

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

International GCSE Arabic (4AR0)
Paper 01

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The January series saw a smaller entry compared to previous examination series. The Unit 1 paper comprises three sections designed to test candidates' reading comprehension, writing and knowledge of grammar.

Section 1 (Reading)

The main theme of the reading comprehension related to women's struggle to gain freedom and achieve their goals. The length of the passage was adequate for candidates with different reading speeds and comprehension skills. The text was designed to test candidates' reading comprehension through six questions which required candidates to respond using their own words and write style, based on specific information found in the text.

The majority of candidates provided relevant responses to the questions. They showed a good understanding of the nature of the questions and they were able to identify the correct detail from the text. Candidates who had predominately use their own writing style and vocabulary were more successful.

However, a small number of candidates found it difficult to organise their thoughts. They gave answers that were not directly related to the text, especially in Q1c. They improvised on their comprehension of the text by using their own ideas and thoughts. As a consequence, candidates were less successful in achieving good marks.

The overall performance and responses to the questions in this section were good. Candidates tended to performed very well in Q1e and 1f, as these two questions required them to use their own style and opinions relating to women's struggle and their fight for freedom.

Section 2 (Writing)

Section two of the assessment is divided into two parts. Part One required candidates to answer two questions on the given text. The questions were designed to test candidates' reading comprehension, as well as their writing skills.

Q1 of this section was a less challenging task designed to test candidates' reading comprehension and ability to summarise the text in good language and style.

Part Two of this section required a more thorough understanding of the text from Part One. Candidates are required to produce a piece of writing based on the theme of the text.

The more successful candidates were those who managed to write a short story about love leading to success and wealth, which corresponded directly with the spirit of the text. Candidates who were less successful were unable to produce a piece of writing based on the theme of the text. Consequently, they were unable to access the full range of the marking criteria for this task.

Section 3 (Grammatical usage)

This section was designed to test candidates' knowledge of Arabic grammar. It contained four questions which covered a wide range of grammatical concepts. It was encouraging to note that candidate performance in this section showed great improvement. Many answers were thorough and reflected a higher level of teaching and preparation. It was also very encouraging that few candidates showed a weakness in their understanding and application of grammatical features in Arabic.

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