect the candidates' lack of confidence.

Here are some examples of some statements that were translated with ease by most candidates:

حياتهم اليومية، وطريقتهم في الحياة،قصص الحيوانات، كما أنها تقدم مثالاً، أفكار الناس، في تعليم أطفالهم، النصائح المفيدة، تظهر الخير والشر.

Here is a list of words/statements that were sometimes incorrectly translated:

الحكايات الشعبية

A good number of candidates translated الشعبية as 'Tradition/Local/Urban/Common/National' stories, instead 'of Popular/Public/Folk' stories.

فهي تعكس

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This was sometimes translated as 'change/reverse' instead of 'reflect'.

وهي نتيجة خبرات عميقة

This was translated by some candidates as 'it is the results of practical experiences/it is the outcome of deep news', instead of 'and it is the result of deep experiences'.

فساهمت في توحيد مشاعرهم

A few candidates interpreted this as, 'so it joined in uniting their feelings/so it continued in aligning their feelings/It helped in writing their feelings, it helped in making their feeling as one', instead of 'so, it contributed to unifying/uniting their sentiments/feelings/emotions'

حكمة الشعوب

Some candidates interpreted this part as 'the communities' judges/wises of people/civilisation wisdom/advise for countries/an advise for county's people/knowledge of people/to be wise to nation/troops wisdom' instead of 'wisdom of peoples/nations'.

قصص رمزية

A few candidates translated this as, 'coded/iconic/numerical' stories instead of 'symbolic stories'.

والمنافسة بين القوي والضعيف

The word 'competition' was not always accurate and was sometimes translated as 'challenge' or 'difference'.

لذلك فهي وثيقة تاريخية

The word 'document' was also misinterpreted as 'documentary/magazine/sheet/statement'.

Question 2

Translate into Arabic

Most candidates were able to translate the text with ease, which resulted in them obtaining excellent marks. Candidates performed slightly better in **Question 2** than in **Question 1** overall. Many candidates did extremely well in matching the gender of nouns and adjectives. Some candidates, however, struggled with certain expressions and some had spelling and grammatical errors. Few candidates used 'dialect/spoken' Arabic, and this should be strongly discouraged. Several candidates also left some words untranslated, which affected their marks.

Here are some examples where the translation could have been better:

'Your pet': some candidate missed to say 'الأليف' and just said 'حيوانك'.

'His active dog was': some candidates had spelling mistakes and few interpreted this part as ' كان كلبه الملىء بالتاقة/المتحرك' instead of 'كان كلبه النشيط'.

'Beside him': translated by some as 'جمبه'.

'Their pets too': the word أيضاً was missed in few scripts.

'His cat': was sometimes spelt as 'قتته/قطّطه'.

'The bus was usually noisy': Many candidates used the words 'disturbing مزعجة' for noisy and very few candidates succeeded in translating it as 'ضوضاء/صاخبة'. Although 'usually عادةً' was correctly translated by some candidates others translated as 'في بعض الأوقات/في معظم الوقت مزعجة'.

'Because of the sounds of the children': Sometimes the word 'أصوات' was missed.

'Like a big zoo': Many candidates translated this part correctly, however some had spelling mistakes e.g. 'كحضيقة'; others translated 'big zoo' as 'big forest غابة كبيرة'. And few missed out the word 'big كبيرة'.

'Dogs of all shapes': Although most of the candidates translated this part correctly, few interpreted all shapes as all types 'جميع الأنواع' instead of 'جميع الأشكال'.

'In cages': some candidates did not know the plural of cage or spelt the plural incorrectly: 'قفوص /أقفاس'.

'And rabbits jumping': Here the grammar of the verb was sometimes translated incorrectly as: 'يقفزون /يقفظون' instead of 'تقفز'.

It is noticeable that there were many spelling and grammatical mistakes in both translations (**Question 1** and **Question 2**). Candidates are encouraged to read stories, texts, articles in magazines, and newspapers in both languages to improve their grammar, their spelling and to enhance their vocabulary. It is also advisable to translate a variety of sentences in different tenses from English into Arabic and vice versa.

Section B – Reading Comprehension

Questions 3 – 12

Most candidates answered these reading comprehension questions successfully and confidently. It was evident that most candidates read the questions carefully before answering. The best candidates also knew how to select the specific information required from the text.

However, there were some spelling mistakes despite the answers only needing to be copied from the text. Moreover, a few candidates did not give the full correct answers to **Question 3**, **Question 4**, **Question 5**, **Question 8**, **Question 10** and **Question 11**.

In Question 3, for example, candidates are required to give two answers, but some only gave one and wrote it on two lines, so only one mark was awarded. (See the Mark Scheme.)

In Question 4: A few candidates answered this question incorrectly by saying 'the child starts to smile nine weeks after birth' instead of 'six weeks', so it seems that they were confused between 'ستة' and 'تسعة', which look similar in Arabic. However, candidates taking this exam should know the numbers very well.

Question 5

Here the questions asked: 'why did the writer consider it difficult to understand the true nature of the smile'. Some candidates gave a list of different types of smiles instead of giving the two points requested (smiles reflect different feelings and have different meanings). (see MS)

Question 8

This was a two-mark question and one of the answers required a correct spelling of the word 'الغربية' 'Western', which is already in the reading text. Those who copies it wrong as 'العربية' 'Arabic' or 'الغريبة' 'strange' were not awarded a mark because of the different meanings they give in Arabic.

Question 10

This seemed challenging to some candidates. The question asked 'why the writer refuses the idea that animals do not smile?'. Although many candidates gave the correct answers, some answered by saying: 'أنها مخلوقات لها مشاعر. إنها تفرح وتحزن مثلنا', which is incorrect.

Question 11

In this question candidates needed to give three situations where the animals appeared to be laughing. Some candidates responded very well to this question and managed to write the three correct situations; some managed to write only two situations. Others divided their answers into three lines considering that

these are the three situations but their answers were worth two marks only. A small number of candidates got the answers wrong or found it difficult to answer and left it blank.

The response to **Question 11** required a very close reading of both the question and the text in order to pinpoint the three correct answered in order to be awarded 3 marks. This example can be used by teachers to train their candidates on how to respond to such a question in order to aim for an A* outcome.

Question 12

The best candidates chose three words out of five and gave their meanings/synonyms in Arabic. Some candidates correctly wrote the synonyms of all the words and the Examiner marked the best three. This should be encouraged by all candidates and could benefit the weaker ones, because it gives them a better chance of achieving some marks towards the end of the paper.

Candidates also should be trained to give/explain the meaning of the words within the context of the text, because certain words can have many synonyms, and some can be unrelated to the text.

Candidates who used dialect or incorrect spellings were penalised. A few candidates left this question unanswered. This could be because they ran out of time. Candidates should be reminded that time management is very crucial during the exam.

A final remark to those candidates who put some answers in the blank pages (at the end of the exam paper). Althought, it's the Examiner's role to check the whole paper for any answers, it is the candidate's responsibilty to label these answers correctly or put a note next to the question number. In addition, where an alternative answer to a question is given at the end of the paper, the answer in the body of the test paper should be crossed out. It should not be left to the Examiner to mark or pick the correct answer beause the Examiner will only mark the first response.