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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary In Arabic (WAA01) Unit 1
Understanding and Written Response

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Paper performance

This 2020 January WAA01 paper is the 6th paper, which makes centres and candidates more familiar with exam, hence more entries. Like all previous papers it was set to cover all areas of the specification. It consists of 8 questions in 3 sections testing reading, grammar and writing. All 8 questions are compulsory, and almost all candidates attempted all questions. The time allocated is enough for average candidates who studied the areas in the specification. It was comparable to previous years. Generally, most candidates coped well and it was accessible to a wide range of abilities. Passages were set to be current and of interest to candidates. There are 3 sections in the paper.

SECTION A; Reading:

There are 3 texts in this section.

Passage 1: The first text (الدبكة في أوروبا) is from the topic (youth culture and concern). Question 1, relates to this passage and is straightforward. This is a matching question; candidates were asked to select 5 correct parts out of the 7 to complete the sentences. Each part worth 1 mark. The average candidates done well in this question.

Passage 2: the text (عشبة الريحان) is from the topic of health. The text is current and from an authentic Arabic source. There are 5 multiple choice questions all related to the text. Each of the 5 questions worth 1 mark. This is a computer marked question, but candidates I marked done well in this question.

Passage 3: (محو الأمية) is from the topic area of education training and work. The question set is a gap filling question with 20 words given to choose ten correct to fill the gaps. This is a medium to low question where all candidates of all abilities were able to get some marks. Most candidates managed to fill the first 2 gaps correct.

We noticed that some candidates filled the gaps without thinking; for example, put a verb in a gap which is followed by (إلى) or put a word which does not make sense in the context of the text. Most mistakes were in (h), as even strong students used (الانتباه) instead of (الإشارة) not paying attention to the fact that the first would come before (ل) rather than (إلى)

Candidates are advised to read each sentence then the text to see if their choice of words makes sense.

Passage 4: (الصناعات التقليدية في الجزائر) this passage is of a mixed topic, both work and tourism topics are covered to some extent in the text. This passage is more complex, and it is meant to stretch more able

candidates and differentiate. The text is used for both question 4; reading and question 5; grammar.

Question 4, is a reading comprehension, requires short written response to questions. This question produced a very high number of correct responses covering the points. The candidates used different techniques to find the correct answers in the text. In Q4a, lot of candidates didn't answer the question or did not answer it fully, so most candidates gained one mark, however failed to achieve the other mark as they did not mention the sentence (زينوها بالألوان الجميلة). Students who copied this sentence exactly from the passage picked up both marks. Questions 4b and 4c were answered well. For question 4d, students were required to provide two different ways culture had been affected, however a high proportion of students gave the same point written in two ways, picking up one mark only. For example, they said both (الأندلسي و العثماني). For 4e, students struggled to give the correct answer, and most give one part of the answer. A few managed to get 2 marks.

SECTION B: Grammar:

This section consists of 3 questions with one major question high and the other 2 are medium to low.

Question 5: Candidates asked to use the word given between brackets and re-write the sentence in a correct grammatical form without changing the meaning of the sentence. This was the most challenging question which unfortunately revealed that many candidates if not most had problems with grammar and how-to re-word the sentence without losing its original meaning. They struggled with the language and grammar, and the common rules of verbs and nouns and how they are placed within a sentence.

Many candidates responded correctly to 5(b) and 5(g); however, they did struggle with 5(f) and 5(j), only a few managed to get a full mark in this question.

We recommend that teachers help candidates to focus more on the language and the syntax of the sentences written.

Passage 5: (الألعاب الإلكترونية في الأردن) the topic is technology and general topic area is youth culture and concerns. The question is mainly testing grammar. Candidates are required to vocalize all the letters of the underlined words in the text. They should do that bearing in mind the position of the words in the sentence.

Most of the marks were 3 and 4, but rarely 5 out of 5. This was because candidates struggled with location of the (شدة) and kasra, (همزة الوصل)

and simple rules like (اللام الشمسية واللام القمرية). Some candidates tended to vocalise the last letter in the word and get it right which suggests that they are capable of vocalising positively the other letters, but it shows that they did not read the question or did not understand the rubric.

Passage 6: is about water sports and is also current with familiar vocabulary used in daily life. It is use for question 7 which a multiple-choice question testing grammar. Candidates are given 4 choices to use the one to fill the gap which is grammatically correct. From what I have seen it seems that students managed at least one out of five, but it also shows that they did not consider the word in the text but guessed.

SECTION C; Writing

Passage 7: is a short one, used as a stimulus for question 8, which is a continuous writing. It is meant to provoke thought and ideas and help candidates to write the essay covering the bullet points given in the question

This question worth 30 marks, asking students to write a letter applying for voluntary work based on the advert which talked about working as a teaching assistant in an Arabic country, given at the start of the question. Some candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and showed good control of the language. Regardless of the topic being a well understood subject with plenty of argument points, students understood the topic well and covered all the required points. The remainder of students provided a very general and vague answer, not specific to the question. Occasionally the students gave unrealistic ideas or irrelevant ideas. Very few responses were irrelevant.

On average, many candidates answer Q8 successfully.

SUMMARY:

There were some excellent performances this season at the upper end. This shows that teachers are getting more familiar with exam requirements and students practised on past papers as they have more of them now.

Language quality seemed to be improving overall this year. We still have some candidates who made mistakes at the basic level; like mixing letters and writing (ك) instead of (ق). Some are writing the alphabet on the paper to know which letter, the use of colloquial. In general Centres are advised to make sure that they work on improving candidates understanding of Arabic grammar and application of language.

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