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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In Arabic (First Language) (4AR0) Paper 1

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## **General Introduction**

The three sections of this paper cover the three assessment objectives in the specification: Reading, Writing and Grammatical usage. Students responded well to most questions; however, occasionally their responses were hindered due to their lack of grammatical knowledge and/or reading skills. The questions related to current issues and to the history of the Inuit and students found them interesting. The allocated time was sufficient to enable students of different abilities to complete the tasks.

## **Students' Performance**

Overall the students' responses were good and maintained the usual high standard, particularly in sections 1 and 2.

### **Section 1**

Section 1 assesses students' reading skills through a number of short-answer questions based on a passage of text. In this paper, the passage was about the Inuit, their homeland, their migration and their ways of living, and students were required to answer six questions, which covered a variety of points all found in the text. The length of the passage was adequate for students with different reading speeds and comprehension abilities. Most students showed a good understanding of the text and managed to respond well to the questions. However, there were still some students who resorted to copying directly from the text, and therefore were not able to score highly. A few students did not manage to answer some of the questions, or answered one or more questions incorrectly. This could have been as a result of their limited knowledge of Arabic or lack of focus when reading. Overall, the text was clear and well set up; however, there are a few points to consider in relation to the individual questions.

### **Question 1(a)**

Most students did very well on this question due to the clarity of the required task and its simplicity. This question was designed to allow the less able students to demonstrate a simple understanding of the text. Most students scored at least two marks out of three. Some students confused Native Americans with the Inuit.

### **Question 1(b)**

The majority of students achieved full marks for this question. However, some students used part of the question (Greenland) as one of the answers. This indicates that some students need to improve their reading skills. Some students' responses also showed a misunderstanding of the Inuit migration.

### **Question 1(c)**

This question instructed students to describe the Inuit's clothing. Most students were successful in choosing the relevant and important items of clothing and thus performed well on this question. Many scored the full seven marks available and only 2.5% of students scored fewer than four. However, some students expanded on points that were irrelevant.

### **Question 1(d)**

This question was a comparison question. The terms used in the question could be found in paragraph four of the text, which should have allowed students to score full marks. Some students, however, did not score full marks because they omitted to refer to a point in the paragraph regarding the positive impact of Europeans. On the whole, about 99% of the students succeeded in scoring three marks or more out of a total of six.

### **Question 1(e)**

This question sought to differentiate and to target the more able students, by requiring them to find answers in more than one paragraph. Despite this, most students scored above the average mark, with 48.8% achieving full marks. Some students confused kayaks with sledges.

### **Question 1(f)**

This was another differentiating question, aimed at the more able students. To be able to answer it correctly, the students needed to deduct the relevant points from the whole text. To be able to score full marks, they needed to extract the relevant information accurately. Consequently, fewer students (35%) scored full marks than in the previous questions.

### **Additional Advice**

Students should:

- read the passage for meaning before answering the questions
- avoid copying directly from the text
- organise their answers according to the questions
- make sure that each point has its counterpart when comparing
- look at the question and its allocated mark and provide the correct number of responses
- make sure not to use part of the question as part of their answers
- not elaborate one point at the expense of others.

## **Section 2**

This section was divided into two parts. In Q2(a), students were presented with a short story and were required to summarise its ten main events using their own words. This question was designed to test students' reading abilities as well as their writing skills.

In Q2(b), students were required to produce a piece of directed writing based on the theme of the story for a specified audience and purpose: an article for a local paper. Most students scored above the average mark.

### **Question 2(a)**

Q2(a) was a test of students' reading comprehension skills and their ability to summarise using good language and style. Those who missed out on the key points scored lower marks. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the text and an ability to identify its main points, and therefore succeeded in summarising them. Consequently, most students achieved above the average mark. The majority of students scored at least five marks out of the ten available. The statistics showed that around 1% of the students scored zero in this question.

### **Question 2(b)**

Many students did well in their response to the question. The task was to write an article for a local newspaper encouraging young people to help those in need. Most students scored at least the average score; however, 12 students (approximately 2%) scored zero for this question.

### **Additional Advice**

Students should:

- attempt to be more focused and precise in their summaries
- avoid using the text in Q2(a) in their answers to Q2(b)
- write in classical Arabic and avoid using dialect.

## **Section 3**

This section aimed to test students' use of grammar in a series of questions.

### **Question 3**

This question required students to extract instances of grammatical terms from a short paragraph. The majority of the students found this question more challenging than the others on the paper. Only a few well-prepared students managed to score full marks (four marks because Q3(c) was disregarded, due to an error on the paper). There were many wrong answers due to a lack of knowledge of Arabic grammar.

#### **Question 4**

This was another grammar question, in which students were expected to give examples of specific grammatical terms in sentences of their own. The task was clear, but again the quality of responses varied due to the fact that many students were uncertain about the terms and had limited grammatical knowledge. As a result, 20% of students scored zero on this question.

#### **Question 5**

This question comprised four multiple choice questions and most students scored the mark available for four out of five parts. The exception was Q5(b), on which only 46% of the students scored the mark.

#### **Question 6**

Students' responses to this question were average. Again, there were many mistakes related to Arabic grammar. Students often misunderstood the task or genuinely did not have the knowledge of grammar required to answer this question. This question was also often incomplete. However, nearly 70% of students managed to score three or more marks out of five, since three marks required only a basic knowledge of grammar.

#### **Additional Advice**

Centres should:

- make sure that all relevant grammar topics have been covered thoroughly.

Students should:

- only give one answer when the question asks for one – writing two different answers instead of one reflects the student's uncertainty regarding the answer and consequently they will be awarded zero
- write a sentence when requested to do so – they should not write one word as an answer, because again their score will be zero.

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