



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

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

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This paper required students to produce **two** pieces of continuous writing. Candidates were asked to choose **two** tasks from a choice of six. They 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 to three writing qualities; 18 marks for Communication Content, 6 marks for Application of and 6 marks for Accuracy.

This exam is designed to assess candidates' performance and writing ability, rather than choosing among pre-determined options, as in multiple choice questions. Candidates were expected to construct and produce a thorough piece of writing in response to question demands. As this exam allowed candidates to construct an original response, examiners' task was to assess the cognitive thinking and reasoning skills and candidates' ability to apply knowledge to solve realistic, meaningful problems in a well-structured language style.

Question demands and candidates' performance:

Question 1

Candidates were asked to write a speech about the best goals to find success in life. This question proved to be the most popular among the candidates.

The question started by pointing out that time management is a key factor to achieve success in life. However, the question required the candidates to talk about the best ways one should follow to achieve success in life.

As there is a reference to time management at the beginning of the question, a considerable number of candidates understood that they should write about time management. However, the majority of candidates started off by talking about time management, but then went on to talk about other means of success, such as religion or respecting the elders. Candidates found the topic here easy to write about confidently. Many candidates excelled in their answers and managed to score well here.

This question proved to be the most popular among the candidate, as it offers a variety of ideas to write about.

Question 2

In this question candidates were asked to write a report about prohibiting the use of mobile phones by candidates in schools. This question was not so popular among candidates, as it was rather challenging and required logical ideas. Examiners noticed that this question provoked many who tried it to talk about how they felt about mobile phones in their schools in real life.

A vast majority of those who chose this question responded with pros and cons and arrived at the conclusion that mobile phones should not be banned but their use should be regulated.

Most of the responses indicated that candidates use their mobile phones in class during lessons and even during exams with the knowledge of teachers, i.e. it is the norm. Several responses said that phones ring and candidates answer phone calls in class. One candidate suggested that if the phone rings, candidates should be asked to go outside to answer it. There were also many responses which wrote about candidates taking pictures or videos of classmates and teachers (mainly teachers) and posting them on social media for various reasons. Some candidates wrote about cheating in exams.

Examiners found the question well worded and clear. However, few candidates did not score well as they did not write a report or mention the conference, or answered in a letter style with their own opinion rather than reporting. Several responses were very good and professional.

Question 3

In this question candidates were asked to write a letter to a friend to convince him or her to watch the educational TV programmes, by pointing out the benefits of these programmes to that friend and to his society.

Responses to this question were varied. Some candidates seemed not to distinguish between the documentaries and general knowledge, but even with this misunderstanding, most of them managed to score well.

Some of the examples mentioned were very satisfactory. Many candidates mentioned animal programmes, or the environment and earth issues. A few candidates mentioned the 'octopus' which they studied in their paper 1 exam, as an example which was a good indicator that candidates were benefiting learning from the information and knowledge reaching them through the questions of this specification.

Many candidates mentioned the 'National Geographic' channel specifically. A popular choice was tourism and learning about other cultures and languages. Some candidates dealt with this theme maturely, saying that we need to learn how other cultures live and learn from them. One candidate said if we learn about other cultures before we visit their countries we can avoid insulting or offending or disrespecting them, which was very mature. Some candidates said it will produce less prejudice and racism. Few candidates mentioned that programmes need to be honest. They called on the government to show the truth or the real story and not always show only the positive side.

In this and the other questions, there were a lot of clichés and what seems to be pre-learned phrases or even paragraphs. Some candidates started their letter by a long introduction using pre-learned clichés, phrases and clauses which were on most occasions unnecessary as they had similar meaning. Some introductions were more than 60 words of irrelevant material.

While some responses contained good use of quotations from the Quran, the Prophet's sayings or lines of Arabic poetry which added value to the piece, others were irrelevant and randomly inserted.

