Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

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

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This paper was divided into three sections:

Section 1 assessed candidates' reading comprehension through six comprehension questions based on a reading passage about the history of books and libraries. This section carried a maximum mark of **30**.

Section 2 presented the candidates with a short text about the ancient city of Petra. Candidates were required to summarise the text in part 2a, and to produce a piece of directed writing in part 2b about the importance of taking good care of historical places and developing and encouraging tourism in the world. This section carried a maximum mark of **10** for each of the two parts.

Section 3 tested candidates' Arabic grammatical usage and knowledge in a series of 4 exercises. This section carried a maximum mark of **5** for each of the four exercises.

The total number of marks for the paper was 70.

Candidates' performance:

Section 1

This section was designed to assess candidates' reading comprehension skill. Candidates were instructed to use their own style when they responded to the six questions which were designed to assess their level of understanding of the text. Candidates showed a good level of understanding reflected in their responses to the questions.

Question 1a

Candidates were asked to explain the reasons behind the creation of writing. They responded well by listing information from the text. Candidates had to give two reasons to get the two marks. The two points which the candidates had to refer to could be extracted from the first paragraph. These are:

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– ضرورة التواصل أو التفاهم مع الآخرين في المجتمعات الأخرى.

– لأجل أن يحفظ نتاجه الفكري من الضياع أو من الاندثار.

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A few candidates only scored one mark as they forgot to mention the second point, like in the response below:

1 (a) ما الذي حفّز الإنسان القديم على ابتكار الكتابة؟

(2)

● وجد نفسة في القدم غير قادر على التفاهم مع أفراد الجمعات الأخرى ولذلك بذل قصارى جهده في إيجاد وسيلة يستطيع عند طريقها التواصل والتفاهم مع اولئك الأفراد.

The sample above scored 1 mark because the candidate referred to one relevant valid point which is التفاهم. <mark>While in the sample below</mark>, the candidate scored full marks because the answer covered two valid points mentioned in the text and they were التفاهم و صيانة التراث من الضياع.

Question 1b

Candidates were asked to give evidence which helped an historian to decide when libraries were first formed in the world according to the text. The two pieces of information could be found in the third paragraph of the text. Candidates were expected to extract the correct information and respond in their own style. The points they were ought to refer to were:

‒ عثورهم على وثائقَ مكتوبة على ألواح طينية.

‒ عثورهم على وثائق مكتوبة على ورق البردي.

Some candidates did not understand the question, and hence were not able to score any marks, as in the following response:

(b) علام استند المؤرخون في تحديدهم لبدايات المكتبات؟

(2)

ليجعلها متوفرة للمراجعة ولناكمة غيره.
جمع التراث اليوناني القديم والتراث البشري.

Question 1c

This question instructed candidates to highlight the characteristics of Alexandria Library. Candidates had to extract six pieces of information from the text, which described Alexandria Library or referred to its purpose or function.

Most candidates were successful in choosing the relevant information by referring to the important features of Alexandria Library and managed to score well in this question. (See the mark scheme for the correct answer).

Question 1d

Candidates in this question were required to describe what qualities a librarian of Alexandria Library should have. Many candidates were able to identify the relevant information which they needed to respond correctly to this question. However, the most successful among them, were those who extracted 5 relevant points and managed to write them in their own style as required by the question in order to score the full five marks.

Question 1e

Candidates were required to mention eight points when comparing "Daar al-Hikma Library" and "Daar al-Ilm Library". Almost all candidates were able to score 3 or more marks here. Examiners accepted any function or description that the two libraries did not share according to the text. Candidates could refer to the different times when they were founded and during which era, their different functions, the different activities which took place in them and which types pf people benefited from them. Here is an example of a good response which covered eight valid points:

(e) ما هي أوجه الاختلاف بين "مكتبة دار الحكمة" و"مكتبة دار العلم"؟

(8)

مكتبة دار الحكمة:

① أقيمت "مكتبة دار الحكمة" في نهاية القرن الثالث الهجري

② تعتبر أول مكتبة أكاديمية تقام في الوطن الإسلامي وذلك لمساعدة عامة الشعب

③ أسست في عهد الخليفة هارون الرشيد حيث تميز عصره بالازدهار في حركات التأليف والترجمة

④ صارت المكتبة موضع المطالعة والبحث كما كانت تستخدم للدرس وإقامة المناظرات الأدبية والجدالات حول مختلف العلوم.

