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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary Level
In Arabic (WAA01/01)
Unit 1: Understanding and Written Response

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Introduction

This is the 8th series of WAA01 examination and the 4th January one. The paper is fair and comparable to previous exam of this specification. It was clear that students are now more familiar with this type of exam and their exam techniques improved noticeably. The quality of language was much better than previous seasons, and performance is better on the lower end despite the unusual circumstances. The students seem to benefit from accessing past papers and the SAM.

Generally, most candidates coped well. Passages were set to be current and of interest to candidates. All passages were from authentic Arabic sources and were chosen to suit candidates of all levels of language.

Examiners think that there was some evidence of improvement in the standard of candidates' answers and there were candidates coped better in question 5, grammar.

Section A: Reading

Students will need to understand, retrieve, and convey information from a short series of different Arabic-language texts. They will be required to provide a mix of non-verbal and Arabic-language responses. A maximum of 30 marks will be available in accordance with the assessment-specific mark scheme.

Q3

In this question candidates are required to read the passage with 5 gaps to be filled from the 10 words provided in the box, 5 of them are distractors. The words used should be appropriate linguistically and context wise.

The text is chosen from an authentic source, current and related to students' study of GTA (tourism).

In this question about a noticeable percentage of candidates' answers for (c) were wrong as candidates have used (الحلقات) instead of (الابراج), in addition to those who have used the word (يطل) instead of (يرتفع) for (d) and for 3f, instead of putting (بأنه) they used (لأنه) and 3i, instead of writing (ملاحظة) they answered (قراءة), where sometimes it doesn't make any sense. This means candidates did not realize that the chosen word should make sense in the context of the whole text. We advise that they read the whole text after fillings all the gaps to check whether the chosen words make sense.

Q4

Passage 4, (القرصنة الإلكترونية), is a longer and more complex text. It is from the GTA (Youth matters). This text is used for question 4 and question 5 in the grammar section. As a modern technology and communication vocabulary the text is considered to be accessible and relevant.

This is a comprehension question where candidates read a text and answer short questions. All parts of question 4 are of higher demand and need the candidates to have a good understanding of the text and think before giving the answer.

As for question(a) seems to be slightly challenging, it has been noticed that a good number of candidates gave one part of the answer but failed to give the second part, gave a wrong answer, as candidates were confusing characteristics with abilities; (مميزاتهم وما يمكن أن يقوموا به), so some candidates answered يستطيعون بواسطة برامج مساعدة إختراق حاسوب معين و التعرف على محتوياته

We also noticed that some copied half or sometimes the entire paragraph where there is the answer. This indicates that the candidate in this question was not sure of the correct answer.

In 4e, some candidates seem not to understand a key word in the question (اجتماعية), so gave an irrelevant answer. This reflects lack of vocabulary or ability to link topics.

Section B: Grammar

Q5

Question 5 is linked to passage 4. Students will need to demonstrate their understanding of grammar by manipulating 10 sentences that appear in a previous exercise and reforming each sentence around a given word. Each question carries 1 mark.

This is a high-level 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.

It appeared to be the most challenging question where only few candidates got a full mark. Many candidates responded correctly to Q5(a, b, c, d, e, f, h, i and j); However, they did struggle mainly with part (a) as most candidate failed to apply the correct grammatical use of the word (السبب) and to reword the sentence to give the correct reason for (القرصنة عبر شبكة الانترنت), and in Q5(g). Some students wrote: 3 consecutive (اعمل مسحًا دوريًا و شاملًا), instead of (اعمل مسح دوري و شامل لجهاز الحاسوب الخاص بك) grammar mistakes. This is a grammar question, and they should know that where there is a (تنوين بالفتحة) they should do so, where they are not required to do it in the other 2.

A few candidates failed to get Q5(c) correct mainly due to them forgetting to mention the word (ظاهرة)Which is why they got 0 marks, as the meaning is not complete.

In part (j) most candidates did not use the correct proposition in the sentence which means there is a weakness in understanding the grammar rules and teacher should focus more on the content of the grammar list of the specification. Generally, Q5 was reasonable and the responses were generally good in this series. But we still recommend more practice on this type of question.

Q6

Passage 5 was used for vocalization. Candidates need to vocalize the whole underlined word correctly.

The question is mainly testing the candidates' knowledge of grammar as well as pronunciation. This question carries 10 marks.

This question seems to be understood by most of candidates. However, candidates need to be advised on how to put the "haraka" on the right place on the letter and not to forget to vocalise the "alif" at the start and use the (shadda) where it needs to be. Also, the differentiation between "اللام الشمسيه واللام القمريه" which is the same weakness in the previous paper.

Generally, most candidates achieved 50% or above of the marks for this question. Many did excellently in this question.

Section C: Continuous writing

Question 8 was accessible to most candidates especially on the low-grade categories, where they performed better compared to last year.

Most candidates covered all or most points, giving the needed information. some candidates were very good in communicating their ideas and got a high mark on quality of language, but unfortunately some answers did not apply the correct requirement of the AO2, they did not expand on the subject content, or analyse i.e., give their opinion, or suggest wide range of solutions to the problems therefore, they missed marks on content and communication part. On average, many candidates answer Q8 successfully.

Few candidates gave unrealistic ideas or irrelevant ideas where they misunderstood the meaning of the term (وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي), social media and instead wrote about the use of mobile phone or even means of transport. These terms should be taught as they are key terminology for one of the GTA. Some candidates have copied the stimulus word by word and use it as an introduction where others have been taught a general introduction that can be used for different subjects.

In general, students must be trained more on how to answer and develop their ideas in relation to this question.

Word count should be closely considered by teachers when teaching this part of the specification.

Advice to centres:

Looking back at this season's exams and general performance the following advice is offered to centres, teachers and students to help them improve performance.

- Centres are also reminded to use past papers, mark scheme and examiner's reports.
- Basic grammatical knowledge remains essential, but it is very important to follow the grammar list in the specification. This helps to ensure unambiguous manipulation of sentences in Q5 and all section B. It is also needed in section C: Writing.
- Paying attention to rubric is strongly recommended. Students should be encouraged to take time to read the question / instructions (rubric) carefully and to check they have answered the question.

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