

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
Arabic (4AR0) Paper 2

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Overview

This paper requires students to produce two pieces of continuous writing. Candidates are asked to choose two titles from a choice of six. Candidates are advised to write about 300 words on each of their chosen topics. The six titles include a range of writing styles. Each piece of writing is marked out of 30 according to the marking grid on pages 6-7 of the specification. The 30 marks are awarded for

- Content and Communication (18 marks)
- Application of Language (6 marks)
- Accuracy of writing (6 marks)

Candidate performance

The most popular questions were questions 1, 2 and 5. These were then followed by questions 4, 3 then 6.

Question 1

Candidates were asked to write a letter to a friend who lives abroad, whom they have not seen for 10 years. Candidates were required to write an informal letter to cover different changes happening throughout the 10 years of absence, such as changes in employment, education, personal life, social life, culture, ambitions and plans.

This was the most popular question among the candidates. Most candidates responded to the required task in the form of a letter and scored well. Some candidates wrote about specific topics, such as global warming or the world economy, rather than more informal, familiar issues, as mentioned above. Unfortunately, these responses did not score highly as they did not meet the requirements in the upper mark band for 'content and communication'.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write an article giving their opinions about the purpose of working. Candidates were required to write an essay covering the moral value of work and its financial reward. Candidates could refer to different careers and their financial and moral impact, or to charitable work and its invaluable moral satisfaction.

This was equally a popular question for the candidates. The majority understood the expectation of the question and responded accordingly. Some candidates restricted their responses by writing on the importance of work in life, and how it might tackle laziness. These candidates were unable to score highly in the 'content and communication' mark band as the essay was not fully developed.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to write a report about women's roles in Arabic society. Candidates were expected to refer to issues such as the current status of women's roles in Arabic society, the expected/ideal role of women in Arabic society, the social treatment of women, the social

barriers, the religious concept with relation to the role of women in society and the importance of women in taking part in the development of society.

This question was the least popular amongst candidates. However, those candidates that did attempt this question responded well to the required task and managed to score well for 'content and communication'. Some candidates neglected the requirement of this question to 'write a report' and they gave their own views in an essay form or a speech that did not meet the requirements for 'content and communication'.

Question 4

Candidates were asked to write a speech giving their opinion about the notion that children learn best by imitating others. Candidates were expected to write about how children learn by imitating their parents or adults, and how adults are considered to be a role model for children and how they should behave appropriately to set a good example to children.

A large number of candidates did not score well in this question as they concentrated specifically on the theme of bringing up children, and about the role of schools in this regard. However, those who scored well here presented highly accurate pieces of writing, which reflected excellent competencies in structure and grammar in the target language.

Question 5

Candidates were asked to write a formal letter to the Minister of Environment using persuasive language to request the increase of the spending on recycling projects. Candidates were expected to cover the benefits of general recycling and household waste, the financial benefits of recycling, the generation of opportunity, the improvement of the country's image and reduction of pollution and health hazards.

This proved to be a very popular question amongst candidates. The majority who attempted it managed to score well as the theme is an important topic at present. A small number of candidates did not score well because they rushed into writing about environmental issues in general, and therefore they distanced themselves from the required task.

Question 6

Candidates were asked to narrate an event relating to the image in the picture, which may include reference to art exhibitions, photography, tourism, and other such relevant activities as the picture might provide.

This was the least popular question among candidates. However, a good number of those who attempted it scored well. Candidates who were not so successful were those who used the picture as a reminder of an event, which had no relevance to any of the images in the picture.

Advice to candidates

Candidates are advised to:

1. Enrich their general knowledge of the Arabic language through reading different styles of writing from books, magazines, newspapers and internet, as well as acquiring knowledge from other media sources.
2. Read and understand previous International GCSE exam material which normally carries valuable information, which can be very helpful when preparing for future exams.
3. Read the model sample answers of previous exams.
4. Familiarise themselves with the format of the question paper.
5. Adhere to writing on the designated lined pages in the answer book.
6. Clearly mark the question of their choice and answer it in the specified area (lined pages) ensuring that there is no answer to any other question in the same area.
7. Ask for extra lined paper from invigilators should the specified area not be large enough for their response.
8. Underline the important words or phrases in the question that refer to the required response to ensure that they respond to the entire task.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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