مكتبة دار العلم :

① تم إنشاء مكتبة دار العلم في أواخر القرن الرابع الهجري

② أُقيمت على يد الفاطميون

③ كانت مكان ملتقى العلماء والمترجمين والمؤلفين، وزاد عليهم النُّسّاخ الذين كانت مهنتهم مختصة في نسخ الأحاديث النبوية وكتب الفقه وكانوا يسحرون الأدب أيضاً.

④ فتحت ضي كذلك لعامة الشعب حتى تكون ذات نفع كبير وتأثير واضح على حياتهم.

Question 1f

Candidates were required to specify the roles of Islamic libraries in the present day, according to the text. According to the Mark Scheme, candidates could mention 7 points out of 8 to score the full 7 marks. Most candidates managed to score at least three marks in this question. Information that was not from the text was not rewarded.

Section 2

In this section, the candidates were provided with a text about the historic city of Petra. The text was followed by two parts (2a & 2b) which directed the candidates towards their tasks.

Part 2a

In this part candidates were required to summarise the provided text in section two. Their summary should be brief and easy to read. As the mark allocation for this part is 10 marks, candidates were expected to provide a summary which contained 10 main points of the original text, without copying out chunks of the text. The purpose of the summary was to give the reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text.

A good number of candidates who were well trained on summarising texts, managed to identify the main points of the text, and were able to write them down in their own words in a well-structured style with correct grammar and punctuation.

Examiners noticed that a few candidates relied on copying large chunks

from the text in their summary without using their own words and style and, therefore, did not score well in this section. It was also noticed that some candidates wrote a very long summary which in some cases exceeded the number of words in the original text.

Part 2b

The task was to write on a topic explaining the significance of historical sites in promoting and developing tourism.

The majority of candidates understood the task and responded to it. However, there were a few candidates who relied on copying the large amounts from the text provided in section 2 in responding to this part. Copying the text did not reflect candidate's competence in Arabic, nor did it reveal the candidate's level and ability in writing and, therefore, the copied items were not considered as part of the candidate's achievements when it came to awarding marks.

Section 3

This section comprised of four questions (3-6). Each question was assessed out of 5 marks. The aim of this section was to assess candidates in Arabic grammar proficiency. Candidates were expected to demonstrate their level of grammar proficiency by responding to each of the tasks in the four grammar questions.

Question 3

Candidates in this question were required to extract certain grammatical items from a short text. The required items covered five Arabic language parts of speech in certain grammatical positions. A good number of the candidates managed to score the full mark in this question, by identifying the correct items in the text as in the following response: (see Mark Scheme)

Extract the following from the text:

(a) ضميراً مبنياً في محل نصب. ....الجبال في قلوبتها "الماء"في لكنا (1)

(b) ظرف زمان. ....يكد في بعدها (1)

(c) جملة فعلية في محل رفع خبراً لمبتدأ. ....تعتمد على تطويل (1)

(d) نعتاً منصوباً. ....جهد عظيمة (1)

(e) جمع تكسير. ....أنحاء (1)

Question 4

Candidates were given five defined grammatical items, and were asked to show their understanding of these items by putting them in meaningful sentences in correct grammar and structures.

This was a challenging question type, as in previous exam series, where the more able candidates could show their good understanding of Arabic grammar analysis. Marks were rewarded to sentences that were meaningful and had the correct relevant grammar structure. Here is an example of a candidate's response which was awarded full marks:

Give a complete sentence for each of the following:

Question 5

The objective of this question was to test the candidate's grammatical knowledge by selecting one response from a set of three choices to complete each of the five provided sentences. The answers were predetermined with certain grammatical purposes. As native speakers, most of the candidates scored well in this question.