Examiners noticed that a high percentage of candidates were not aware of the features of 'Persuasive Writing Technique' where they are required to stress the importance of watching the educational TV programmes by highlighting their advantages and ignoring their disadvantages. In some responses, candidates included both advantages and disadvantages as equally significant, and hence, did not score well. Some letters contained a long narrative script without justification, opinion or explanation.

Digression was dominant in some responses where candidates seemed to follow their stream of ideas forgetting their starting point of discussion and suddenly jumping to a different point.

Question 4

Candidates were asked in this question to write an article comparing wedding ceremonies between their country and another place.

The wording of this question is very clear. This was the least popular question. However, candidates who tried it were fully aware of the task. Many candidates were successful at comparing marriage ceremonies of their countries with another country and discussing both equally, while a few did not compare at all but only described their country's traditions, which had some impact on their Communication and Content mark. In

general, candidates expressed their concern over the exaggerated expenses of wedding in Arab countries in comparison to Western countries. They also believed that Western countries value love and understanding more than Arab countries. A few candidates did not talk specifically about the marriage ceremonies but on other aspects of the relationships, which showed a clear misunderstanding of the question.

Question 5

Candidates in this question were required to write an article to show whether spending on historic monuments and places is considered a waste of money or a necessity.

This question proved to be the second most popular question in this series. Most of the candidates who tried it, understood the task, and were able to show very good discussions and arguments. They were also able to express their opinions in a logical, organised and structured way of writing.

This question was very demanding as candidates had to write an article, give their own opinions, and then, to justify it. Many answers were excellent and well structured.

Question 6

In this question, as in previous series, candidates were asked to write a story linked to a provided picture. About half of the candidates who tried this question managed to produce well-structured stories which were relevant to the provided picture.

Many of the students had a full understanding of the photo and were able to follow this understanding through their writing and managed to build a clear story that was relevant to the photo. They included, time, place, characters, relevant plot and climax effectively with an excellent grammar and structure throughout their writing, making it very pleasant to read. However, there was a minority that made an excellent story with good grammar and structure, but their writing was not relevant to the provided photo, therefore, they did not manage to score well. And finally, there were some who created relevant stories to the photo but had weak writing ability and bad grammar and structure, which obviously had some impact on their scoring in Knowledge and Application of Language, and on Accuracy.

Advice to candidates:

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Candidates are advised to:

- قراءة السؤال بتأني ومحاولة فهم ما هو مطلوب.
- الالتزام بالكمية المطلوب كتابتها من حيث العدد المطلوب من الكلمات.
- التأكد من إعطاء أمثلة لها صلة وثيقة بالفكرة الرئيسة لموضوع الكتابة.
- التعرف على أنواع الكتابة الأدبية المختلفة قبل الدخول إلى الامتحان، وذلك لأن لكل نوع أسلوب خاص في الكتابة؛ فأسلوب كتابة التقرير يختلف عن القصة، وأسلوب كتابة الرسالة يختلف عن الخطاب وهكذا دواليك.

1. Make sure that each point of view is referred to and clearly stated in one paragraph.
2. It is important to link your paragraphs together by reading what you have written before.
3. It is better to be clear when you write your ideas.
4. Write about what you know, and what you believe in. Examiners assess your language ability rather than your point of view.
5. 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.
6. Do not write too much. The more you write, the more likely you are to make language mistakes, or to go off topic.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Before you write each paragraph of your response, refer to the question to remind yourself about what you are meant to write about.
10. 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.
11. Read and understand previous International GCSE exam material which normally carries valuable information that can be very helpful when answering future exams.
12. Read the model sample answers of previous exams.
13. Familiarise yourselves with the format of the question paper.
14. Adhere to writing on the designated lined pages in the answer book.
15. Clearly mark the question of your 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.
16. Ask for extra lined paper from invigilators should the specified area not be big enough for your responses.

17. Underline the important words or phrases that refer to the required task, when answering a question, to ensure that you respond to the entire task.

Grade Boundaries

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

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

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