

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Arabic (4AR0) Paper 02

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4AR0/ 02 IGCSE Arabic – Examiner’s report – June 2015

The following points were noted by examiners:

This paper required candidates to produce two pieces of continuous writing. Candidates were asked to choose two tasks from a choice of six. Candidates were advised to write about 300 words on each of their chosen topics. The six tasks included a range of writing styles. Each piece of writing was marked out of 30 marks according to the marking grid on pages 6-7 of the specification. The 30 marks were awarded for Content and Communication (18 marks), Application of Language (6 marks) and Accuracy of writing (6 marks).

The paper offered six questions which covered six areas of study. Candidates had the choice of choosing 2 questions to respond to out of the six.

Q1:

The question here was focusing on the benefits of reading. The question appealed to most of the candidates due to the popularity of this topic, and to the essay writing form. Candidates were expected to cover relevant areas such as:

- Books are the source of material of various subjects in all areas of knowledge.
- The knowledge one obtains from books could be accompanied by action and experience.
- The importance of reading.
- Increasing knowledge about other cultures.
- Enforces independent learning.
- Widening and strengthening imagination.
- Increases individual confidence and articulation.
- Improves language skills.

Q2:

This question required candidates to explore the effect of supermarkets on local shops, and to defend and support the existence of local shops.

Candidates were expected to cover relevant areas such as:

- Preserving traditional shops.
- The difference between shopping at a supermarket and local shops.
- Price control.
- Unemployment.

- The role of shop keepers in improving their services and saving their shops.

Q3:

Requires candidates to write a letter to a hotel manager about improvements they can make to their hotel. Candidates were expected to cover any relevant reason for complaint, and be able to give suggestions for improvement, as well as the implications of these improvements.

Q4:

This question required the candidates to write a report about the increase in world population and the increasing need for jobs and food. Candidates were expected to cover relevant areas such as:

- Reasons for the increase in population.
- Possible food shortage and how to overcome this.
- Shortage of jobs and the need to create new job opportunities.

Q5:

This question required the candidates to write a speech to convince colleagues to attend a road regulations course organized by the government. Candidates were expected to cover relevant areas such as:

- Acknowledgement of traffic rules.
- Awareness of road signs.
- Safety within the car.
- Safety on the road.

Q6:

Candidates were asked to write a story relevant to the image provided. The image presented two girls preparing a place by the sea for an event or function.

Candidates were expected to write a story in which they take part in or they may create one about other people. Their story should include characters, plot, sequence of events and setting.

Candidates' performance:

Q1:

Candidates related to this question very well and many produced very good responses as they explored the benefits of writing; and its different types and

purposes such as increasing knowledge about other cultures, and improving language skills. Candidates who scored highly were avid readers themselves as this was evident in their own accounts and in the high levels of accuracy in their writing. These candidates indirectly spoke about the positive impact of reading experienced by learners and were able to discuss the psychological benefits that readers enjoyed over non-readers. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the subject, and demonstrated good ability to clarify and persuade their readers to commit towards wide reading. However their evidence about the benefit of reading remained vague, and very general.

Examiners noticed the following:

- Some candidates stressed heavily the importance of reading but they did not investigate or explain its benefits. Sometimes some responses were general statements which did not tell us what or how we could benefit from reading.
- Some candidates included the benefits of reading as a list: 1, 2, 3 without elaboration.
- Some candidates concentrated on comparing digital books and paper ones, and gradually diverted from the main task.

Q2:

This question was the least popular amongst the candidates, and therefore, a large number of the candidates who selected it found it difficult to fulfil the required word count, as they ran out of ideas. However, those who scored well here were able to elaborate and expand their ideas with very logical descriptions and justifications. The very able candidates succeeded to write a persuasive article to encourage preserving the traditional local shops. They managed to give a comparison between local shops and supermarkets on different issues, such as size, quality and the economic contribution to the country. They used different arguments to defend traditional shops, however very few focused on the improvement of quality, and how shopkeepers can trade their goods in a modern and efficient way.

The majority of candidates used the aspect of the identity of the country as a reason to protect traditional shops. They were content to stop at this point and were unable to give alternative ideas to encourage shopkeepers and customers to choose the traditional shops instead. This is what makes the article incomplete.

Q3:

Most of the candidates who chose this topic succeeded in demonstrating an ability to write formal letters suggesting improvement. After mentioning the signs of failure within the hotel most of them demonstrated that they can indicate weaknesses of the hotel staff and facilities provided, in a polite style.

Some of them exaggerated and requested unrealistic changes, such as changing all members of staff or the building itself. However, the majority were modest in their requests and were able to make their letter a lot more constructive by showing initiative. The following observations were made in responses

- Some candidates didn't complete the 300 words and had used large handwriting to make it seem they had written a lot more.
- The connectives that candidates used weren't appropriate to the construction of the sentence.
- Some used colloquial language and dialectal expressions which resulted in loss of marks on the knowledge of language.
- A few of the candidates mentioned their complaint and their requests for improvement and ignored the impact it had on the hotel in the long term.
- Less able candidates focused on the problems they had experienced at the hotel and made very few suggestions for improvements.
- Some candidates also forgot to address the last part of the question which required them to mention the benefits of making the suggested improvements to the hotel. This often meant that those candidates produced shorter responses.

Q4:

Many candidates found difficulty with this question. Very few scored high marks. For a few candidates report writing conventions were a problem.

A good number of candidates who chose to write reports showed a good knowledge of the style required for this type of writing. They used numbers and percentages to demonstrate the increase of population, comparing them to the last century and pointed to the problems that accompany this increase. Examiners noticed the following:

- Some candidates focused on their own country (Jordan, Egypt and Sudan) and tried to request different solutions. They were able to talk about the lack of food and jobs as the main concern especially for some places that were affected by war or refugees. This made their reports very subjective and they failed to cover other sides of the world and find an objective solution that could be effective in the long term.
- Spelling mistakes especially in writing percentages were very evident.

Q5:

Candidates handled the speech writing conventions very well to address this question. Most candidates were able to develop their ideas to complete their

responses except for the few who forgot to persuade their peers to join these road safety courses. The following observations were made in responses:

- Some answers were not completely correct because candidates talked in detail about road signs without explaining the benefit of respecting them and the dangers to human life when we ignore them.
- Some candidates went off at a tangent by failing to stick to the task at hand.

Q6:

The most able candidates developed complex and intriguing stories by relying on the prompt. Although many candidates referred to the picture prompt at the end of their stories, only the very imaginative were able to add a dramatic twist in the end.

However, the following observations were made in responses:

- A handful of candidates failed to refer to the prompt in their stories, as required.
- Some candidates' stories lacked the fluency and story writing techniques required.
- Some of the candidates' responses were just simplistic recounts of events linked to the picture, sometimes partially successful and most of the time less successful.

Advice to candidates:

Candidates are advised to:

1. Enrich their own general knowledge through reading different styles of writing from books, magazines, newspapers and the internet, as well as acquiring knowledge from other media sources.
2. Read and understand previous International GCSE exam material which normally carries valuable information that can be very helpful when answering future exams.
3. Read the model sample answers of previous exams.
4. Familiarize 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 isn't any answer of any other question in the same area.
7. Ask for extra lined paper from invigilators should the specified area not be big enough for their responses.

8. Underline the important words or phrases that refer to the required task when answering a question to ensure that they respond to the entire task.

9. Practice improving their hand writing. Poor handwriting and poor presentation should be avoided as it makes the marking process hard and sometimes may result in losing marks.

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>