Question 6

Candidates in this question were required to analyse a sentence grammatically. Examiners noticed greater improvement in candidates' standards in comparison to previous exam series. Many candidates seemed to have good knowledge of what was required to say, hence, managed to score well. However, there were some candidates who showed some understanding of the required analysis, but failed to score well as they contradicted themselves in their answers, or added incorrect information, for example:

- Instead of analysing the word ظن in ظننت as فعل ماض مبني على السكون candidates wrote:

فعل ماض مبني على الضم

Or

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فعل ماض منصوب بالفتحة

</div>

- Instead of analysing the word سِن in سِنه as مفعول به منصوب
  candidates wrote:

<div dir="rtl">

مفعول به منصوب وعلامة نصبه الضمة

</div>

Or

<div dir="rtl">

مفعول به مرفوع

</div>

Advice to candidates

When preparing for the reading comprehension section you may need to consider the following:

1. In order to retain your vocabulary knowledge, you must practice a combination of memorisation (like studying your flashcards) and make a point of using these new words in your verbal and written communication. Guided vocabulary practice like this will give you access to new words and their meanings as well as allow you to properly retain them.

2. Make reading a fun activity, at least on occasion, rather than a constant chore. This will motivate you to engage with the text and embrace the activity as part of your daily life (rather than just your study/work life). As you practice and truly engage with your reading material, improvement will come naturally.

3. Solve previous papers, because by solving the previous papers you can understand and identify what kind of questions are appearing in the examination, so that you will be mentally prepared for those kinds of questions.

At the exam time

4. While going through the passage, these three parts of the body should act in collaboration; eyes, hands and brain.   Make a habit of finding valuable keywords quickly and underline those keywords with a pen.

5. When you don't find an answer to a question, we tell ourselves *"Okay, I will come back to it later".* This may be a good strategy to save time While leaving the difficult questions and solving the easier ones. But before going to another question just do one thing. Take your pencil and make a circle on your choice, which you feel correct at the present moment.

Answering the part 2, section 2 a, the summary:

6. Read and understand the text carefully.

7. Think about the purpose of the text:

   a. Ask yourself what the author's purpose is in writing the text?
   b. What is your purpose in writing your summary?

8. Select the relevant information.

9. Find the main ideas - what is important.

   a. They may be found in topic sentences.
   b. Find alternative words/synonyms for these words/phrases - do not change specialised vocabulary and common words.

10. Distinguish between main and subsidiary information.

   c. Delete most details and examples, unimportant information, anecdotes (a short amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person), examples, illustrations, data etc.

12. Change the structure of the text.

   a. Identify the meaning relationships between the words/ideas - e.g. cause/effect, generalisation, contrast. Look at paragraphs: Signalling for more information. Express these relationships in a different way.
   b. Change the grammar of the text: rearrange words and sentences, change nouns to verbs, adjectives to adverbs, etc., break up long sentences, combine short sentences.
   c. Simplify the text. Reduce complex sentences to simple sentences, simple sentences to phrases, phrases to single words.

13. Rewrite the main ideas in complete sentences. Combine your notes into a piece of continuous writing. Use conjunctions and adverbs such as 'therefore', 'however', 'although', 'since', to show the connections between the ideas.

14. Check your work.

   a. Make sure your purpose is clear.
   b. Make sure the meaning is the same.
   c. Make sure the style is your own.

When answering the writing task in section 2 b:

1. See the whole essay in your head before you start writing. If you do not do that, you may lose significant marks for both coherence and task response.

2. Focus on the backbone of your essay. The backbone is:

   a. **The introduction**: this should identify the question and outline your position. Don't rush it as it is the first thing the examiner will read. First impressions count.
   b. **The first/topic sentences of each paragraph**: these should be clear and to the point. They should identify exactly what that paragraph is about and show how it relates to the rest of the essay. Start off general and then build towards the specific.
   c. **The conclusion**: this is the easiest part of the essay normally. Most often, all you need to do is go back to the introduction and rephrase it.

3. Make sure that each point of view is referred to and clearly stated in one paragraph.

4. Do not write too much. The more you write, the more likely you are to make language mistakes, or to go off topic.

5. Before you write each paragraph of your response, refer to the question to remind yourself about what you are meant to write about.

6. It is important to link your paragraphs together by reading what you have written before.

7. It is better to be clear when you write your ideas.

8. Write about what you know, and what you believe in. Examiners assess your language ability rather than your point of view.

9. If you feel under pressure in the exam, focus as much on examples as explanations when you write. Make sure that your examples are relevant to the main idea.

Enrich your general knowledge through reading different styles of writing from books, magazines, newspapers and the internet, as well as acquiring knowledge from other media sources.

Grade boundaries

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